



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,

This month's *Rector's Report* is written in part on the national highway traveling north from southern Punjab to Lahore, after an exhilarating four-day journey that included several historic sites as well as multiple meetings with various "Old Formanites" who are making impressive contributions in a variety of fields including education, business, religion, and politics.

The trip involved two nights in Bahawalpur with side visits to Derawar Fort and Uch Sharif. In addition, I attended a small gathering in Multan involving several recent graduates as well as at least one "Old Formanite" who had graduated from FCCU more than fifty years ago. Another highlight was an unexpected meeting with members of the Forman College debating team -- they had traveled to the Sadiq Public School in Bahawalpur to attend a debating tournament involving a couple of dozen other schools from across Pakistan. Even before this trip, I attended a small gathering of FCCU graduates from the Lahore area, the start of a monthly series of such meetings organized to maintain and strengthen face-to-face contact with our alumni.

Looking ahead, we anticipate that Friends of Forman Director Sam Schreiner will visit Lahore along with several of our international supporters who have expressed an interest in spending time on the Forman campus.

We also look forward to celebrating the 201st birthday of Charles W. Forman on March 3. While the continuation of Covid-19 precludes a large alumni gathering this year, we do plan to cut a cake, place a wreath on the Forman grave, and formally launch the publication of a 42-page booklet summarizing the various papers presented one year ago at a Symposium arranged for last year's Founder's Day event to mark the 200th anniversary of Forman's birth.

Also, former Forman faculty member Dr. Yaqoob Bangash who spoke at last year's Charles W. Forman Symposium reports that a blue historic marker has been placed at the old Newton Hall in downtown Lahore, commemorating the location of the original Forman campus. Two other historic markers related to Forman are anticipated in the future, one at Rang Mahal and another on the site where Charles W. Forman preached his first sermon in Lahore.





The annual Forman Staff Club dinner -- canceled last year due to Covid-19 -- will be held on the evening of February 26, providing food and music as well as an opportunity to meet families. Faculty and staff who are registered as members of the Forman Staff Club are invited to attend. For more details, please contact Cassian Rozario in the Registrar's Office.

The emergence of a new variety of Covid-19 combined with road closures due to Pakistan's Super League cricket matches at Gaddafi Stadium forced Forman to return to online instruction for the remainder of this semester. However, the campus has remained open and the sight of ongoing cricket matches in Forman's "front lawn" has been one of the early highlights of this year for me. As for Forman's outstanding college cricket team, it topped its group in the recent Central Punjab College Cricket League championships, going undefeated in three successive group matches against Government MAO College, Concordia College, and Shalimar before finally losing in the semi-finals.

It was gratifying to learn that Dr. Naila Sahar, Assistant Professor in the English Department, has arrived in the US to take up her postdoctoral fellowship in the Global Gender and Sexuality Studies Department at the University of Buffalo in upstate New York. Her work is funded by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and focuses on resilience, resistance agency, and empowerment among female Muslim migrants.

Meanwhile, Dr. Zamurad Awan, Associate Professor in the Political Science Department, co-authored a research study titled *Pakistan Semi-Tribal/Tribal Women in War Zones: Displacement and Rehabilitation*, published by the Policy Research Institute in Islamabad. In addition, college professor Dr. M. Umar Bhatti compiled a useful compendium for students, published under the title *Botany for CSS, PMS, and All Other Relevant Exams* (World Times Publications).

Webinars this month included a panel discussion titled *Religious Populism, Cyberspace and Digital Authoritarianism in India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Turkey*, hosted by the European Center for Populism Studies and including a presentation on India provided by Associate Professor Dr. Raja M. Ali Saleem from Forman's Center for Public Policy and Governance (CPPG).

Also, CPPG sponsored a thought-provoking and well-attended webinar on *Geo-Political Transformations in the Indo-Pacific and their Relevance for Pakistan*, featuring two outstanding guest speakers, Dr. Christophe Jaffrelot (Senior Research Fellow at CERI-CNRS in France) and Dr. Maleeha Lodhi (former journalist, policy analyst, diplomat and Pakistan representative to the United Nations).

Somewhat related, Dr. Saeed Shafqat, Founding CPPG Director, wrote the first chapter in a new book titled *China and South Asia*. Published as part of the Routledge Series on India and China, Dr. Shafqat's opening chapter is titled "CPEC and Changing Dynamics of China-India Relations." The book includes a hopeful opening epigram attributed to Confucius: "Isn't it a joy to have friends come from afar"?

As part of its continuing Graduate Seminar Series, the Department of English organized a well-attended talk led by the well-known actress, writer, director, and poet Navid Shahzad titled *Fact or Fancy: A Rendezvous with Navid Shahzad*. She also highlighted her new book *Aslan's Roar: Turkish Television and the Rise of the Muslim Hero*. Having launched her television career with the satirical show *Such Gup*, she later produced the film *Punjab Nahi Jaungi*. I always find these occasions stimulating -- but this was an especially impressive event, by turns entertaining, informative, and thought-provoking.

Also, Dr. Fatimah Syeda, Chairperson and Assistant Professor in the Department of Language and Literature, and her colleagues organized a Poster Presentation competition for MPhil Drama students, introducing approaches to contemporary drama from different regions of the world.

Many people have by now heard my oft-repeated phrase that "*a university is a place where many different voices are heard*". In that spirit, I appreciated the recent op-ed by Zeeshan Bhutta, chairman of Forman's School of Management, published in *Pakistan Today*; titled "Is the PM listening?"; that op-ed highlighted a number of the economic and other challenges facing Pakistan right now.

Looking ahead, the Department of Business will host an International Conference on Business and innovation at Forman on March 2-3. The event will involve academics, researchers and professionals and will be held both online and in person. For more details, please contact Dr. Rao Raza Hashim (conference chair) and Dr. Bushra Usman (conference secretary).

On the alumni front, I am pleased to note that Dr. Bilal Sehole who graduated from Forman with a BS Honors in Mathematics in 2009 just reached the "100 publications" milestone. Currently a professor at UMT, he has an MS degree from COMSATS and has undertaken post graduate work in both South Africa and Poland. In other alumni news, popular singer and Forman graduate Shae Gill was recently selected as one of the artists appearing on Coke Studio, in her case singing alongside Ali Sethi. Shae has a wonderful voice and her music demonstrates both versatility and popular appeal.

Finally, I might mention that a few weeks ago Fiona and I were browsing through Liberty Books, when we came across a copy of a children's activity book issued by Liberty Publishing and titled *Pakistanis Who Have Made Us Proud*. Scanning through the pages, we quickly came across a full-page devoted to Dr. Arfa Sayed Zehra, described as "a Pakistani educationist and Urdu language expert", formerly chairing the National Commission on the Status of Women and recognized for her knowledge of Urdu as well as her frequent public presence at various conferences and televised forums. Most recently, she delivered the commencement address at LUMS, delivering a brilliant speech that went viral and was widely distributed on social media.

Of course, on seeing this reference to Dr. Arfa in a bookstore in downtown Lahore, I immediately also thought of Dr. Arfa in her role as distinguished Professor of History at Forman -- accompanied by great thanks and appreciation in equal measure for her many contributions to Forman (as well as to Pakistan and beyond!), in ways that surely make all of us within the wider Forman community very proud!



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