



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 Update* is written in Cambridge (Massachusetts) where I am attending the final session of the Harvard University Seminar for New University Presidents. For the past year, we have been meeting via Zoom, usually in the late evening Pakistan time; now, we are finally able to meet in person and it has been both a pleasure and a learning experience to share views with dozens of other new university presidents from not only the US but also Canada, Egypt, Argentina and elsewhere.

Also, over the weekend I attended the biannual *Pakistan Reunion* in Branson (Missouri) involving a number of expatriate families connected with Pakistan in various ways over the last several decades. Most families who attended were already familiar with the work of Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), including the children of Dr. Christy (who served at Taxila Christian Hospital), Dr. Hamm (who served at Sialkot Christian Hospital), and Irv Lotze (who was principal at the Christian Technical Training School in Gujranwala). For my part, I appreciated the opportunity to provide an update on FCCU and its progress in recent years.

During my absence from Lahore, Forman signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the American Institute of Pakistan Studies (AIPS), cementing a relationship that has already resulted in two AIPS-sponsored events at Forman in recent weeks.

Dr. Matthew Cook, based at North Carolina Central University and Director of AIPS, led the most recent such AIPS event, a two-day workshop on writing academic proposals that included graduate students from Forman, LUMS, Government College University and the University of Punjab. Having participated in several AIPS programs over the years (and having served for a time as Executive Director of one of AIPS's "sister institutions", the American Center for Mongolian Studies), it is gratifying to have now formalized this academic partnership aimed at promoting further exchanges.

Two FCCU professors who have already contributed so much, both to Forman and to Pakistan, recently received additional honors:

- *First*, Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC) appointed Dr. Kausar Abdul Malik as Chair of the HEC Committee for Agricultural, Biological, and Veterinary Science, charged with evaluating applications of research journals requesting HEC accreditation.
- *Second*, the Chief Minister's Office for Punjab appointed Dr. Saeed Shafqat to the Committee on Local Government Legislation, charged with reviewing and formulating a draft Bill for Local Governance aimed at strengthening the devolution of political, administrative, and financial powers of Local Government in the Punjab.

Meanwhile, Dr. Samina Mehnaz, Head of Forman's Kausar Abdul Malik School of Life Sciences, announced that her National Research Program for Universities (NRPU) proposal for eight million rupees has been approved. At the same time, she noted that four other faculty members from the School of Life Sciences have also recently received NRPU awards, adding further to Forman's recent success in accessing research funds provided by the Government of Pakistan. In most cases, these projects include funds to hire Ph.D. and MPhil students as well as purchase needed equipment.

Also, Dr. Shakila Bashir from Forman's Statistics Department reports that her NRPU research grant application – titled *A New Family of Distributions to Estimate the Survivorship Functions with an Application to the Survival Times of Chronic Kidney Disease Patients* -- has been provisionally approved.

Congratulations to Hafiz Nisar, Adeel Khalid and Ruksana Zia for being selected to present on *The Role of Higher Education in Nurturing Sustainable Communities* at Albion College in Michigan. Travel grants related to the conference were generously provided by the Great Lakes College Association's "Global Crossroads" initiative.

A special shout-out to Dr. Wasiq Hussain from Forman's Mathematics Department for his talk "*Fun Way or Run Away: Using Technology for Effective Teaching of Mathematics*", a lecture that has also become popular at other universities in the Lahore area. Most recently, he was featured at seminars on this topic hosted by both the University of Management and Technology and Government College University.

Forman's English Department hosted Dr. Amina Yaqin, Associate Professor of World Literature and Publishing at the University of Exeter in England, as part of its Graduate Seminar Series on *Gender, Sexuality and Feminism in Pakistani Urdu Writing*. Professor Yaqin, published widely in academic journals, has also been interviewed on many television networks including BBC, Sky News, EuroNews, Indus News and Pakistan Television Network.

In addition, Forman's English Department organized the fifth session of *The Writer's Lounge: Art of Theatre and the Contemporary Political Context in Pakistan*, featuring Usman Ali, a prominent Pakistani writer, playwright, and literary figure; he is also the founder of Ali's theatre and has written many plays including *The Prisoner*, *The Guilt*, *The Odyssey*, *The Breath*, *The Flute*, and *The Last Metaphor*. More recently, the Forman Dramatics Club invited the acclaimed film director Sarmad Sultan Khoosat to talk about his film *Kamli* which has received a lot of favorable publicity in recent weeks.



Dr. Firasat Jabeen, Assistant Professor in Forman’s Department of Mass Communications, was awarded an NRP grant to launch a project titled *National Policies and Media Development; Exploring a comparison of Pakistan’s English and Urdu press*. The 12-month project also involves Dr. Saleem Abbas, Rachel Hasan, and Syed Saqib Saleem. More broadly, the study will examine how linguistic “apartheid” contributes to information “apartheid” in Pakistan, a theme that Dr. Jabeen also explored in a recent academic journal article published by Taylor & Francis.

Also, Forman’s Environmental Sciences Department cooperated with the Ministry of Climate Change, GIZ and the Comprehensive Health and Education Forum (CHEF) to host a “*Youth4Climate*” event focused on climate change.

Somewhat related, Forman’s Faculty of Humanities partnered with Oslo Metropolitan University’s Journalism and Media Center to organize a workshop on *Climate Journalism Education* held at Forman’s new Media Center. Speakers came from both Norway and the United States – and also included Professor Dr. Derk Bakker, head of Forman’s Environmental Department.

Forman’s Political Science Department launched an academic *Seminar Series on the Constitution of Pakistan* that will continue into the Fall. Professor Muneeza Mirza and Dr. Avra Patras are taking a lead on this initiative that will attract eminent lawyers, academics, authors, and others to the Forman campus during the coming months.

Forman’s Chemistry Department organized a one-day workshop for students, staff, and faculty on Lab Safety, emphasizing the importance of adhering to lab safety protocols. Given that lab accidents occur around the world, it is important that FCCU remain “ahead of the curve” on this important issue!

Forman’s Computer Science Department arranged an online career development workshop for women in cooperation with Microsoft Pakistan and Pakistani Women in Computing (PWIC) to inspire female students to work in the field of information technology. Pakistani women working at Microsoft, Apple, and Google shared their career stories while answering questions focused on the challenges and opportunities facing females working in Pakistan’s technology sector.

Also on the career front, Forman’s Education Department sponsored the first session of EdForum, a series of discussions with experts in the education field. This first session included talks by Ammar Bin Saleem (Assistant Manager for Marketing at LUMS) and Farooq Jamil (Head Career Advisor the Beaconhouse School System). The series of special presentations has since continued, mostly recently involving a talk on education technology involving entrepreneurs and technical specialists working in the field.



Forman's Population Research Center (PRC) organized a webinar on *Evaluation of Maternal and Child Week: Findings from Pakistan*, featuring Dr. Rubeena Zakar from the University of Punjab's Institute of Social and Cultural Studies. In addition, the PRC held an Open House via Zoom to discuss its new certificate program in Demography and Population Studies. Initially launched last fall in cooperation with the Departments of Economics, Sociology, Demography, and Population Studies, the second phase of this certification program starts in Fall 2022.

Meanwhile, Forman's Writing Center hosted a workshop on academic writing, encouraging students to consider submitting their research workshop for publication in academic journals. Finally, Forman's Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC), working with the Faculty of Natural Sciences, organized an impressive Undergraduate Research Poster Competition.

Here is an upcoming deadline of possible interest to the wider Forman community: "*Falling Walls*", a competition for innovative ideas, will once again be held at FCCU this Fall. Applications are due by September 10 and presentations will be delivered at FCCU on September 22. The program is sponsored by Germany's Falling Walls Foundation in recognition of the Fall of the Berlin Wall. Interested students, researchers, academics, and others are given an opportunity to "pitch" an idea in three minutes or less that has a positive impact on science and society, with winners offered a trip to Berlin to present their ideas before a wider audience. For more details, please contact Dr. Mariam Khalid from Forman's School of Management at mariamkhalid@fccollege.edu.pk.

Many thanks to the faculty and staff who participated in the opening ceremony for Pre-College Summer Coaching Classes offered by Forman's Church Relations Office under the leadership of Dr. Farzand Masih. The Chief Guest for this year's program was Mian Imran Masood, Vice-Chancellor of the University of South Asia, Member of the Punjab Higher Education Commission, and former Minister of Education for Punjab.

As many readers will know, FCCU is working to strengthen and deepen its sports programs. As part of this initiative, the College Sports Department headed by Babar Kamil recently sponsored a three-day coaching workshop featuring visiting guest speakers Kyle Schwindt, Nick Moore, and David DeLaughter. While the program focused on sports medicine including the prevention and treatment of injuries, it also touched on other areas including the opportunities that coaches have to transform the lives of those with whom they work. Thanks, too, to Coach Brian Furches from Global Sports Partnerships for helping to make programs like this possible.

Babar Kamil, Head of Health and Physical Education, recently presented his annual report on athletics as part of Forman's 134th annual Athletic Championship. Among other things, he noted that FCCU had placed third in tennis, table tennis, and volleyball in various Lahore Board championships. Also, FCCU reached the semi-final of the Central Punjab Cricket Championship, placing two players on the Central Punjab Cricket Board's team that went on to win the all-Pakistan championship.

Just prior to departing on this trip to the United States, I was privileged to attend the latest TED-X talk sponsored by one of Forman's student societies. Wow-what an amazing event! The individual talks were recorded and are also available on YouTube.



Also, Forman's Debating Society hosted the All-Pakistan Forman Bilingual Declamation 2022 Contest, drawing on support from the Forman Photography Society (for photos) and Forman Music Society (for a Punjabi "Takkra" program at the end of the event).

A few days later the FCCU Character Building Society sponsored a special program on Kashmir featuring guest speaker Zahid Ali Abbasi, Additional Secretary of Kashmir Affairs. In addition, Dr. Amjad Saqib, Founder and Executive Director of the Akhuwat Foundation spoke on *Poverty Alleviation Through Education* at another talk on the Forman campus, this one sponsored by the Forman Sociological Association.

I always appreciate the opportunity to highlight recent alumni news in the *Rector's Update*. This month, this includes news that Farhan Masood who completed his FSc from FCCU in 1995 and later studied entrepreneurship at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has been named an official member of the Forbes Technology Council, a rare and prestigious honor. Farhan is the Founder, President, and CTO of Soloinsight, Inc., a security-related IT firm based in North Carolina.

Recently I was invited to attend an interesting event sponsored by the highly successful IT group OZI featuring guests from several Lahore-based start-up companies involved in the gaming industry. Within the space of fifteen minutes, I met five Forman alumni including not only technical specialists but also the head of OZI's HR Department.

Several months ago, I mentioned that *Pasoori*, a production of Coke Studios featuring Ali Sethi and former Forman student Shae Gill, had already garnered several million YouTube views and seemed on the verge of "going viral". I am pleased to note that this is exactly what happened – in fact, the number *Pasoori* views now exceeds 175 million. Most recently, BBC featured an article on *Pasoori*'s unexpected success as part of a broader report under the headline: *Coke Studio: The Music Show Defeating Hate in India and Pakistan*. As it happens, *Pasoori* has now been viewed by tens of millions of people, not only in Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh but around the world!

I am also pleased to note that Forman recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Orange Tree Foundation, a registered charity based in Karachi focused on education that also involves a partnership with leading companies such as Standard Charter, Al Baraka Bank Pakistan, KFC Pakistan and Sapphire Retail, among others. Based on the MOU, each year five students will receive five full scholarships to study at Forman.

Finally, let me mention that this year's Zakat scholarship campaign raised 5.1 million rupees, exceeding last year's campaign by more than two million rupees. Some 92 individual donors contributed to this year's campaign, compared to 66 individual donors last year. A special thanks to all those who contributed to this year's campaign.

As I conclude this report, I should note that this is undoubtedly the longest edition of the *Rector's Update* since it was launched more than 18 months ago. I am not sure if subsequent editions will be this long – however, this one almost “wrote itself,” given the large number of events taking place at Forman in recent weeks. For sure, despite the hot weather, life at Forman Christian College (A Chartered University) is busier than ever!



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