

# Pacific and Asian Studies

## University of Victoria 2009-10 Newsletter

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 Dr. Timothy Iles  
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 Mrs. Karen Tang  
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## PAAS Grad Injured in Thailand

Chandler Vandergrift, an independent filmmaker, photographer, and NGO supporter who has spent considerable time in Thailand covering the stages of insurrection and political unrest through which that country has been passing, was injured as a result of governmental forces closing a so-called Red-Shirt blockade in central Bangkok on May 19, 2010.



News reports suggested that Chandler's injuries could lead to permanent disability. Subsequently, the department has learned from Nicole Sorochan, also a PAAS graduate and one of Chandler's long-term collaborators, that Chandler is making a good recovery following extensive surgery.

Nicole tells us that "Chandler received 24 shrapnel wounds and

had 7 pieces removed from his head via brain surgery. He was released from the hospital yesterday, and is currently recuperating with his mother in a hotel. He is not able to watch TV or read books/newspapers yet, however, because of the grenade blasts that have caused double vision. He is walking now though! What an amazing recovery!"

Chandler graduated from our department only a few years ago, and since then has gone on to pursue a graduate degree at Royal Roads, before returning to the country to which he has been so dedicated, Thailand. Chandler is fondly remembered by many in the department as a committed, caring, bright, and engaging young scholar whose career, we are certain, will continue on, even after this terrible event.

As Nicole writes, "Chandler is an amazing person. He is



focused and dedicated on using his skills as a photo journalist and in conflict analysis to help

people gain a better understanding of Thailand. He loved to take pictures—and his pictures speak for themselves. I have been shooting a documentary with Chandler entitled *A Land Apart* for the past 6 years in Southern Thailand about the insurgency. I have never witnessed someone so comfortable and in their element as Chandler when we are traveling deep in the red zone. We need people who take risks and tell the stories that will simply not be told without people like Chandler—and we need them to bring light to all sides of the conflict, to give us perspective and understanding.

Chandler believes in investigative responsible journalism. The key there is responsible. He tells stories through his pictures, writing, and film from all angles of a story. Conflict is an interesting subject—and we must remember its not simply black or white. Chandler knows this, and actually spends the time to research all sides of it. It is true that he cares about the people he is photographing and is very interested in using his knowledge to help bring peaceful non-violent resolution. I don't think there are many moments when Chandler does not have a camera in his hand.”

The department joins with Chandler's family, friends, and collaborators in wishing him a speedy and total recovery, and a quick return to his work, so important to bringing the stories of Thailand and its political struggles to international attention.

As Nicole Sorochan tells us, “Chandler has made a dramatic recovery over the last week—but, the medical bills for his treatments have left him with a bill of over 200,000 dollars to pay off.

“If there is any way you might be able to help Chandler out by donating any amount of money. please donate to the Chandler Vandergrift Trust at any Bank of Montreal location. If you are not from Canada, you can send money to our film paypal account [nicole@viewstreetproductions.com](mailto:nicole@viewstreetproductions.com) and I will re-direct it to his trust fund.”

For more information, the following sites have extensive, stirring and dramatic photos from Chandler's film projects, as well as from his coverage of the Red-Shirt demonstrations and their aftermaths:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nationsstate/>  
<http://www.thaifilmproject.com/gallery.html>  
<http://www.nationsstate.blogspot.com/>

## Adjusting, Adapting, Improving Our Restructured Programme, Year One

### Student Choice

Our restructured programme has now completed its first full year, and student feedback indicates its continuing success. Some initial rough edges involving student confusion over our new course numberings together with an uncertain economy and the creation of several new university programmes in BC resulted in lower enrolments in some of our classes, but all signs point to greater departmental growth in almost all areas in the coming terms.

As ever, language classes remain very strong, and the new, balanced requirement that all of our students take between 6 and 9 units of an Asian language is starting to bring significant benefits to other classes, as well—students now see themselves as investing more sincerely in their education about Asia, thus benefitting them in their other courses.

Enrollments remain fairly strong across the board, especially in courses on China and Japan, with increasing enrollments in our core courses as well. This June we will have 33 majors graduating, tying us with Philosophy for third largest (after English and History) in the Faculty of Humanities.

During the ten years of Andrew Rippin's tenure as Dean of Humanities, the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies experienced considerable renewal, with almost half of our current faculty appointed in that time; our most recent appointments are Shelly Chan, in Chinese History, and Jun Tian, in Chinese language and linguistics, both hired in July 2009. Unfortunately, the recent financial crisis has had an impact on us as it has everywhere else. We still hope to fill a position in Chinese film and contemporary literature left vacant since 2007, and sessional funding has been cut to Indonesian in the coming year. The department is seeking ways to ensure that language and culture teaching in this area is maintained with limited resources. We look forward to working with our new Dean, John Archibald, who is coming from the University of Calgary, to ensure our department continues to respond to the demand for informed undergraduate and graduate teaching and research on the Asia-Pacific. Our fingers are crossed!

And so, as this first academic year of a revitalising Department of Pacific and Asian Studies draws to a close, our eyes remain focused on the future, our energy remains high, and we remain collectively optimistic for times of renewal and growth to come.

For more information, visit our department's Website, where you'll find details about our new courses as well as a course-number conversion guide: <http://web.uvic.ca/pacificasia/>

## News from Our Recent MA Graduates

**Sayuri Holman:** In the autumn of 2007, Sayuri entered our MA program to pursue studies masculinity and related gender issues in the Asia-Pacific region. Her master's research project focused on examining the lives of young Fijian men married to non-Fijian women. She spent several months conducting fieldwork there, using participant observation techniques, and conducting multiple in-depth interviews to gain an understanding of the lives of these young urban couples.

Once she returned to Canada she went straight to work at developing and writing her thesis, entitled "Trying to be the man you've become': Negotiating Marriage and Masculinities Among Young, Urban Fijian Men Married to non-Fijian Women."

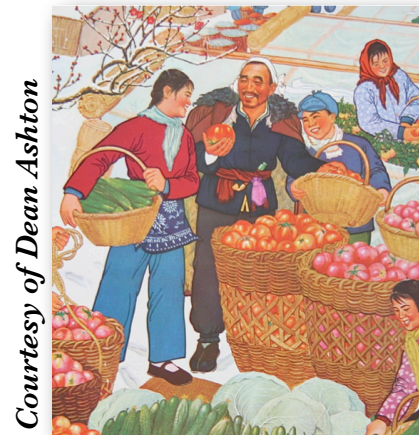
## News from Our Recent BA Graduates

**Dean Ashton:** Last fall I was one of two recipients of the Undergraduate Research Scholarship (URS) for the Pacific and Asian Studies Department. The scholarship was initiated by the university last fall to encourage collaborative research between undergraduate students and a faculty supervisor.

The goal was to provide undergraduate students with the kind of research experience that is usually reserved for graduate students. After participating in the program I can tell you that the experience was invaluable.

The research project that I was engaged in was part of a larger project of Dr. Richard King. Dr. King has a large collection of propaganda posters from the Chinese Cultural Revolution that are not available in any of the current online databases. His

long term plan is to create a digital archive of the images that other scholars can access as a resource. My role in the project was the digitisation of the images. We settled on photography as the best method to digitise the images and I was charged with taking the photos. I photographed all of the posters, recorded all of the bibliographic information, and began on translation of the posters. The project gave me an opportunity to practice my Chinese language skills as well as the amazing opportunity to work with primary source



*Courtesy of Dean Ashton*

documents. In addition, while documenting the posters I selected a small sample of the images known as Huxian Peasant Paintings and used them as the subject for my Honours Thesis.

The real benefit of the scholarship and the project for me was the opportunity to meet regularly with Dr. King and discuss the images. He was able to provide me with important background sources and theory in order better to understand the material. The project also provided me with valuable insight into larger research projects and the processes that are involved. I learned the technical skills of digitising the images, gained a more nuanced understanding of the Cultural Revolution and learned how important visual culture can be as an academic resource. I also think that the project has better prepared me to go on to graduate school.

To close I would like to encourage any other undergraduates who think they might be interested in doing research with a professor in our department to consider applying for the URS this coming September. If you have a subject you want to learn more about, approach the professor in the PAAS department who you think can supervise you and

put together a project. The benefits are more than worth the extra work.

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## Summer Japanese Language Immersion Programme

The idea of sending our students to Japan in summer for authentic language and culture experiences has sprung from the students' strong desire to learn Japanese in Japan and the long-standing relationships with Japanese partner institutions such as Konan University and Doshisha Women's College.

Last year was a very unfortunate year due to the impact of H1N1. Five students were so excited and ready to go, but Konan U. informed us that they had to cancel the popular summer immersion program. This year, three students are scheduled to attend the program.

In terms of the official exchanges, two students are currently at Doshisha U. in Kyoto, one student is at Konan U. in Kobe, and one student is at Seikei U. in Tokyo. We are in the process of starting a new exchange with Aoyama Gakuin U. in Tokyo. We hope that the students' interest in short-term and long-term study abroad programs will be rekindled this coming year.

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## PAAS Students of Chinese Find Chances to Study Abroad and Perform at Home

**Jun Tian:** Students in the Chinese Program have had great success in 2009 and 2010 in terms of winning scholarships to study abroad and participating in Chinese language competitions.

In 2009, seven students (Peter Braga, Mathew Rideout, Ruji Auethavornpipat) received full scholarships, and two students received tuition-free scholarships to study in different institutions in China. Three of them studied in the East-China Normal University (ECNU) in Shanghai under the exchange partnership that has lasted for over thirty years, the University of Victoria's longest-standing exchange agreement. Two students won government scholarships to study in China, one with Canada-China Scholar Exchange Program, and one China Government Scholarship. Four students won Hanban (Office of Chinese Language Promotion)

Scholarships to a Summer Camp in China. In addition, two students also received two tuition-free scholarships to study in one of the best Chinese universities—Renmin Daxue (People's University) in Beijing.

This year, even more students in our program (Brittney O'Neil, Michael Pickering, and Holly Benson) have found opportunities to study Chinese abroad with scholarships. As in previous years, three students were selected to study at ECNU. Five students received Confucius Institute Scholarships to study in two Chinese universities, Southwest University and Tianjin Normal University. Three students also won the Chinese Government Scholarships to study in China, and one student won Taiwan's Huayu Scholarship to study in Taiwan. All these students will commence their study abroad in September 2010. Two students also received tuition-free scholarships to study in Renmin Daxue this summer. Altogether, thirteen students are going to study Chinese abroad this year.

In addition to all these study abroad opportunities, our students have also been participating in local events to improve their Chinese. Every year, the Department organises a Student Speech Contest, at which many students exhibit their language skills, presenting skits, telling jokes and stories, and reciting poems to a wider audience. In 2009, nine of our students also went to Vancouver to represent the University at the BC Chinese Bridge Mandarin Singing Contest. In March, one of our first year students won a third place in BC Chinese Bridge Speech Contest 2010. All these extra-curricular activities have enriched our students' life as well as engaged them in more practice in Chinese.

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## Studying Japanese in Japan

**Joshua Friesen:** In August of 2009, my year as an exchange student began. Apart from a quick trip home to Canada in December, my entire time has been spent here in Japan. My life at Seikei University in Kichijoji so far has been more rewarding than I could have ever imagined. Living in close quarters with students from Germany, France, England, Australia, China, Korea, Thailand etc, has opened my eyes to much more than just Tokyo.

My life at Seikei has been and continues to be very busy, with a heavy course-load and two part-time jobs, while participating in two school clubs. Classes are taught all in Japanese, but with the ten or so foreign students at Seikei it is easy to receive one-on-one help from the teachers, who have become more like friends now than teachers. Japanese classes, which all exchange students have to take, are separated into three levels, beginner, intermediate, and advanced, and are split up further into the areas of grammar, composition, reading, speaking, and kanji. Every student goes through an interview with one of the teachers who will decide what level is best for them.



*Courtesy of Joshua Friesen*

Apart from Japanese courses, it is possible for exchange students to take any class which Seikei offers, from any of the four departments, law, economics, science/tech, and literature.

Japanese students are intensely involved with school clubs, and almost everyone is a member of at least one. For international students, there is the "International Exchange Club," which is a good place to meet Japanese students who are interested in other cultures, languages, etc. I am also part of the orchestra at Seikei, which just goes to show that it is virtually possible to join any club.

There are two months in between each semester, which gives students plenty of time to travel while school is on holiday. Some of my fellow exchange students travelled to Kyoto, Hokkaido, Aomori etc, and I myself took a two week trip to Kochi where I had been on exchange three years ago. The good thing about Japan's size is, it may look far on a map, but it really isn't. Flights are inexpensive, shinkansen are convenient, and highway buses are efficient way to travel around.

A year in Japan is a very long time, but it has definitely changed my life. I hope the connections I've created with teachers, students and friends will continue on. I hope what I've learned in class here will stick with me, and I hope I won't forget all the strange and wonderful experiences that have made me speechless, for good reasons and for bad. But I know for sure that I can go back to Canada without any regrets.

For anyone with even the slightest interest in studying abroad, and for those who don't, I urge you to take a risk and go on an exchange. It is impossible to talk fully about my experiences, but I hope that something I've said will give someone inspiration to study abroad.

## Youth-Powered Energy Solutions

**Joanna Wong:** With a deep interest in sustainability and a solid grounding from my Pacific and Asian Studies degree, in 2008 I became a Beijing-based project manager with The Green Long March, a nation-wide youth environmental movement. The Green Long March, which takes the inspiration for its name from Mao's revolutionary long march of the 1930s, brings together students from over 60 partner universities to call for a more sustainable China.



*Courtesy of Nicholas Pope*

The Green Long March leverages China's energy goals for 2010 with a national youth action campaign to improve energy efficiency and reduce CO2 emissions. Student projects include leading campus-based green energy audits, supporting a biogas demonstration village in Guangdong Province, and coordinating the construction of an energy-efficient water filter in an earthquake-affected village in Sichuan Province.

“Alternative energy technology such as solar power hot water heaters already exists,” explained volunteer Meilin. “But the market is just opening. We want to help raise awareness of the importance of these new technologies, and also show that they can be cost effective.” With support from the top levels of government and grassroots Chinese community groups, the Green Long March represents a promising model for youth-led environmental action in China.

*Joanna Wong graduated in 2006 with major in Pacific and Asian Studies (China Concentration). She studied Mandarin at East China Normal University in Shanghai through a University of Victoria scholarship.*

## A Message From PASSS

**Chany Chea, PASSS President:** *The Pacific and Asian Studies Student Society (PASSS)* represents all students who are in the Pacific Asian Studies department. The goal of PASSS is to unite all students who are involved in, or are interested in the Pacific and Asian region. PASSS hosts a variety of events where students can learn about different Asian cultures, utilize (and practice) their newly learned language ability, or simply make friends with similar interests.



Courtesy of Chany Chea

This year the PASSS has made its main initiative to link professors and students together to make learning about the Asia-Pacific region a fun cultural experience. From organising the speech competition, the Chinese New Year Dinner, a Thai dinner, meet-and-greets for students and professors, PASSS' activities have generated a friendly social atmosphere among students and faculty in the Pacific and Asian Studies department. The speech competition is an opportunity for students in Pacific and Asian language classes to show off their hard work, and this year we had many creative and entertaining performances! The Chinese New Year

and Thai Dinner both were huge successes in bringing people interested in the region together. Our meet-and-greets also were a great opportunity for students to get their questions answered about our program from professors and to socialise. Another initiative of ours was to keep students who are interested in the region up to date on relevant guest lectures, opportunities and events. PASSS also gets involved in the community. As with previous years PASSS has devoted its earnings to support a cause. This year the group decided to support the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre (VIRCS). We raised funds through various bake sales, and I would like to thank everyone who came out and supported us! With all the support and hard work put in by PASSS executive members we were able to raise \$683 for VIRCS. I hope that PASSS continues to be an effective liaison between the students, the University of Victoria faculty and the community. PASSS students have had a lot of fun putting together these events for students, faculty, and the community. Many thanks go out to our past and future supporters. We hope to see you all at our future events! PASSS it on!

## Our Instructors— Research and News

**Martin Adam:** In recognition of his contributions to Pacific and Asian Studies, as well as to Religious Studies, Martin received both tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor this year—congratulations, Martin!

**Leslie Butt:** This year has been an exciting one for research. I received a grant which allowed me to run a research project in Papua, eastern Indonesia, on how HIV-positive indigenous men and women experience stigma. Rates of HIV in Papua per capita are among the highest in Asia and they are 20 times higher than the rest of Indonesia. Rates of HIV infection are increasing rapidly. Anti-retroviral therapies are just becoming available now (in 2010!), and very few Papuans are able to access them. In a word, conditions are appalling. My project focuses on the experiences of stigma of HIV-positive persons. I was able to spend some of 2009 in Indonesia, and worked closely with a research team from the local university. We're preparing to submit a report to local health officials on stigma which we hope will improve the way HIV-positive

persons are treated in the province. In 2010, I'll be returning to Papua, accompanied by a graduate student, Kathleen Gregson. Kathleen will be focusing on health care workers and the roles they might play in perpetrating stigma within the community. It will be a pleasure to work alongside her this summer.

**Richard King:** I am now back teaching full-time in the Department after five years on a reduced load while I was Director of the Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives here at UVic. This past year I have had the pleasure of teaching a third-year class and a seminar on modern Chinese literature, the Department's capstone theory and methodology course (which I share with Leslie Butt), and a third-level language class. This has given me the chance to have greater contact with students and share in their progress in a way that has not been possible for me in recent years.

The third-year literature class was taught with completely revised content: students read Mo Yan's recent novel *Life and Death are Wearing Me Out*, a story of revolution and reincarnation in modern China, and compared the author's idiosyncratic presentation of Chinese history with the same period covered in other works of literature, film, and the visual arts. The seminar looked at Chinese women's writing through the twentieth century, finding surprising similarities in the concerns of authors in the republican, Maoist, and reform eras. Dr. Butt and I chose the theme of "migration and displacement" for the capstone seminar; students studied the style and content of selected academic papers in the humanities and social sciences related to this theme before coming up with original research papers of their own. This year, a larger number of our students than ever have been able to take advantage of awards and studentships to study in China and Taiwan, both during the summer and in the coming academic year. This is a very exciting time to be studying China!

In addition to undergraduate teaching, I have been involved with the supervision and examination of graduate students at P&A and in other Departments at the University.

On the research side, I have continued my research and translation of modern Chinese literature, and paid more attention to the visual and performing arts. Two books have appeared in the past year, one of writing about the Great Leap Forward, China's

unsuccessful and ultimately disastrous attempt at accelerated modernization in the later 1950s, and another on the visual and performing arts of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). Information on *Heroes of China's Great Leap Forward* can be found at the website of the University of Hawaii Press:

[http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/cart/shopcore/?db\\_name=uhpress&page=shop/flypage&product\\_sku=978-0-8248-3436-4](http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/cart/shopcore/?db_name=uhpress&page=shop/flypage&product_sku=978-0-8248-3436-4)

For *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution*, see the UBC website at [http://www.ubcpres.ubc.ca/search/title\\_book.asp?BookID=299172436](http://www.ubcpres.ubc.ca/search/title_book.asp?BookID=299172436). I am also co-editor of the proceedings of a conference jointly organised by the Centres for Asia Pacific Initiatives and Global Studies on *Chinese Uncertainties and Canadian Responses: After the Global Financial Crisis*, published online at

[http://www.capi.uvic.ca/sites/capi.uvic.ca/files/users/user3/China\\_Canada\\_Report\\_Final\\_2.pdf](http://www.capi.uvic.ca/sites/capi.uvic.ca/files/users/user3/China_Canada_Report_Final_2.pdf)

Another current project involves the preparation of a digital archive of Chinese propaganda posters from the 1970s and early 1980s, which I will be working on this summer with two students. I have also presented conference papers on Chinese literature in the 1940s and film and propaganda art in the 1970s, both papers parts of larger collaborative or individual projects.

**Hiroko Noro:** The past year was another busy, but very productive and active year for me. Last year and this year, I had opportunities to visit Princeton and New York City in lieu of my SSHRC-funded research. Some of the research outcomes were disseminated at several venues ranging from scholarly conferences to workshops at secondary schools in the eastern states of the U.S. I am very excited and delighted that American secondary school students responded very positively to the theatre-based experiential teaching methods. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the teachers who allowed me to teach their students. At UVic, I was involved in the VPAC-sponsored annual conference on diversity. In collaboration with theatre professionals, I had chance to prove the efficacy of theatre/drama in inter-cultural understanding.

Another highlight from the past year is that I am in the process of establishing research networks with scholars in Brazil and Japan with our common research goal, i.e., transnational children of Japanese-origin. I was asked to take part in

researching on the role of Japanese as a heritage language in the Canadian context for this international project. I am grateful that I was given an opportunity to renew my passion for the research topic that has been so dear to me for the past 28 years.

**Cody Poulton:** I spent the lion's share of my six-month leave in the latter half of 2009 in Japan, shuttling between Kyoto and Tokyo working on the *Neverending Anthology of Modern Japanese Drama* for Columbia University Press. One project I finally did get to finish was my book *A Beggar's Art: Scripting Modernity in Japanese Drama* for the University of Hawai'i Press; it came out this July, 2010. I spent much of the fall last year chasing down photos and other illustrations for that work, doing the copying-editing and other nitpicking tasks that one has to do long after you thought you were done with a project. My hosts in Japan were the International Research Center of Japanese Studies in Kyoto and Seikei University in beautiful Kichijōji, Tokyo, where we now have an exchange.

I also gave a number of papers and lectures while I was in Japan: at the University of Tokyo and Seikei University (on gender and Japanese theatre); Otemae University (on Japanese theatre and culture of the 1920s); the Kyoto Center for Japanese Studies (on the body and modern Japanese theatre); and Osaka University (a roundtable discussion with Matsumoto Yūkichi, artistic director of theatre company Ishinha, and theatre critic Senda Akihiko). I even got to do a little hiking in my beloved Kumano where the gods were merciful and spared the rain.

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## Completed MA Students

**Sayuri Holman:** "Trying to be the man you've become': Negotiating Marriage and Masculinities Among Young, Urban Fijian Men Married to non-Fijian Women."

**Irina Novak:** "Do the Japanese Dream of a Robotic Future? Expressing Posthumanism in Japanese Media."

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## Continuing MA Students

**Scott Aalgaard:** Contemporary Japan

**Kathleen Gregson:** Southeast Asian Area

**Jack Jin:** Chinese Literature

**Ryan Johnston:** Contemporary Japan

**Yuko Kameda:** Owl Symbolism in Ainu Art

**Yuriko Katsumata:** Japanese Theatre

**Lynda Lin:** Contemporary China

**Yuumi Noto:** Contemporary China

**Yuki Ohsawa:** Gender and Japanese Film

**Kimberly Ruta:** Myth in Polynesia

**Joel Van Loon:** Japan and the Periphery

**Xiaoduo Zhang:** Classical Chinese Poetry

**Yuanfang Zhang:** Contemporary Japan

Congratulations, good luck, and best wishes to all our MA students!

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An Opportunity to Help

## Pacific and Asian Studies Student Research and Exchange Fund

The Pacific and Asian Studies Student Research and Exchange Fund is now entering its fifth year. In the first year, the fund received over \$3000.00 in donations. Recently, however, we have received no new contributions, and our drive to raise an initial endowment of at least \$10,000 remains stalled with the fund hovering just below \$2400.

This fund is intended to help Graduate and Undergraduate Students alike to be able to travel to the Asia and Pacific regions in order to undertake advanced language training and carry out thesis research and other kinds of critical study projects. Many of our alumni can easily recognise the value of such "first-hand" experience.

Please consider donating to our Student Research and Exchange Fund. No matter how small the amount, every bit will help us reach our initial goal of a \$10,000 endowment.

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