Teaching excellence recognised

On 16 October, Dr SungYong Lee was recognized with a ‘Division of Humanities Teaching Excellence’ award.

This is the first year that such awards have been presented by the Division of Humanities and Dr Lee was one of two recipients.

In presenting the award, Associate Professor Tim Cooper spoke of Dr Lee’s pastoral care of his students, his constant development and reflection upon his own teaching, and the way in which the discipline of Peace and Conflict Studies is manifested in Dr Lee’s teaching. In particular, Associate Professor Cooper highlighted the listening, non-judgmental style that Dr Lee brings to the classroom.

Dr Lee quotes Buddhist philosopher Daisaku Ikeda, as the central guideline in his teaching activities: ‘There is no genuine education without earnest life-to-life interaction and inspiration. People grow through their interaction with people.’

His dedication to the individuals in his classroom and their learning needs came through strongly in his teaching profile. Dr Lee works hard to ensure that his students have both a theoretical framework and the opportunity to interact with people whose lives have been affected by conflict and who promote peacebuilding. Through online livestreaming technology, he has facilitated guest lectures and online interviews with practitioners in Pakistan, Liberia, Cambodia and elsewhere, enabling students to pose questions directly to people who are working in the field.

He also shares his own fieldwork experience, which has recently culminated in a book Local Ownership in Asian Peacebuilding (Palgrave Macmillan). Dr Lee has also coauthored International Peacebuilding: An Introduction (Routledge) for undergraduate and postgraduate students, which has been adopted by five academic courses in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada and Turkey.

Students, both past and present, have been full of praise for the award. One comment seemed to capture the feelings of the students: “It almost seems redundant to give a prize to such an accomplished, exemplary, and always humble rockstar of a Prof that is SungYong. Congratulations! Thank you for your hard work and dedication to your students. We notice it every day.”
Three Milestones:
Peace Traditions of Aotearoa New Zealand

The Centre marks three milestones in one in January 2019, with the first summer school paper taught by NCPACS, the first Masters paper in Peace and Conflict Studies on the University of Otago campus in Auckland, and the first time a Masters' paper that focuses on Aotearoa New Zealand's peace traditions has been taught anywhere in the world.

The summer school paper Peace Traditions of Aotearoa New Zealand is a special topic developed by Dr Heather Devere, who will also teach the paper. Dr Devere has the support of Maui Solomon, Maata Wharehoka and Kelli Te Maihara who have provided cultural advice on indigenous peace traditions. Some of NCPACS PhD graduates, including Dr Roberta Frances, Dr Sylvia Frain, Dr Michael Ligaliga, Dr Mahdis Azarmandi and Dr Janine Joyce will also be assisting with the programme.

"While Aotearoa New Zealand has a reputation for being a peaceful country which often appears near the top of the Global Peace Index, there is relatively little known about our many peace traditions," said Dr Devere. "I would like to acknowledge all the peace groups in Aotearoa New Zealand who have kept the lessons of peace alive".

"This paper considers an historical trajectory of all sorts of communities which follow a peace kaupapa or practice.”

Students will be able to study the indigenous non-violent resistance of Moriori, Parihaka and Waitaha peoples, as well as restorative justice, the Waitangi Tribunal, Anti War and Anti Nuclear movements, peacekeeping and New Zealand's role in the Pacific.

“There will be the opportunity for students to focus on issues that are of particular interest to them, and to conduct personal research that will help to further knowledge of areas that are, to date, relatively unknown.”

It is hoped that the course will attract students from a range of disciplines including politics, sociology, theology, cultural studies and education, and peace activists and practitioners who would like to consider their experience within an academic framework. With seminar style classes scheduled on six consecutive Saturdays from 12 January to 16 February, and the convenient Auckland CBD location, this inaugural course will appeal to a wide range of students.

From the Director’s desk

This year has brought more than its fair share of challenge and uncertainty to the Centre. Among other things, we have had to understand and accept the university-wide shake up of administrative processes, and adjust to the idea of joining the newly organised School of Social Sciences. I am proud of the way the faculty and students have responded to these significant challenges and uncertainties. They have not allowed them to interrupt the Centre's continuing excellent level of research, teaching, outreach and sense of community.

In 2018, the Centre continued to graduate record numbers of excellent masters’ and doctoral students, produce excellent published research, conduct award-winning teaching, and do outreach to the community. We also made progress on advancing issues of biculturalism, and maintained the Centre's vibrant and supportive sense of collegiality.

This year also represents the end of an era. In December, Rosemary McBryde, the Centre's much-loved manager, will finish in her role after seven years of invaluable service. She will be greatly missed by all and the Centre will not be the same without her. In January 2019, the Centre will move to new premises, ending its seven-year hiatus in Castle Street, and the opportunities and challenges of integrating into the new School of Social Sciences and adjusting to the new administrative structures will begin in earnest. Also in 2019, the Centre will celebrate its 10th anniversary since it first began working under the directorship of its foundation chair, Professor Kevin Clements. There will be a number of special events next year including a conference to be held 25 – 27 November, which we hope will attract a number of alumni, former staff and many friends of the Centre. More details will be available in 2019 as planning gets underway.

I want to congratulate all the faculty and students of the Centre for their achievements this year, and thank them for their courage and forebearance in the face of challenges. I am hopeful that as we move into another period of change and adjustment, and as we reflect and celebrate the first ten years of the Centre's work, that we can continue to do excellent peace work, continue to strengthen and grow our community, and find new opportunities to flourish. I want to end by thanking Rosemary for her amazing contribution and wish her all the best in her next adventure.

Me Rongo,
Richard
Envisioning an Anarcho-Pacifist Peace: A case for the convergence of anarchism and pacifism and an exploration of the Gandhian movement for a stateless society

Anarchism and pacifism aim to build a world that is free from violence: pacifism through the rejection of physical violence as a tool of politics, and anarchism through its opposition to the structural and direct violence that results from violent forms of authority. This thesis is split into two main parts. First, it makes a theoretical argument for the joining of anarchism and pacifism. Put simply, this argument is that because pacifists oppose violence as a method of politics, they should therefore reject the state, as the state is rooted in violence. This means that pacifists should adopt anarchism as an ideology and a practice. On the other side, anarchism can be defined through its opposition to domination and violent authority, and on this basis it rejects the state, capitalism, patriarchy and racism, along with any other past, present or future forms of privileging and violent hierarchical structures. The argument is made that if anarchism opposes domination, it should reject physical violence and killing, the ultimate form of domination, as a tool of politics and social transformation. In this way, both pacifism and anarchism come together in a synergistic way. Second, the thesis explores the practice of anarcho-pacifist politics in the real world. It focuses on the Gandhian Sarvodaya movement, which could be seen as the most sustained and successful example of anarcho-pacifist politics in practice. This exploration is primarily based on interviews with contemporary followers of Gandhi and his successors, Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan.

Nothing About Us, Without Us: The pursuit of inclusive and accessible positive peace

People with disabilities are the largest minority in the world; a minority that experiences violence during times of peace, as well as during times of conflict and displacement. Exacerbating their marginalisation has been the absence of the disability community from Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) research, literature and practice. The purpose of this thesis was to conduct pure research that de-subjugated the knowledge of people with lived experience of disability, conflict and displacement, while using applied research to conceptualise ways in which PACS might actively advance inclusive and accessible positive peace. The design of this research was strongly influenced by critical theories, the transformative paradigm, appreciative inquiry, narrative inquiry and partial-insider research. Over a period of five weeks, twenty-five interviews were conducted in Ecuador with refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities from Colombia and Venezuela, their family members, and service providers. Participants confirmed that the intersectional experience of disability, conflict and displacement can be dangerous and harrowing. As participants shared insights into how to navigate direct, structural and cultural violence, a second key finding was that a great deal can be learned from people with lived experience. Finally, this research showed that when PACS is informed by rights-based approaches; when those with lived experience have equitable opportunities to determine their own research agenda and contribute knowledge and expertise; and when “nothing about us, without us” is at the forefront of peace building research and activities, then inclusive and accessible positive peace can begin to be realised.

Recent PhD completions

Congratulations to our December doctoral graduates, Dr Roberta Francis, Dr Joseph Llewellyn, and Dr Jonathan Sutton (profiled in the Semester One newsletter).

Dr Joseph Llewellyn
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Dr Roberta Francis
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The Centre has recently welcomed two new doctoral students

**David Whippy (Fiji)**

David comes to the University of Otago with a Masters in Diplomacy and International Affairs from the University of the South Pacific in Fiji. He has experience working in civil society at the grassroots and mid-range levels in Fiji and Hawaii, in the areas of child rights, restorative justice, transitional processes to democracy and mediation.

He is a 2018 recipient of the Rei Foundation Scholarship. His dissertation is on peacebuilding in his native Fiji, focusing on peace education as a means of bringing transformative change. He plans to develop a localized model of peace education that is influenced by Fiji’s history and its ethnic and cultural diversity. He hopes that this nonviolent approach, directed at primary and secondary students through the formal education system in Fiji, will create change agents of the younger generation. His study emphasis is influenced by his own experience as a kailoma (a person of mixed heritage) in Fiji, and his peace education journey in academia and civil society.

David currently works at Brigham Young University, Hawaii, teaching peacebuilding classes in transformative mediation, NGOs and transformative change and peace education. His other research interests include peace ecology, China in the Pacific and sports in peacebuilding.

**Joshua Campbell (USA)**

In 2017 Joshua completed a Masters in Peace Studies at the International Christian University in Tokyo, where he was a Rotary Peace Fellow. As part of his Masters, he undertook field research in Morocco where he had previously worked as a Peace Corp volunteer from 2012 to 2014. His project as a volunteer was to design and deliver a content based learning workshop for young people learning about volunteerism, helping them to develop and carry out their own projects.

Joshua's undergraduate study was undertaken at the University of Nebraska, in Omaha, where he studied Political Science and International Non-Profit Management. He also spent one year in Shizuoka, Japan, as part of his undergraduate study.

Volunteerism and international exchange are recurring themes in Joshua’s life. His doctoral thesis topic “Does international volunteering promote peace through intergroup contact?” is an extension of his Masters work in this area.

“International agencies may claim that their work promotes peace. However without research, it is hard to know whether this claim is valid. By undertaking this doctoral project, I hope to produce a way of measuring the impact of volunteerism on peacebuilding.”

**Welcome to Tilly Reeves-O’Toole**

I am a first year PhD student based in the Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology at the University of Liverpool (United Kingdom). I am visiting the NCPACS as part of the Economic and Social Research Council’s Oversees Institutional Visit scheme. My time at the Centre has provided me with a brilliant opportunity to learn from and work with other researchers whose interests closely align with my own. In particular, I’ve been able to present my research on the discursive constitution of pacifism and nonviolence within the practice of UK politics and have received invaluable feedback and support from all those who attended. Off the back of this I am aiming to publish an article early next year. Outside of the Centre I’ve taken full advantage of all that Dunedin has to offer including great coffee and the great outdoors. It is safe to say that I will find it extremely hard to get on the plane home in a few weeks time!
Solidarity, Sanctuary, Hospitality, and Sacrifice: Peace and Human Rights in the time of Trump

(Excerpts from the key note message given by doctoral student Jeremy Simons on the 2018 International Day of Peace at the Quaker Settlement, Whanganui, New Zealand)

For all the great aspirations that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) represents, some have criticized it for reflecting western, enlightenment notions of progress and development which were current in the mid 1940s when the UDHR was written. These concerns can be summarized under three themes: the orientation towards individualism, the emphasis on legal solutions, and the prioritization of rational and scientific forms of knowledge. Individualism can be problematic when the importance of collective concepts of human rights are underestimated; legalism often narrows the concept of justice to an adversarial legal process; and rational choice may limit our thinking about peace by ignoring or overlooking radical peacebuilding understandings that are ecological, indigenous, or imaginative.

While there is some validity in these critiques, to write off the declaration because of them would be to throw the baby out with the bathwater. I suggest therefore, the UDHR can be understood as an instrument that promotes a right to genuine peace and avoids the pitfalls of an overly western, scientific or technocratic approach to human rights. Moreover, I want to recommend several movements in our way of seeing, acting, and being, that can assist us in restoring and re-balancing the holistic realities and sensitivities of universal human rights. In fact, these ideas are not new, but I think they bear re-stating as a reminder in the especially polarized world that we see around us.

If there is a danger in an overly individualistic notion of human rights, then the first movement is a shift from individualism and isolation to solidarity. What does solidarity look like, what does it mean?

I understand solidarity to mean finding a way to walk with people, sharing their experience, telling their story, sharing their pain and suffering, regardless of physical location or social position. However more than that, I believe solidarity is about being open to and aware of the marginal aspects of our lives and selves, and connecting the awareness of our own marginalities to the lived marginalities of others. In other words, being open to a deeper understanding that we are all in this together.

There is something about those with privilege choosing to live under the reality of oppression or otherwise sharing in the experience of those who suffer that can radically change perspectives all around and reinforce the universality, necessity, and equality of human rights.

However, there is another form and direction of solidarity that we must consider, which is the solidarity of the oppressed with the oppressor. It is said that while Nelson Mandela endured 27 years, or 10,000 days of unjust imprisonment, he made the effort to learn Afrikaans – the language of the guards, so he could somehow enter into their world and engage them on their terms.

In this way, Nelson Mandela took the injunction to love your enemy as an imperative to enter not only into solidarity with those who are deserving of our compassion, but also with those whom we find most repugnant and unworthy of our attention. Human rights are universal, not dependent on our personal whims or moral valuations of others.

If there is a danger in over emphasizing legal remedies as the highest form of HR, then moving from legalism to sanctuary is the second antidote I want to suggest in making human rights a reality in our days of polarization and exclusion. What do I mean by sanctuary?

This is the creation of social spaces that support and actualize legal rights and protections. Establishing legal space without the creation of corresponding safe social space will mean that our efforts to achieve greater Human Rights and greater social justice will fall short.

For example, the devastation of the current Philippine war on drugs that has left over 20,000 mostly poor, alleged drug users killed in alleged police drug busts or shot by unknown killers, Catholic churches have begun taking in people who fear they will be targeted by the assassins or former perpetrators who can provide crucial testimony and information in the crimes against humanity case currently being built against Philippine president Duterte at the International Criminal Court.

The third tonic for the soul of human rights is to shift ourselves and our thinking from isolation to the hopeful hospitality of the beloved community.

Vincent Harding was a Mennonite African American historian and theologian. He and his wife worked in the Freedom movement in the early 1960s. He recalled how in 1960, he, another black young person, and three white activists, journeyed together from the "safe" city of Chicago to the segregated south as an act of dangerous and illegal solidarity and witness. When they arrived in Montgomery Alabama, they were welcomed by MLK and his wife Coretta Scott King into their home. Harding recalls that "one of his [MLK’s] goals was not simply to establish legal rights for black people, but to go beyond that to create what he termed the "beloved community" in which all people could rediscover a sense of our fundamental connectedness as human beings."

The isolation of in-group identifications was healed through the hopeful hospitality of the beloved community.

From rational choice to radical sacrifice

Finally, within all three of these movements, from isolation to solidarity, from legalism to sanctuary, from isolation to the hopeful hospitality of the Beloved Community, we see a necessary underlying foundational movement in how we conceptualize and think about human rights, which is the movement from rational choice to radical sacrifice.

This last element is essential in grounding our struggle for authentic human rights. Without moving from rational choice to radical sacrifice, of giving up old ways of seeing, doing, and being, we will never be able to tap into alternative knowledges that see hidden connections, unseen opportunities, unhealed relationships, and overlooked capacities. In other words, this shift requires us to have new eyes and healed vision, new ears for healed listening, in order to discover new ways of seeing, perceiving and constructing reality.

Moana Jackson a leading Māori advocate provides one such perspective:

"Indigenous Peoples have also possessed profound understandings of the metaphysics of peace and its moral imperatives to honour and restore any damaged relationships. That is why in the Māori language, there is no word for “enemy.” Instead those with whom one might be in conflict were called “hoariri” or “enemy” and the highest aspiration, both individually and collectively, was to be at peace with one’s friends."

Human rights are grounded in human dignity and the idea of humanity as a family; in the "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

Thus, to struggle for human rights, peace and justice, is nothing less than to sacrifice through solidarity, sanctuary and hospitality, for our souls, our communities, our environment, and everything we hold dear as people journeying together in the beloved community.
Seven happy years

I began with NCPACS in February 2012, one month after returning to Dunedin from extended travel overseas. Initially the Centre Manager role was a one-year parental leave vacancy, which then became a permanent position in 2013.

I feel extraordinarily fortunate, not only to have found a job so quickly after coming back to Dunedin, but more particularly to have been able to combine many years’ experience in administration and management with an interest in global and societal issues, which grew out of my years as a Social Sciences secondary school teacher. To me, the Centre has been a perfect combination – serving people who do interesting work that I admire in an environment that offers the right balance of variety, support and independence – and lots of fun.

I take with me many treasured friendships with extraordinary people from all over the world: past and current colleagues, visitors, our generous funders, and the inspiring students who have come through our doors over the last seven years. This group of people has the heart and skill to change the world for the better, and it has been my privilege to work with them, supporting their endeavours in whatever way I can.

While my decision to leave in December is a direct result of changes brought about by the university’s Support Services Review, I am also looking forward to reshaping my working life, with a focus on providing editing, proofreading and writing services. There have been many occasions over the past seven years when I have crafted writing, proofread work or assisted colleagues with finding just the right word for their academic writing. Helping people to express their ideas clearly and with maximum impact is another way in which I can provide support. And it’s an opportunity to keep learning.

My thanks to all those with whom I have interacted over the last seven years including friendly and collegial staff across the university, members of the Trust, and the Centre’s support network around New Zealand and the globe. It has been a pleasure knowing you.

Rosemary

NCPACS promoted in North America

In October, Dr Katerina Standish was a visiting scholar at two Canadian Peace Research Institutes and the John Sloan Dickey War and Peace Fellow at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, USA.

Dr Standish gave talks on the state of Peace and Conflict Studies, War and Peace Education and introduced students at Dartmouth to the Peace Paradigm including conceptualizations of violence and nonviolence. Her talks were standing room only and colleagues and students were very excited to hear about the exciting research and study opportunities at Otago.

Of particular interest to the students and faculty was our decolonizing work at Otago and in the Centre and the Indigenous context of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

ASEAN Leaders programme

In July and August this year, Common Purpose Asia Pacific sponsored PhD student Khin Khin to participate in the annual ASEAN Leaders Programme.

Common Purpose gathers leaders from the ASEAN and the wider region, from all sectors and walks of life, to work together to build strong connections, share knowledge, develop their cultural intelligence required to grow ASEAN’s cities, and secure the future of its people for generations.

In 2018, the programme was conducted in Singapore, and in Jakarta. ASEAN Leaders Programme explored each of these two very diverse cities to learn how its systems, sectors, leaders, and people connect, communicate, innovate, and work to make the city inclusive, and equip citizens to face present and future challenges together. The programme delved into issues brought about by exclusion, conflict and violence at the neighbourhood- and community-level, on social media, and in terms of urban planning, services, and policy, and reflected on possible creative and inclusive solutions.

It was a unique opportunity to learn to work with complexities, to leverage diversity, to foster intuition and curiosity, to learn about new, creative and innovative technologies, and to lead strategically, decisively and compassionately.
Zeina Al Naasan, a former refugee from Syria presents at the Refuge in the City conference. Zeina was resettled in Dunedin and will be commencing doctoral studies at the University of Otago in 2019.

For two days on 6th and 7th November researchers, service providers and former refugees came together to discuss refugee resettlement in Aotearoa New Zealand and explore future directions.

The conference began with stories from former refugees of their experiences, and included speakers sharing knowledge on a range of topics including health, social support and education.

Dr Rachel Rafferty, along with MPCS students Mercy Rezaun and Megan Galloway provided organisation and support to the conference, which was hosted by the Centre for Global Migrations and led by Professor Angela McCarthy. Speakers at the conference included current doctoral student Rula Talahma, our recent graduate Dr Nijmeh Ali, and our research affiliate Dr Najib Lafraie, as well as Dr Rafferty.

The conference was well attended by people working on refugee resettlement in Dunedin and many expressed their appreciation for the interesting range of perspectives among the speakers. Connections made at the conference will be important for making the current resettlement systems more responsive to the complex needs of former refugees, and more effective in empowering them to build a new life in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Rachel's teaching and pastoral skills impressed Master of Peace and Conflict Studies student Abigail Clark.

“I nominated her because I found her teaching style to be supportive and very helpful. She always gave fantastic advice and explained concepts in a way that was easy to understand. When a lot of the students were stressed for one of their papers she held a debrief/distress session for us all, which really helped. When students needed extensions or help on their assignments she was quick to help out. Rachel also holds lots of fun group activities for us to help learn the concepts.”

Another Master of Peace and Conflict Studies student, Rezaun Mercy, has appreciated Rachel's teaching this year.

“Rachel is an incredible teacher who always encourages us to think from different perspectives. We have had highly stimulating discussions in her course where I always felt that my opinions are valued and respected. She encourages us to think deeper into today’s problems and how to solve them. I enjoyed having her as a lecturer, mentor and guide.”

Dr Rachel Rafferty was this year nominated by students for an OUSA Teaching Award.

“I know that all our teaching staff make real efforts to give a good learning experience so I am mindful that I was very fortunate to be nominated,” Rachel said after attending the ceremony.

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A moving commemoration was held on Monday 6 August to mark the 73rd anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.

Organised by a group of students and staff, the commemoration at the Peace Pole on the Museum Reserve included readings and music. The event began dramatically with a performance by the O’Taiko drumming ensemble from the University of Otago. Local musician Michelle Jackson played her own composition on double flute and the Koto Ensemble performed several pieces. A song especially composed for the day by neuroscience student Chen Loung was performed by a community choir.

Particularly special this year was the presence of a delegation of students from Yasuda Girls’ High School who were visiting their sister school in Dunedin at the time. The song performed by the girls gave the ceremony additional poignancy.

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The Centre Manager
peaceandconflict@otago.ac.nz

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