

The New Abnormal



Stirring Up Rumors: Secrets Behind the 2024 SP

Written by Harry Chen

Rumors are flying on stage as the students of the English Department take on Neil Simon’s famous comedic play of the same title for the 2024 Senior Play. Director Ian Chow promises an unforgettable night filled with laughter and surprises through unexpected twists and the talent of the cast.

Seniors present a full production of *Rumors*, taking on roles in directing to props, sound effects to stage lighting. According to the American novelist Harper Lee, “You never really understand a person until you consider

Department News

Stirring Up Rumors: Secrets Behind the 2024 SP..... 1

What Comes Next? The Future of the Menstrual Equity Movement and Events..... 3

Beyond Textbooks: FJCU’s Service-Learning Program at Guo-Tai Elementary School..... 5

Global Connections: Intercultural Communication and Cooperation in English Department..... 8

English Department’s Collaboration with WLFD: Assisting with Worldwide Freedom and Democracy..... 11

things from his point of view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.” The Senior Play tradition is not merely about a play; it is a way for the students to experience the culture of the stage and the literary work personally. By immersing themselves in the characters, students can gain insight into the cross-cultural differences, interactions, and humor.

Rumors, a farcical comedy, Simon’s most popular plays revolving around a group of friends entangled in a series of misunderstandings as they try to maintain their public personas. Speaking about the choice of *Rumors* as the 2024 production, stage manager Annie Chen emphasizes the play’s fast-paced dynamics: “The play challenges not only the cast and crew but also the audience to stay engaged in the events that simultaneously happen on the stage, and the cast has to keep their high energy no matter how chaotic the situation becomes.” Director Ian Chow mentions the importance of lines in *Rumors*: “With *Rumors*, the comedy comes from the lines themselves and how they’re delivered. Even during table readings, the dialogue had us laughing. That’s the real challenge with a play like this — making the

humor land purely through the words and delivery.”

Rumors also highlights how misunderstandings drive characters to unravel as they struggle to uphold appearances. Director Ian Chow states that the production “is all about how far people of higher status will go to cover up a scandal. It’s fascinating—and hilarious—to see how quickly they try to save face or abandon ship when things get messy. The play shines a light on the ugly side of humanity but does it in a way that keeps you laughing.”

Like any production, the preparation for *Rumors* has some challenges. The fast pace of the play demands close management of the set changes, lighting, and sound effects. Director Chow states that, “For a fast-paced play like *Rumors*, timing is everything, making it challenging to perfect the flow and rhythm without everyone present. With only three months to rehearse, memorizing lines and stage directions has been tough, especially for first-time performers. However, the cast’s growth and dedication through practice and patience have been incredibly rewarding.”

One challenge comes from the lighting design. The leader of the lighting group, Steven Liu, says,

“Our biggest challenge was creating the right atmosphere because we had to rely on stage layouts and our imagination before actually stepping into the theater. The first step is always the hardest, and our members have to make time and put extra effort into brainstorming how to put our imagination into reality.”

The set design also faced challenges. The leader of the set design group, Steve Hsieh says, “The biggest challenge was the set design with a second-floor structure. We had to



Rumors rehearsal. Photo by Arianna Lin.

ensure the design fit within our limited budget while communicating with the director to get the size right.” Since the script has only two acts, they do not have to move the props frequently, but they still need to brainstorm a strategy about placing the props and then quickly moving them. Liu and Hsieh both

mention adopting a realistic style, such as minimizing the use of bright colors and flashy special effects, and focus on natural lighting and shadows to create the right atmosphere. “It was a challenge,” says Liu, Hsieh also agreed, “but we understood that if we executed it perfectly, the audience would experience something fresh.”

Rumors is the fruit of the whole team’s collaboration. According to one crew member, “Everyone was incredibly dedicated to their roles. The production requires the effort of everyone involved.” Another says, “We aim to let the audience see the heart and creativity we’ve poured into it. This serves as proof that, no matter how challenging the process, we will persevere until the very last moment.”



Arens Theater. Photo by Harry Chen.

Rumors by Neil Simon will be performed at Arens Performing Arts Center on December 12th, 13th, and 14th.

Scan to read more
about the Senior
Play



What Comes Next? The Future of the Menstrual Equity Movement and Events.

Written by Luna Huang

On Feb. 2nd, 2024, the 23rd student association of English Department started to promote the Menstrual Equity Event. This event included a donation to the menstrual equity non-profit organization WithRed, the menstrual products fund for English department students, free menstrual products for their needs, and a lecture from an obstetrician and gynecologist. The purpose of this event was to diminish the stigma of menstruation and to gain recognition of such an issue. Menstrual equity is a global issue. According to Country of Santa Clara's website, Menstrual Equity refers to equal and overall access to menstrual hygiene products and the right to education about reproductive health. From previous sessions, the events mostly focused on the cohesiveness of students from the English department. This is the first time the student association of the English department has held an event with a specific focus on social issues, and it seems to be a huge success based on the outcomes and feedback of this event. Because of the positive feedback from participants, students of the English department

are eager to know what comes next. As this is the first Menstrual Equality event hosted by English department students and the student association of the English department, Peggy Lee, the vice president of the 23rd student association of the English department, has fully participated in this event. The idea to hold this event is that female students are 70-71% of the student composition of English department, and menstruation is deeply connected to most students' lives. Owing to this circumstance, it is necessary to hold an event that targets the topic of menstruation to gain recognition of the issue. Speaking of the expectation of the next session of the student association of English department, "We faced a problem while preparing for this event. The preparation team for this event has both males and females, and it was hard to have a discussion over the knowledge of menstruation and menstrual products," said Peggy. Because of the different levels of knowledge of menstruation in males and females, Peggy hoped to have an event that could engage both males and females to reinforce the

understanding of menstruation. At the end of the interview, she said, “As a woman, I would say it would be great if we could have more events for menstrual equality in the future. I want this event not only targeted to English department students but also to the College of Foreign Languages and Literatures.”

Though only three members are there in the 24th Student Association of the English department, they have some discussions on the Menstrual Equity event. The interview with Arianna Lin, the vice president of the 24th student association of the English department, talked about their expectations for this event. “We are planning to have this event for the next semester in 2025, and we wish to have more different aspects of this event for both males and females,” said Arianna. Similar to Peggy’s expectation, Arianna said in the interview “I want to encourage more male students to participate in this event because the function of menstruation and the usage of the menstrual products should not be the knowledge that only women need to know.” With this expectation, she talked about the plan for the future which may include lectures to teach males how to use menstrual products and even let them experience the

simulation of menstrual pain.

To further discuss the expectations for the future event, two participants are sharing their thoughts on the Menstrual Equity event. Annie Chen



The donated menstrual products. Photo by Luna Huang.

and Christine Tan, who are both seniors, had donated the money and menstrual products for this event. In the interview, Annie said, “I think this event is meaningful, which helps to debunk the myth of menstruation. I really hope we can have more events like this in the future.” The other interviewer Christine talked about her reflection on this event as well, “What I like the most about this event is the lecture on menstruation, and I think we can get to know the medical aspect from an Obstetrician and Gynecologist, which is the information that we may not know from daily life.” The feedback from the participants is positive, and both of

them hope to have more similar events in the future. To their expectations, both of them indicated in the interview that they wanted this event to expand to the whole foreign language college.

Even though Menstrual Equity is a global challenge, the recognition of this issue in Taiwan is still low. However, there are still a lot of groups working to build menstrual equity environment in FJCU. Not only the English department has a menstrual equity event. Student association of FJCU held the event to diminish menstrual poverty, in which they provided free menstrual products to female students in 2023.

Another example is the department of sociology. They had a lecture with the non-profit organization WithRed which targets menstrual equity to talk about the situation of menstrual poverty and their solutions to the situation in 2023.

To the future expectation, there may be more and more people who recognize this issue and more and more groups to work on diminishing menstrual poverty and improving the menstrual equity environment. In the future, we may have not only the students from English department benefit but also all students in FJCU benefit too.

Beyond Textbooks: FJCU's Service-Learning Program at Guo-Tai Elementary School

Written by Yvonne Wu

Students from the English Language and Literature Department enrolled in Introduction to Teaching English as a Foreign Language in the fall semester of 2024 are required to participate in service-learning and teaching at GuoTai Elementary School, near FuJen Catholic University. FJCU students will teach at GuoTai Elementary School for ten weeks, from the week of October 7, 2024, until the week of December 16, 2024. They will be divided into groups,

with each group responsible for teaching a homeroom class on Tuesday or Wednesday mornings. Additionally, FJCU students must design ten-week teaching plans for their elementary school students. These teaching plans must address specific topics, such as picture book teaching, biographies of notable figures in moral education, or current events.

According to Professor Doris Shih, the service-learning program at Guo-

Tai Elementary School has a long history. Its origins can be traced back to a graduation project in 212, which allowed students to apply what they had learned at GuoTai Elementary School. This project lasted until 2016 and was later transformed into a course-integrated project designed for students to put their specific knowledge and skills into practice. Moreover, service-learning program under the Introduction to TEFL course serves two main purposes. First, it provides students with an opportunity to apply their knowledge of different teaching methods when lecturing or designing teaching plans. Second, it aligns with FJCU's mission to fulfill social responsibility by supporting the communities surrounding its campus.



Learning Service at Guo-tai Elementary School. Photo by Yvonne Wu.

However, Professor Shih noted that she and her students have faced several challenges this semester. The first challenge is related to time management. With numerous teaching methods and theories to cover, it

has been difficult for the professor to teach all the material effectively within a tight schedule while ensuring students fully understand the content. Secondly, in the long history of collaboration with GuoTai Elementary School, students have never fail to complete their teaching responsibilities. Unfortunately, two of students this semester failed to show up for their scheduled teaching sessions without notifying their partners in advance. Professor Shih said this circumstance had never happened in the past twelve years. Consequently, she expressed her frustration and disappointment with her students' actions this semester, leading her to decide to go to Guotai Elementary School to send her apology by providing gifts for the students of her two irresponsible students. Therefore, Professor Shih urges students to take responsibility for themselves, their peers, and the English Department, as they stand for the department while teaching at GuoTai Elementary School.

Furthermore, due to the fact that the Introduction to TEFL collaborates with the Education Center on campus, students who are taking the educational program would also take this course even though they do not major in English. However, since

most students from the Education Center are currently teaching, Professor Shih allowed them to replace the service learning at GuoTai Elementary School with their self-teaching. Nevertheless, this arrangement has made it challenging for the professor to regulate and evaluate their teaching. As many teach off-campus or online, it may also be a bit unfair for the other students who need to wake up in the early morning to teach at Guo-tai Elementary School. From an overall perspective, these three challenges have never happened before in the long history of service-learning at Guo-tai Elementary School, which made Professor Shih feel slightly exhausted. However, she still has a positive vision and anticipation for future service-learning at Guo-tai Elementary School.



Learning Service at Guo-tai Elementary School. Photo by Yvonne Wu.

During this semester, Professor Shih visited GuoTai Elementary School several times and had opportunities to interact with the elementary

students. They shared with her how much they enjoy learning from FJCU teachers and expressed appreciation for the efforts of FJCU students. This feedback made Professor Shih feel proud of her students, who have demonstrated their professionalism and enthusiasm in their teaching roles.



Learning Service at Guo-tai Elementary School. Photo by Yvonne Wu.

She hopes the English Department will continue collaborating with GuoTai Elementary School, strengthening the partnership, and fulfilling its social responsibilities for many years to come. Meanwhile, Professor Shih also considers this service learning as a method to eliminate educational inequality to some degree because for students who are not able to go to cram schools, the lectures of FJCU teachers provide them with opportunities to get in touch with extracurricular English lessons.

Global Connections: Intercultural Communication and Cooperation in the English Department

Written by Rachel Chang

For the past few years, the FuJen Catholic University English Language and Literature Department has been actively promoting cross-cultural communication through innovative courses. This semester, two courses “Cross-Cultural Communication: Global Understanding Project and Intercultural & Flipped Foreign Language Classroom” represent the department’s dedication to fostering intercultural understanding and connecting students with global perspectives without traveling.

These courses align with the mission of using education as a tool for global cooperation, as reflected in President Lan Yizhen’s emphasis on international partnerships and academic initiatives.

Cross-Cultural Communication: Global Understanding Project, led by Dr. Doris Shih, allows students to obtain professional knowledge in cultural studies and communication theories. As part of East Carolina University’s (ECU) Global Academic Initiatives, students apply these concepts through virtual interactions with international peers from Universidad Piloto de Colombia in

Bogota, Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola in Lima, and East Carolina University in North Carolina. Topics in these connections range from daily experiences like college life and food traditions to deeper issues such as gender roles, societal values, and the meaning of life. These connections encourage cultural exploration and personal reflection (Cross-Cultural Communication: GU).

Cynthia Chen, a student in this course, shared her challenges and discoveries collaborating with peers in Colombia and Peru. She initially struggled with understanding diverse English accents, particularly the Colombian one. “In Taiwan, I rarely encounter diverse English accents. I thought listening carefully would help, but we were just talking past each other,” she explained. Despite this, she discovered cultural similarities, such as resemblance between South American night markets and those in Taiwan. Cynthia also faced sensitive topics like the China-Taiwan relationship, sharing her perspective to help her partners understand a Taiwanese viewpoint. Beyond these conversations, the

course boosted her confidence. “After sharing with our partners, their positive feedback helped me appreciate my culture more,” she reflected. Additionally, the experience strengthened her respect and communication skills, “I used to feel anxious when speaking to others who have different English accents, but now I’m better at starting respectful conversations across cultures.”



Cross-Cultural Communication: Global Understanding Project. Photo by Rachel Chang.

These courses align with the mission of using education as a tool for global cooperation, as reflected in President Lan Yizhen’s emphasis on international partnerships and academic initiatives.

Yvonne Wu, the teaching assistant for this course and a former student of this course herself, shared insights into her observation and experience. She noticed a significant change in students’ willingness to communicate over the semester. “At first, students were hesitant to turn on

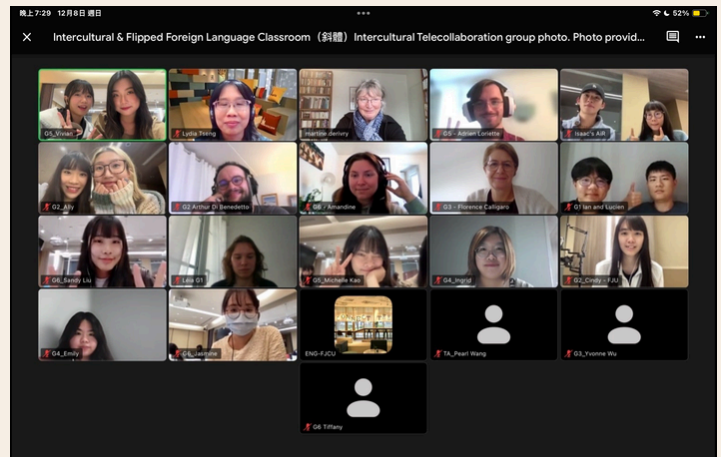
their microphones or interact with peers from other countries. But after a few sessions, they became more eager to speak,” Yvonne explained. She emphasized that the course helped students improve speaking and conversation-extension skills, areas many Taiwanese students struggle with. “By practicing in a supportive environment, students become more comfortable engaging with peers from different cultures,” she concluded. By communicating with peers from diverse cultures in such an environment, students acquire a deeper understanding of their culture while learning to build trust and respect across differences. Intercultural & Flipped Foreign Language Classroom, led by Dr. Lydia Tseng, emphasizes intercultural exchange and interactive learning. A key project is the Intercultural Telecollaboration, where students communicate with peers from the University of Bordeaux, France, and Nanzan University, Japan. Since 2021, students have developed intercultural communication skills through discussions with French peers, and this year, the addition of Nanzan University enriches the experience. Through these telecollaborations, students engage in discussions on shared topics, ex-

changing insights to explore cultural perspectives and communication styles. Collaboration this year centers on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encouraging students to discuss critical global issues, such as climate action, quality education, and social equality.

Josephine Chen, a student enrolled in the course, shared her thoughts on the value of the Intercultural Telecollaboration project. She said how engaging with French students on global issues such as climate change and equality deepened her understanding of different priorities and approaches across cultures. “While discussing the SDGs, I realize how varied each culture’s perspective on environmental issues can be. The French students focused more on policy-driven action, while highlighting grassroots efforts,” Josephine said. One significance of this course for Josephine was the opportunity to collaborate with her partner in ways that facilitated greater cultural understanding. “It taught me to ask questions and share perspectives while maintaining patience and empathy in cross-cultural communication,” she explained.

However, cross-cultural communication is not always straightforward.

Peggy Lee, a participant in the telecollaboration with Japanese students, described the challenges her team faced with communication. “Our Japanese peers were shy at first, so we had to ask specific questions to prompt responses,” she explained. Thus, she learned to adapt her communication style, realizing that effective exchanges required understanding cultural differences. “We discovered that while Taiwan and



Intercultural Telecollaboration group. Photo provided by Ivory Kent.

Japan share cultural similarities, our approaches to tasks can be varied. This course helped me appreciate the importance of flexibility in communication.” Peggy added, “It made me realize that effective communication requires adapting to different styles and expectations” and that empathy is the key to cross-cultural interactions. Through this course, students like Josephine and Peggy not only overcome language and cultural barriers but also develop a greater appreciation for cultural

diversity and the critical role of global cooperation.



Students collaborating with their international peers. Photo provided by Dr. Doris Shih.

These courses demonstrate FJCU's dedication to promoting global citizenship. By enhancing communica-

tion skills, students also cultivate a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity and international cooperation. Through virtual exchanges, students gain valuable insights into their own cultures as well as others, developing important intercultural communication skills that support global efforts toward sustainable development. As education continues to transcend geographical and cultural barriers, initiatives like these play a crucial role in building a more inclusive, cooperative, and forward-thinking global community.

English Department's Collaboration with WLFD: Assisting with Worldwide Freedom and Democracy

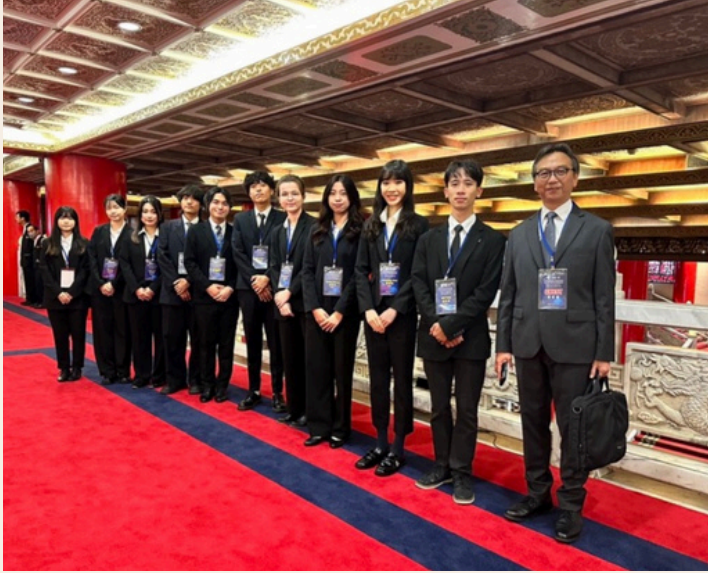
Written by Ally Chan

The World League for Freedom and Democracy (WLFD) held its 2024 World League Conference from October 5 to 9 this year, at the Grand Hotel in Taipei. In collaboration with Fu Jen Catholic University, WLFD provided English Department students with a unique opportunity to assist in hosting international guests. The World League for Freedom and Democracy (WLFD) is a global organization dedicated to advancing human rights, democratic principles, and world peace across international boundaries. Founded on the belief that freedom transcends race,

nationality, religion, occupation, and gender, the WLFD serves as a unifying platform for individuals to promote fundamental human rights and democratic ideals. By bringing together diverse voices from around the world, the WLFD strives to create a more just, peaceful, and democratic global community.

The League conference welcomed distinguished international guests, including members of parliament and representatives from various national chapters of WLFD. The program aimed to recruit enthusiastic, English-proficient students to

assist in welcoming international guests, offering students valuable real English communication practice, enhancing their language skills and intercultural understanding.



Working staffs. Photo provided by Ally Chan.

Only ten students were selected for receptionist roles. These students received complimentary professional etiquette training sessions to help them prepare for responsibilities as hosts. However, WLF D and the university allowed other interested students to attend as observers to provide more learning opportunities. This allowed these students to gain insights into interpretation and international event management.

One participating student reflected, "The WLF D General Conference was an eye-opening experience that allowed me to engage with international diplomacy and witness the complexities of conference organization. Being as a receptionist during the event enabled me to

observe key aspects of event coordination, guest management, and interpretation services."

Another student shared deeper professional insights: "I decided to explore interpreting as a career option. I understand that becoming a successful part-time interpreter will require a balance of language expertise, preparation, adaptability, and strong communication skills. My experience at the WLF D General Conference has given me a clearer sense of the challenges I will face and the areas where I need to grow."

A third student noted, "Attending the WLF D General Conference as a student is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I had the privilege of being part of the working staff, which allowed me to gain invaluable experience. Throughout the event, I not only learned more about what a global conference would be like but also strengthened my teamwork and interpersonal skills."

Dr. Doris Chang, the professor overseeing the collaboration, stated, "I'm really proud of our students who joined the escort interpretation team because they learned international etiquette in very limited time," noting that, "They mastered the arts of escort interpreting, and they were really responsible."

For future collaborations, Dr. Chang explained that, “As the instructor, my reflection is whether I should continue such joint projects.”

Any decision to continue such collaborations hinges on the broader educational value, with Dr. Chang stating, “I want to ensure the whole class can eventually benefit from the opportunity.” The collaboration between Fu Jen Catholic University and the World League for Freedom and Democracy represents a remarkable educational initiative that bridges academic learning with real-world professional experience.

This partnership not only enhances language and communication skills but also offers invaluable insights into international diplomacy, conference management, and skilled interpretation. While educational institutions continue to search for innovative ways to prepare students for global careers, such initiatives demonstrate the transformative power of experiential learning, enabling students to develop critical skills, expand their professional horizons, and gain a deeper understanding of international professional environments.

Campus News



Photo source by [fjcu 99th anniversary's official page](#)

Fu Jen Catholic University Celebrates 99 Years of History and Leadership in Education

Written by Ian Su

Nearing 100 years of leadership in education and community building, FJCU adapting its core values from Beijing, China to Taiwan continues a long-standing tradition of fostering students and teachers in the mission of the growth of the whole person through social welfare, sustainability,

and promotion of genuine knowledge.

Established in 1925, Fu Jen Catholic University (FJCU) was seen by those Catholics as an educational field connecting Chinese traditional culture and the whole world. Opposed and closed under the rule

of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), FJCU was reestablished in 1961 in Taiwan and continued its legacies in various domains based on the core values of “Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Holiness” for the local Taiwanese as well as international students.

“Menstrual Equity Movement in the College of Foreign Languages,” led by the Department of English Language and Literature 23rd Student Association (SA), held in March, served as one of FJCU’s milestones in ensuring students’ social welfare. Because the English Department’s education focuses on “goodness,” one of the core values of the university, equipping students with the social responsibility of advocating for people’s goodness, Prof. Tammy Huei-lien Hsu noted that “the English Dept. has nurtured countless distinguished alumni who have made contributions both nationally and internationally.” Moreover, Pres. Yi-chen Lan stated that “over the years, the English Dept. has evolved according to the changes in the globalized world” and through such programs as the Menstrual Equity Movement “that the English Dept. can continue to shine among her peers in Taiwan and enhance the reputation of the University.” The SA

of the English Department successfully raised public awareness of menstruation-related issues through lectures and a series of social media posts. The SA raised more than \$4,000 NTD and used \$3,600 NTD to buy menstrual necessities for students in need with the rest of the money going to With Red to continue future endeavors. The 24th SA pledg-



FJCUENG Student Association hosting the Menstrual Equity related Events. Photo by Ian Su.

Campus News

Fu Jen Catholic University Celebrates 99 Years of History and Leadership in Education	14
A Tradition of Fun and Festivity: Holiday Decor at FJCU Dormitories	16
Bridging the Gap: FJU Grassroots Service Club Inspires Rural Children Through Education.....	18
FJCU English Department Students on Exchange in the US and Germany.....	20
FJCU’s 4th Green Market: A Celebration of Sustainability and Community Impact	22

ed to continue the movement as Menstrual Equity Movement Plus, aiming to establish a more inclusive environment to discuss menstruation-related issues.

From May 13 to 14, 2024, FJCU curated an anniversary exhibition on its dedication to special education as part of “10-year Special Education, 99-year of FJCU” celebration. The exhibition includes interactive activities for audiences to experience the lives of students having difficulties in learning. Being invited to the exhibition, Mei-tseng Lin, the commissioner of the Social Welfare Department, New Taipei City Government, praises that FJCU has been valuing students having difficulties in education so much. It provides them proper education resources and feasible assistance, thoroughly implementing the vision of special education.

As for the “FJCU President’s Historical Cycling Challenge, 99-year of FJCU,” President Yi-Chen Lan comp-

leted his challenge accompanied by the school faculty and alumni throughout Taiwan, implying the unity of the school. In addition, the cycling team raised individuals’ awareness of environmental sustainability through tree planting and beaches cleaning up over Taiwan. After his completion, Yi-Chen Lan President praises that —it’s the historical success of FJCU, and we’ll continue doing it in the face of a century of FJCU’s establishment, an unshakable milestone for us.

At the moment of celebration, Prof. Tammy Huei-lien Hsu expresses that “It’s amazing to see the university thrive for nearly a century. Here’s to a bright future and more milestones ahead! the English Dept. has nurtured countless distinguished alumni who have made contributions both nationally and internationally.”

Scan to Read
More about the
Annivesary Events



A Tradition of Fun and Festivity: Holiday Decor at FJCU Dormitories

Written by Christopher Chiu

As the holiday season approaches, dormitories across campus are lighting up with creativity and cheer. Students from each dorm have come together to turn ordinary living

spaces into dazzling displays of holiday spirit. From sparkling string lights to quirky handmade ornaments, the decorations brighten the halls and foster community and

and joy. We will focus on the HPSE Dorm, one of the many dorms on campus, and their decorations.

The Kickoff: A Decorating Tradition

The HPSE Dorm, a cornerstone of campus life, has stood proudly for 40 years. Over the decades, it has grown not just as a place of residence but also as a community filled with meaningful traditions. One such tradition is the annual Christmas decoration event, which has become synonymous with the dorm's identity.

Manager Chang, who has overseen the dorm for several years, shared the story behind this cherished custom. "The tradition of Christmas decorations predates my time here," he explained. "Since Fu Jen University is a Catholic institution, this event naturally aligns with the campus' atmosphere offering a way to celebrate the season while embracing the university's heritage." These decorations have since become a hallmark of the HPSE Dorm, cherished by both current students and alumni as a symbol of togetherness and holiday cheer.

What makes this tradition particularly special is the creativity and innovation poured into it each year. Every Christmas, the decorations follow a unique theme, designed to captivate

and inspire both residents and visitors. Last year's theme, "Crayon Shin-chan and the Magical Christmas Journey," brought a touch of childhood nostalgia to the holiday season. Meanwhile, the 111th academic year took a wintry turn with the theme "Frozen," transforming the dormitory into a magical snow-covered wonderland. These themes aren't chosen randomly—they are a reflection of the vibrant ideas and imaginative spirit of the student leaders. Each new cohort brings fresh perspectives, ensuring that no two years look alike, and the decorations remain a highlight of campus life.

Behind the scenes, the preparation process is just as rewarding as the final product. The event is a collaborative effort that brings the entire team of student leaders together, fostering camaraderie and a shared sense of purpose. The process begins with the division of responsibilities, as leaders allocate tasks for the academic year. These responsibilities are then broken down further into manageable steps to ensure everything is executed efficiently. From brainstorming creative concepts to meticulously crafting props and setting up the final displays, every step is an opportunity for students to develop essen-

tial skills, such as teamwork, project management, and problem-solving. This tradition isn't just about decorations—it's a learning experience, a bonding exercise, and a celebration of the collective spirit that makes the HPSE Dorm a truly special place to live.

Staff Member's Reaction

From designing the initial concept to completing the final product, the dorm cadres meticulously hand-crafted every detail of the decorations—showcasing the cadres' creativity and commitment.

These students devote their time and effort to enhancing their fellow residents' living experiences. Chuang Chenglin, a cadre with two years of experience, shares insights into the process: "It's a challenge to brainstorm and visualize the entire setup, and it's even harder to turn our vision into reality." Despite the difficulties, the result is always impressive.

Sometimes the projects involve crafting small yet intricate items, such as



Crayon Shin-chan and the Magical Christmas Journey, photo taken by Christopher Chiu.



Christmas in 2022, photo taken by Christopher Chiu

a snowman made from a foam sponge carefully hung on the Christmas tree. Other times, the work extends to large-scale installations, including sleds, fireplaces, reindeer, and even a full-scale stable. "These projects are incredibly time-consuming," Chuang admits, "but when everything is in place, the props are arranged, and the lights are plugged in and lit up, the magical sight makes all the effort worthwhile." The finished display is a testament to the hard work and ingenuity of the student team, bringing festive cheer to all who see it.

Residents' Opinions

The HPSE Dorm's Christmas decorations are renowned for being the largest and most elaborate among all the dormitories on campus. The vibrant displays fill the dormitory grounds with the warmth of the holiday spirit, delighting both residents and visitors alike. Wu Yu-Sheng, a long-time resident of the HPSE Dorm, expresses his pride in the dorm's creativity. "I've been amazed by these decorations since my first year at university. They're not

just beautiful; they also reflect our dorm community's unique character and dedication." In every way, the dorm's holiday decorations have become a cherished tradition, one that fosters a sense of belonging and pride among residents while adding a

festive joy to the campus. As the years go by, this tradition continues to play a significant role in making the HPSE Dorm a vibrant and welcoming place, especially during the joyous Christmas season.

FJCU English Department Students on Exchange in the US and Germany

Written by Vincent Suselo

This semester, several students from Fu Jen Catholic University's English Department have participated in an exchange program or dual degree program in foreign countries. This article explores their experiences in their host country and university.

Three students from the English Department have successfully enrolled in FJU's dual degree program with Germany's University of Bayreuth, completing their final undergraduate year there. The University of Bayreuth is considered one of the world's best universities; according to the QS World University Rankings 2024, it is ranked 509th in the world and 31st in Germany.

For comparison, Fu Jen Catholic University is ranked 1201-1400th globally. Having moved across the world to study in a foreign country, these students earned the privilege of being admitted to the dual degree program, which is no easy feat. They had to prove their

proficiency in the German language, and maintain high grades during their time in FJU.

Another exchange student is Felicia, who is on a one-semester exchange program at Temple University in Philadelphia, United States. Temple University, categorized as an R1 research institution holds high prestige in the United States for its extensive research activities. It is also ranked 721-730th globally by QS World University Rankings 2024, and 111th in the US. These four students have kindly taken their time to share their insights and experiences through a series of questions.

To begin, all four students shared that the class environment in both Germany and the United States is drastically different from Taiwan. In Germany, the teachers encourage all students to express their thoughts and opinions during class, even if they do not know the correct answer. According to one student, "it's about

process of learning and exchanging ideas.” Similarly, Felicia shared that regardless of how difficult or boring a class might be, students in the United States “frequently raise their



Temple university

hands to ask questions or respond to their classmates.” In Taiwanese classes, high school and university, it is common for the classroom to be quiet with the exception of the teacher. Taiwanese students are generally expected to sit quietly and absorb the teacher’s lecture. However, in the University of Bayreuth, students are at least expected to have read up on the class material beforehand, and share their thoughts and discuss with their peers during class time. The students have also shared several culture shocks they encountered during their time. In Germany, there is the concept of “Lüften,” which means “to air out.” No matter how hot or cold it is outside, or if the heaters are on

many Germans habitually open the window for 15-20 minutes every 2-3 hours to let fresh air in. One student shared how they found that Germans don’t usually power nap in the library. Power napping is very common in Taiwan, so much so that high schools often dedicate one hour to napping. However, one of our classmates resorted to drinking coffee or taking a walk instead to refresh their brain. In the United States, Felicia was initially shocked that most people she met were kind to each other. They are not shy about complimenting each other, and they often end their conversations with “have a good one” or “have a nice day” even with people they don’t know well.

One of the questions the students were asked was if their experience



Campus of temple university

abroad had “rewired” their brain in any way. One said that they started to “view this world from different perspectives and have the capacity to be more inclusive and diverse.” This

is because they met and made friends with people from different cultures all around the world, and their previous knowledge about them was “reshaped”.

FJU offers extensive study abroad opportunities through its network of partner institutions worldwide. According to TaiwanHot.net, FJU has around 500 sister institutions globally, ranking third in Taiwan only behind National Taiwan University and National Cheng Chi University. One partner institution is the University of Notre Dame Australia,

which recently celebrated its 20th year partnership with FJU. According to The Record, this will “increase opportunities for exchange programs and international research collaborations.” Other universities in Taiwan are also sending more of their students abroad for exchange programs. For example, Chung Yuan Christian University has enrolled 24 students at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee as part of their dual degree master’s program in various engineering fields.

Fu Jen University’s 4th Green Market: A Celebration of Sustainability and Community Impact

Written by Paco Wong

As sustainability becomes a pressing global priority, eco-conscious living becomes more accessible through its 4th Green Market, themed “Let Green Lead”. Scheduled on December 10 to 13, 2024, this event will transform Fenghua Plaza into an area bustling with environmentally friendly practices and products that inspire students, faculty, and local community members to live a more green lifestyle.

With estimated 300 to 500 visitors per day, the Green Market has become a unique event on campus, contributing to the university efforts to promote sustainability and serving

as a platform for dialogue and action. The market aims to create an impact beyond its four-day run by focusing on vegetarianism and eco-conscious brand.

A Market With Purpose

One of the key highlights of the event is its vendors – local businesses and advocates of sustainability. They offer a range of products, from vegetarian food and plant-based drinks to dried flowers and other eco-friendly crafts. The vendors are required to follow the sustainability mission of the market, ensuring that each outstanding product or service reflects the ideology of environmental consciousness.

“It’s not just a place to sell things,” said Ms. Chen, a vendor who runs a plant-based drink stand. “It’s a platform to show people who may not consider sustainability in their daily lives that there is a part of the market taking sustainability very seriously.” She added, “Selling drinks is secondary. It’s worth it to have the conversation about why small choices like scooping up plant-based options matter.”

Ms. Chen’s enthusiasm embodies the broader vision of the Green Market: motivate change through interaction and teaching. For her, the event is not only about sales, but about connecting with a younger, engaged audience—someone who might bring these ideas forward into the future.

This interactive approach to sustainability is especially influential for students. A sophomore student Alex Tsai says, “I came to the Green Market last year out of curiosity but feeling inspired. I didn’t realize how simple it was to make it a habit to pack a personal container or try vegetarian meals. Mindfulness isn’t about being perfect; it’s about being mindful.”

Several students also agree with this statement, praising the market as a driver of personal growth. “It’s a market, but it’s also a reminder of what’s at stake, says a Junior student, Vivian Lin. “The best part is that it’s

fun! It doesn’t feel like a lecture on the environment — it feels like a celebration of what we can do to change it.”

A Community of Change

Moreover, the market unites the vendors, students, and visitors in the community, for a common cause. Small business vendors, like Ms. Chen, appreciate opportunities to network with other small businesses while learning how to become more sustainable themselves. In turn, students are exposed to real practical examples of how businesses can work with an eco-friendly concept.

Dried flower vendor Mr. Huang tries to turn floral waste into new products. “We have a lot of waste in the flower industry and most people don’t realize that,” then he explained. “Events like this help me raise awareness and show people that beauty and sustainability can go hand in hand.” These conversations are eye-opening for students. “Talking to the vendors gives me different perspectives, I’ve heard about sustainability, but seeing it in action, like how dried flowers can be repurposed is inspiring.” Alex Tsai said.

A Lasting Impression

The Green Market is able to gather a variety of different vendors and make it an entertaining place for participants. After the event, many students and visitors take these lessons practically:

buying consciously, adopting greener habits, or just being more conscious about how they may affect the planet.

“These small, collective steps do make differences,” Mr. Huang said. “This market shows people that you are not alone when making changes. We can do that. Together, we can build a better future.” The growing scope of Fu Jen University’s Green Market is a timely reminder that sustainability is

just as much about steps taken in the present as promises made about the future. By bringing communities together through education and shared commitment to the planet, this event shows us how community-driven initiatives can be catalytic. Sustainability doesn’t have to be a daunting challenge. As the Green Market proves, it can be a vibrant and enjoyable journey: one choice at a time.

Bridging the Gap: FJU Grassroots Service Club Inspires Rural Children Through Education

Written by Max Tseng

While most students in Taiwan spend school breaks recharging at home or hanging out with friends, FJU Grassroots Service Club dedicates itself to protecting rural children’s right to education. For years, the club has been committed to rural teaching in several countries in Taiwan, bringing happiness and inspiration to those who are the hope of the next generation. Months of meticulous planning go into each camp, as members enthusiastically design programs that combine fun and education to create memorable experiences. “Since I met a lot of people in school who helped me, I want to pass down this love and return it,” explains Edward Chang, the former President of FJU Grassroots Service Club. “We want these children to

have fun during the camp, and we aim to connect the children with us since this service is people-oriented.” Rural communities in Taiwan often lack access to resources, extracurricular activities, and life-skills training; also, the shortage of teachers makes it difficult for students in these areas to broaden their horizons. The FJU Grassroots Service Club recognized the gap and decided to make it practical. The club organizes camps with themes that spark curiosity and creativity, focusing on teamwork, brainstorming, and interactive lessons, which may not be accessible in regular courses. The primary objective of these camps is to bridge the education gap by inspiring a love for learning and building self-confidence among children. Each

camp is tailored to meet the specific needs of local children, and the club members will design various programs to engage them interactively.



The first meeting between Vivian and the child, photo by Max Tseng.

“Our camps are designed around a central theme, with activities such as acting and outdoor games built around it,” says Vivian Lin, a FJU Grassroots Service Club member.

For instance, the summer camp theme this year was Crayon Shinchan, which aimed to let children understand the origin of life, the age of dinosaurs, and the birth of human civilization. Games were also designed to encourage students to speak up and express themselves. These topics can let them explore the world of science and history, and inspire their love for learning.

The camp typically spans ten days including six preparation days and four camp days. In the preparation stage, members will simulate the real situation to prevent emergencies. Moreover, they will review the whole

process at night to determine which activity can be improved and often stay up until three in the morning. Members often revise plans multiple times to ensure activities are perfect for every student’s situation. After officially being on board and meeting all the students, the club members will start the tiring but meaningful journey from eight in the morning to four in the afternoon for four consecutive days. One particularly memorable activity was theatre time, where children learned to distinguish between right and wrong actions. “When seeing their happy faces, all the hard work paid off,” says Lin. “It gives me the sense of achievement that makes me believe my existence in this club.”

For the club, the camps are about more than helping others—they are an opportunity to connect with the local community and personal growth. “Through these camps, I realized that my efforts can truly make a difference in the lives of others, and that’s where I discovered a genuine sense of fulfillment,” says Vivian Lin. There is always awkwardness between the kids and the members on the first day but the interaction on the last day won’t lie. “They hugged us, cried, and told us how much they’d miss us,” she says. “It was in those moments I under-

stood the impact we had on them; it's not just about teaching or playing games—it's about showing them they are cared for."

When the club members returned to those schools the following year, students expressed how much they missed them. It was the time when they found out the connection between the club and the kids was inseparable.

Of course, holding camps is not child's play, and there must be numerous challenges in the middle of the activities. It includes some members who were not good at acting at first, but Edward decided to take a proactive approach as a leader. "I just



Teaching children about environmental protection through acting, photo by Max Tseng

had a conversation with them and told them that it is okay to relax and open up more. Watching them grow is impressive."

On the other hand, there were issues with the students; for example, some kids turned out to be isolated from others when activities were carried out, and members had to take the first step by asking them to join. "If a

kid was being left out, I would ask them to join no matter which squad he or she is," recalls Vivian Lin.

As the FJU Grassroots Service Club continues its mission, the impact of their work grows. "We hope our service can impact various children and they can give back to society when they grow up," says Edward.

This can be recognized as a cycle of goodness, and there was a senior who participated in the camps due to the help when he was little, which demonstrated he did not indulge in empty talk. The club aims to keep the spirit of service alive in the years to come. "It is wonderful when a group of people work together towards the same goal, and we can create memories for kids," says Vivian Lin.



Playing a game to deepen the understanding of each other. Photo by Max Tseng.

Scan to Read
More about
the Program

