



May 19, 2016

Dear Friends of DRBU,

The campus of Dharma Realm Buddhist University is abuzz with excitement about the many successes of the past year and enthusiasm for continuing forward. There is much to share, and we are delighted to have the opportunity to update you on our plans for the future.

This summer marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of DRBU by the late Venerable Master Hsuan Hua in 1976. Since its inception, DRBU's efforts have been dedicated to carrying out Master Hua's vision of a university where people can receive a transformative education in the broad Buddhist tradition while living in a contemplative and peaceful environment. We will celebrate this anniversary with a series of events commemorating our founding and honoring the dedication and contribution of all who have brought us to where we are today.

The two new programs that launched in the fall of 2014—a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and a Master of Arts in Buddhist Classics—are now in full swing. Both programs have an all-required, sequentially built curriculum, realized through close reading of primary texts, a discussion-driven pedagogy of “shared inquiry” in the classroom, and an emphasis on writing. Our unique variation of the “Great Books” model integrates classics from both East and West into the BA program and supplements the MA program's core focus on classical Buddhist texts with perspectives in Western philosophy. The programs are designed both to convey knowledge and to activate the inherent wisdom we believe all individuals possess. Learning at DRBU is interactive and deeply self-reflective. We not only educate students, we empower them to realize their potential, to engage in lifelong transformation, and to become free to pursue the highest goals of human existence.

In May 2015, DRBU graduated its first cohort to receive the MA in Buddhist Classics. In the fall of 2015, we were proud to hold a convocation welcoming the MA cohort of 2017 and the BA cohort of 2019. Another celebration is in store when, on May 27, 2016, DRBU graduates its second MA cohort.

One of DRBU's aspirations is to reach out to and connect with local and larger communities. The Sudhana Center, acquired in June 2015, is a major step toward realizing this goal. Situated in downtown Ukiah, this five-acre campus will serve to house DRBU students and faculty, and to host practice sessions and other events for DRBU students, faculty, and staff, as well as people from the Ukiah community and beyond. Indeed, much of this has already begun. There is a weekly Sunday evening meditation class, led by monastics from CTTB, which many Ukiah residents attend. Professor Martin Verhoeven is leading a taiji class for students, faculty, and staff. Plans are currently underway for the very first summer session, to be led by Dharma Master Chih and Professor Doug Powers. We are off to a great start and look forward to many more successful events in the future.

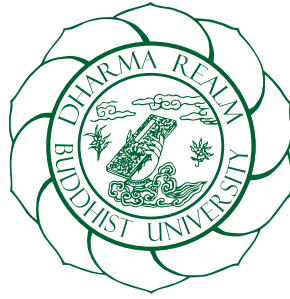


Perhaps the biggest news to share is our progress toward attaining accreditation with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Over five years ago, DRBU conducted a self-study to reaffirm our mission and refine our approach. This spring marked the culmination of years of preparation to apply for Initial Accreditation with WASC. The University's self-review was submitted to the commission in January and in March the review team came to campus for the site visit. While the official results will not come out until late June, the immediate response from the review team was overwhelmingly positive. The team was moved by the integrity of the University, our unique educational model, and our sincere and dedicated students, faculty, and staff.

Plans for renovating the future home of DRBU, a long time in the works, are reaching an exciting moment in time. The University is growing fast and surpassing the capacity of our current building; the time has come to expand into a larger facility on the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB) campus—one designated for DRBU by our founder. We are pleased to announce that renovation will begin this summer. The first phase, to be completed by November 2016, will renovate the 27,700-square-foot south wing of the complex to provide classrooms, offices, study spaces, a Chan hall, and more. DRBU is collaborating with a Bay Area architecture firm renowned for specializing in adaptive reuse and sustainable design. The designs for this project are beautifully rendered to reveal the character and potential of the building, echoing in architectural terms the mission of DRBU to unlock the potential of students' inherent wisdom.

Last spring, the first phase of renovation of the women's dormitory was completed. This project converted an existing building on campus into a comfortable and up-to-date residential space for women. In addition to 15 individual rooms, the dorm is replete with a large common area, computer lab, contemplation room, study, tea room, shower room, and restrooms. The common spaces provide opportunities for study sessions, unwinding with friends, and even yoga classes. There is ample space for exercise, and students have been taking advantage of this, balancing their studies with workouts. The feedback from students on their living environment has been very positive. The dormitory has become a space that students not only call home, but also a place to build community. When the building is complete, it will house 76 students.

The DRBU Board of Trustees has elected and welcomed several new, highly qualified members this year. These new trustees strengthen the Board with their collective background and expertise in higher education, law, community advocacy, board governance, and nonprofit entrepreneurship. They include an attorney and co-founder of a Silicon Valley law firm; a co-founder of a successful, all-volunteer-run organization that inspires generosity-driven social change through technology; a former president of National Taipei University; a retired attorney who founded The Chinese-American International School and other educational organizations, in addition to serving on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors; and a founding member of DRBU and former chancellor and professor. We are proud to have each of them with us and look forward to working together to advance the University's mission.



We invite you to explore our new [website](#), launched last fall. The site is regularly updated to capture and convey the many aspects of life at DRBU, from academics to student activities. More than simply informative, the new website provides a dynamic snapshot of life on campus with articles, photos, and videos.

This year also saw an increase in the number of co-curricular events on campus, greatly enriching the experience of students, faculty, and staff, as well as the greater Ukiah community. The five-week Forum on Ethics and the Environment, planned by a group of students and staff, was an engaging series of lectures and conversations with both local scientists and members of the DRBU community. We have had the honor of hosting several distinguished speakers, including Dr. Shrikant Bahulkar from the University of Pune, who spoke on Buddhist narrative literature; Dr. Osmund Bopearachchi from UC Berkeley, whose lecture "The Life of Gautama Buddha as Depicted in Ancient Indian Art" was brought to life with an excellent slideshow; and Ajahn Pasanno, renowned abbot of Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery, who discussed the practices of *metta*, *samatha*, and *vipassana* with eloquence.

One of our goals at this time is to increase enrollment. As we continue to develop and improve our facilities, and as we expand our outreach through the use of social media and other strategies, we know that we will continue to attract dedicated and inspired students. As always, DRBU remains committed to supporting the enrollment of all accepted students with financial aid that is solely need-based. Through our Service Scholarships and University Grants, we work with each student to develop a financial aid package customized to meet their needs.

It goes without saying that none of this would be possible without the dedicated hard work and generosity of many people. We are extremely grateful for all of the support that has brought us to this point. If you would like to be involved in this great endeavor, there are many ways to help DRBU thrive. Share our story, join an event, or visit our [website](#) for information on [ways to give](#). Better yet, visit our campus anytime you find yourself in northern California. You are always welcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Heng Chih".

Bhikshuni Heng Chih, Ph.D.
Chair, Board of Trustees

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susan Rounds".

Susan A. Rounds, Ph.D.
President