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Achieving Change Together

December 2019 ClassACTions

BBLP Fellow Update

We are delighted to share reports about two of our Benazir Bhutto Leadership Program Fellows.



On Friday, November 1, 2019, approximately 30 classmates and friends gathered at the Harvard Faculty Club for a welcoming reception for our third Benazir Bhutto Leadership Program fellow, **Nadia Rehman** of Pakistan. After a short time for socializing, ClassACT chairperson **Marion Dry** called the group together to formally introduce Nadia and asked classmate **Leigh Hafrey** to conduct an interview that would help those in attendance understand more about her background, philosophy, passions and plans for the future.

In her opening remarks, Nadia expressed her gratitude to ClassACT, her admiration for Benazir Bhutto and the sense of responsibility she felt to carry on the work of our classmate. “Benazir was a mother like I am, but she never stopped. My seven-year-old daughter is in Pakistan right now and I miss her terribly, but the sacrifice has to be worth it.” A strong advocate for increased opportunity for women and other minorities, Nadia is determined to make a difference to people throughout Pakistan and the world.

During the course of the interview and the Q-and-A period afterward, Nadia

articulated, through examples of her international work on trade policy, that in addition to creating jobs at home, “economic interdependence” is a major step on the path to peace between countries in conflict. Nadia also spoke of her strong belief that cultivating friendships and networks among people across borders, ethnicities and cultures is extremely important in accomplishing positive international policies. “It is not the same as formal dialogue,” she said, but it is often more effective in influencing policy makers.



Leigh Hafrey and Nadia Rehman

True to this belief, Nadia has already become well known in Cambridge. She has been elected president of two organizations--the Harvard Pakistani Student Group and the Harvard Kennedy School South Asia Engagement Group. On December 4, under her leadership, those two organizations collaborated with the HKS India and Pakistan Caucus and the Harvard Sikh Student Association to cohost a solidarity event celebrating the opening of the Kartharpur corridor by Pakistan to Sikh pilgrims traveling from India to commemorate the birth of their founder, Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The event acknowledged the creation of the peace corridor as an example of how the two countries, despite conflict, can find opportunities to cooperate to improve the lives of their peoples.

During her year in Cambridge, Nadia will be studying industrial policy under Ricardo Housman, Professor of the Practice of Economic Development at the Kennedy School, as well as developing a network of people to advocate for peace which she hopes “will outlast” her stay.



Natasha Jehangir-Khan

Meanwhile, former fellow **Natasha Jehangir Khan** is back in Islamabad, Pakistan where she is working on an Asian Development Bank project on reforming the capital market infrastructure of the country. Natasha recently had an exploratory meeting with the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister.

SPOTLIGHT!

Tom Cooper Shores up Media Ethics

Fake News may have met its match in Tom Cooper.



Since 1983 Cooper has been a professor in the Visual and Media Arts department at Emerson College. The author or co-author of seven books, Cooper is an expert on media ethics. In 2017, he was approached by the United Nations to be among an international panel devising educational programs on this topic and others. The result is Education for Justice (E4J), which now presents online “modules” for use in classrooms worldwide.

“The United Nations is seeking to find more people who can share their talents and in this case their ethical training with people around the world who often don’t have the resources or maybe the political ability or the awareness that ethics instruction even exists,” says Cooper. “The U.N. is reaching out not only at the university level but—and this is very heartening to me—at the high school and even at the elementary level as well. So as with ClassAct, there’s some outreach, some new ground and some support for people of integrity, wherever they are.”

Cooper explains that the courses have two audiences. “One is teachers themselves,” he says. “Now there is online a universal curriculum that can be customized. The second is, all those young people who have some kind of longing for a better world but don’t know how to go about achieving it. They can learn a plan of moral reasoning.”

The E4J courses deal with many aspects of the craft of journalism, among them accuracy, objectivity and transparency. In an era when media are in flux and under attack, ethics are often the first casualty, for many reasons. “One is speedup,” says Cooper, noting the way newsroom staffs have thinned even while reporters and editors are now responsible not only for the print stories but also for fast-breaking online items. “And one of the victims of speedup is ethical decisionmaking. People don’t take the time to verify sources and think things through.”

What are the program’s main precepts? “You have to open both your mind and your heart in ethical decision-making,” says Cooper. “A closed mind is usually prejudging. A closed heart may not be able to empathize with all of the the innocent people in a situation. You have to be able to put yourself in the shoes of all parties. Don’t go in with an assumed verdict.”

In all his ethics instruction, Cooper looks for what he refers to as “green-light ethics.” These can be embodied in “moral exemplars...Mandela or Gandhi or Mother Theresa, from whom you can learn a positive approach to ethics. So by virtue of that, the book that I have coming out next is called *Doing the Right Thing*. It goes back in history to find 12 moral exemplars who had very difficult ethical decisions to make who nevertheless rose to the occasion and managed to make a decision that changed the world. And the most recent of those is Malala. She’s the final chapter and one of the green-light models I hold up to my students, because she’s the same age as they are. Our own attention in ClassAct to Malala comes for different reasons by virtue of Pinkie Bhutto, whom I barely knew but greatly respected. And here we are, finding her to be important to our work.”

Health Matters

Jonathan Sprague, co-founder and co-chair, has announced that ClassActHR73 1.) has identified 240 classmates who have had professional backgrounds in healthcare or other health-related areas; 2.) formed a small workgroup to discuss how to engage classmates interested in these topics; 3.) plans on a survey, early next year, of these classmates and then a broader discussion with all interested classmates; and 4.) begun exploration of various topics such as volunteer work with underserved populations nationally and internationally and physician burnout. The plan is to hold one or more regional gatherings of classmates to discuss health issues. Any classmate interested in being part of the discussions can contact **Jonathan** to get involved.



A note from **Ron Dieckmann**, M.D., president and founder of KidsCareEverywhere, whose mission is to transform pediatric care in under-resourced communities with medical software: “I really appreciate the ClassACT introduction to our classmate **Jono Quick**. Jono provided the contact to a prior associate of his from the World Health Organization who is a major physician leader in Ghana, Dr. David Ofori-Agjei. David has served as dean of the major med school in Accra and as president of the national physician organization. He is definitely a dynamo and together we have planned an extensive collaboration between KidsCareEverywhere and the medical community in Ghana to distribute software widely throughout the country.

“Our goal is to take our medical software to two of the three med schools in Ghana, and develop a train-the-trainer program to allow them to assume ownership of the program. Because the med education system is drastically under-resourced in Ghana, David believes the software may have a significant impact on patient care and self-education for physicians at all stages of training.

“After about ten prior difficult missions in Africa, I am extremely cognizant of the difficulties of managing a sustainable training effort on that continent. But based on the leadership efforts coming from David, the Accra med school, and the national physician group, I think this is the best opportunity we have had to succeed in Africa.”

Save the Dates!

Mark your calendars for two major ClassACT get-togethers in 2020.



May 16-18, NYC: ClassACT/JusticeAid weekend. Join us in New York for a weekend focussed on Voter Education, featuring a public forum on May 17 and a concert on May 18.

July 10-12, Dayton and Cincinnati, Ohio. Think baseball, strengthening community and human rights.

More details to come on both events in the New Year.

Coming in January: Voter & Civic Engagement Initiative

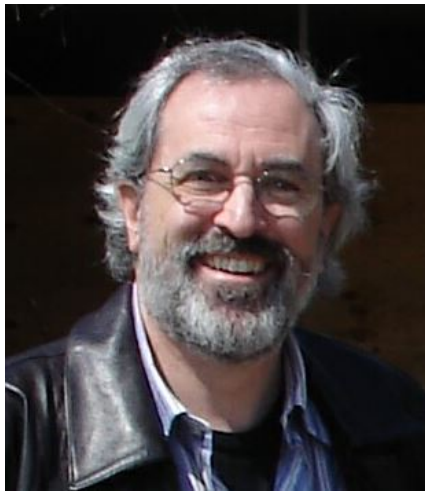


Are you concerned with the lack of civic engagement in this country, especially among America's youth? With the paltry percentage of American citizens who show up at the polls and vote on Election Day? With voter suppression? In January, ClassACT will launch its Voter & Civic Engagement Initiative, with ways for classmates to have impact. Look for our January ClassACT Bulletin, which will highlight programs of ClassACT and ClassACT's Sustained Collaboration JusticeAid, and include a survey to solicit classmate interest, involvement and action. Interested in helping with this? Contact **Therese Steiner** to get involved!

Kudos...

...to ClassACT board member **Leigh Hafrey**, who has been awarded the Ideas Worth Teaching Award by the Aspen Institute for his MIT course titled “Bridging American Divides: Work, Community and Culture.”

[Click here for more information](#)



...to ClassACT Bridge Project Roots of Music, sponsored by board member **Rick Weil**, which has been named one of ten finalists for the Lewis Prize for Music. Roots of Music provides free year-round music education, academic tutoring, and mentorship for youths ages 9-14 in Greater New Orleans.

A shout-out...



...of appreciation to ClassACT general counsel and clerk **Kevin Crane**, for his ongoing support for keeping us "legal" from his office in Harvard Square.

We Want You! We Need You!

- The ClassACT Marketing & Communications committee is seeking members, particularly those with writing, graphics and photography skills, to help us spread the word about our activities. If interested, please email committee lead **Stan Mark**.
- ClassACT has created an Event Planning Group to help us as we increase our efforts to hold regional events. **Andrea Kirsh** and **Sara Greenberg** have already signed on, so we are looking for two additional creative folks who like organizing events that are both meaningful and fun. If interested, please email **Marion Dry**.
- To strengthen the ClassACT Bridge program, we need help from classmates with experience and interest in non-profit organizations. If interested, please email **Marion Dry**.

Happy Holidays!

ClassACT wishes everyone a joyous, safe and healthy holiday season!

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