

**FIRST SUA CLASS COMES TOGETHER
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In the faces of those attending the dedication ceremony for Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo on May 3, a bright hope could be seen. One reason for the spirited mood was the presence of 75 of the 120 students accepted into SUA's first class, set to start classes this fall.

The 120 students hail from 17 states and 16 foreign countries and territories, including Argentina, India and Zambia. Those who were part of the May 3 dedication were met with thunderous applause from the more than 2,500 SUA staff, faculty, supporters and community members in attendance when they entered the ceremony. This ovation underscored the sense of responsibility these students feel at being the ones blazing a new trail for world peace.

One student, Keiko Kubo, said: "I feel a great responsibility. Everyone has high expectations for us, and it's an honor to be here, to be a student of SUA."

This sentiment seemed to ring true of other students. Patrick McMahon of Seattle is leaving the University of Washington after spending two years there. He decided to attend SUA because the faculty impressed him, and he is interested in educational reform. "I didn't want to be foolish enough to pass up an opportunity like this," he said.

When Nathan Gauer of Washington, D.C., was asked why he decided to attend the new university, he said: "I think this is the only school that will enable me to be human and not a robot. I have a lot to offer and can't be limited. Being surrounded by faculty and students like me will help bring forth my potential. What better place to do that than SUA? Today, I've realized how many people are depending on this first class of students. I will respond to those expectations."

In his message for the SUA dedication, SGI President Ikeda, who is also the university's founder, said to the students: "I place all my trust and hopes in you. I entrust you with the realization of all my dreams for the future. At the same time, you must know that you are the focus of the hopes and expectations of so many of your fellow citizens worldwide. I hope that you will bear the weight of this great burden of expectation with patience and grace. For it is indeed the first graduating class that will set the direction and determine the success or failure of Soka University of America."