

## UMUC/UMGC Journey

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It's been a l-o-n-g haul. What follows are some highlights, some interesting, others perhaps not so interesting, but all dished up with a touch of forthrightness, honesty, and humor. Here's my UMUC/UMGC journey dating back several decades from January 1996 to May 2020 showcasing my experience working for a traditional school now-turned Full-Fledged Digital Diploma Mill Behemoth, at least under the leadership of the school's past two presidents dating back a good 10 years now. All my teaching took place within the Asia Division's three main sub-campuses: mainly Korea, but mainland Japan and Okinawa.



There was the time in Korea, around the Millennium, while giving Professor Lena Lupica a ride back to Songtan (where we both lived) from classes at Camp Humphreys that we were stopped off-post at a police sobriety roadside checkpoint. I had a 1989 Toyota Sprinter; the steering wheel was on the right side. One of the few like it in the whole damned country (186 in all I was told at Customs). The cops waved for us to slow down and stop. I rolled down the left window for Lena to breathe into the breath analyzer. Cops were none the wiser. Guess they had been at the job a little too long that day! A couple of years later, Lena and I bumped into each other at a Maryland event in Seoul. She hadn't forgotten.

There were also the memorable faculty workshops held at Yokota AB, Japan. After our weekend's work was done, our long-term Asia Director, Joe Arden, would treat us to lavish dinners—and wine, yes, plenty of wine--outside the New Sanno Hotel where we were holed up

for the weekend. Upon walking back to the Hotel (most of us were plenty soused), Professor David Norris exclaimed: “Now I know why Joe pays us what little he does; he spends it all on wine!” Seriously, though, Joe was always Good Ol’ Joe. It was about five years ago he rang me up asking that I contact any of the Old Timers he knew since he had retired over 10 years ago. He was passing through Korea and wanted to meet old colleagues. About nine of us met in a little restaurant in Itaewon (heart of Seoul’s international nightlife district). Sure enough, Joe picked up the tab for the wine yet again out of his own pocket. About \$300. Always a class act.

Not all memories were peaches and cream. There were sad moments to ponder in passing as well. I remember trudging out to Camp Long in Wonju (Korea) for an English 101 class during a treacherous winter storm not long after the Millennium. Roads were icy-slick. ICY-slick. That said, Irene Chung, Korea Regional Director then, or whatever her title was, was never peachy-keen on making up classes even under the most extreme of weather conditions. I came upon a driver who evidently lost control of his vehicle, careened and smashed through the guardrail, catapulting him below into a deep ravine. Emergency crews were already on the scene. Nothing I could do. I inched my way toward class. Upon returning later in the evening, emergency crews were still there: lugging the driver’s body up the steep gorge. Makes me reflect upon my own mortality to this day.

I could go on, and on... but that remains a sample of heady memories of old UMUC in halcyon days that we all remember so fondly before the days of automation and corporatization. That said, let’s hold up a toast to UMUC in her heyday!

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