



# SOPIA UNIVERSITY USA

# Connections

Spring 2013



## PRESENTING PUBLIC PROGRAMS



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## Special Thanks to:

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Dear Colleagues,

Becoming Sofia University is a long-term commitment and an ongoing effort on all fronts. In this issue of Connections you’ll see evidence of just one of the many ways we’re becoming Sofia U – through our new Public Programs department. Lectures, performances, book events, ritual theater, readings, continuing education workshops,

seminars, films, and new certificate programs are some of the ways we’ll be sharing our gifts with the world. We will continue actively networking with groups and individuals aligned with our mission and values, while also becoming a sought-after venue.

Our ability to attract bestselling authors, Anita Moorjani and Eben Alexander, is testament to how, after years of institutional naval-

gazing (partly a by-product of being an “alternative” school on the margins of the mainstream) we are now reaching out and connecting with the outside world – both near and far via online video streaming. By the way, all the events we stream online are saved and can be viewed on demand anytime at [www.livestream.com/sofiauniversity](http://www.livestream.com/sofiauniversity).

So, our Public Programs are one of the ways we’re acknowledging that we’re no longer on the margins of society. We’re stepping up to claim our rightful place, front and center, as leaders.

As always, I hope this newsletter helps keep you up-to-date on the evolution of Sofia University. I encourage you, as members of the Sofia University community, to share your successes. Contact me at [Tracy.Byars@Sofia.edu](mailto:Tracy.Byars@Sofia.edu) with any submissions, suggestions or corrections, and please stay connected!

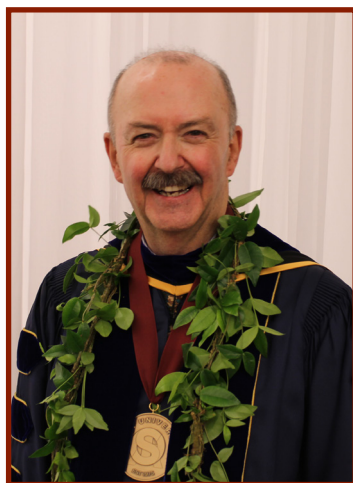
Warmly,  
*Tracy*

# Letter from the President

Dear Colleagues,

As we evolve into our future as Sofia University from our venerable ITP roots, we continue to move forward championing transformative, transpersonal education.

While our values have not changed, we have certainly been witness to many exciting changes here on campus. One of our greatest recent accomplishments is our new bachelor's completion programs receiving accreditation from the Western Association for Schools and Colleges (WASC). These programs, the first that we have offered at the undergraduate level, are led by Program Director Dr. Kris Brandenburg.



Our public programs department has taken off at full speed, hosting the exceptional author and speaker Anita Moorjani in November, with plans to host author and neurosurgeon, Dr. Eben Alexander, in June. On the forefront of spiritual research and discovery, these speakers align perfectly with Sofia University's own reputation as a leader in consciousness studies and the mind, body, spirit connection.

In April, our university was featured on the Discovery Channel's televised series, "In View with Larry King." The segment showcased students, staff, faculty and alumni, and was a wonderful opportunity to introduce our programs to the community at large.

Speaking of making new connections, we continue to build successful relationships abroad. Sofia U and the Community Center for Health and Wellness recently hosted visitors from SIAS University in China for peer counseling training, and we continue to build upon our relationship with the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, Switzerland. If you haven't had a chance to meet our special guest Roman Gonzalvo, visiting from Spain, and Editor of the Journal of Transpersonal Research, please feel free to introduce yourself to him. He will be on campus conducting doctoral research through June. Let's continue to give him a warm Sofia welcome during his stay with us.

To better support our growth as Sofia University, we are also updating all our technologies. In addition to launching a new website this spring, Sofia University is adopting a new learning management system, called "Canvas" and a new "campus management" system, called Jenzabar, that uses a single data repository and enables student to access to their own data and records. Both virtually and face to face, we now have the resources to invite broader and more comprehensive interaction globally than we have before.

I am sincerely honored to represent this vital and distinctive university, and will continue to spread the word of who we are and what we do in my travels on behalf of the International Association of University Presidents. Our international relevance has never been more apparent to me, nor has the strength and warm sense of community right here on campus.

Warm regards,  
*Neal King*

## Travels With Neal...

As President of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP)



With Deepak Chopra at the United Nations



With our newest board member, Sofia Leano, her husband Antonio Leano, Jr. and father-in-law Antonio Leano from Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara



In China with IAUP colleagues



With colleagues from the University of Technology in Jamaica



In Puerto Rico speaking at a symposium sponsored by the Universidad del Turabo on preparing global citizens





The wonderful cast of “A Memory, A Monologue, A Rant, and a Prayer” R-L: Kelly Lynn O’Leary Diana DiSalvo, Timothy Edwards, Roopam Sidhu, Tracy Byars, Jennifer Smith, Queen Dioni. Robin Campbell Bates, Lisa Herman (not pictured director Kay Kleinerman)

# V D A Y R I S E S

## One Billion Rising and “A Memory, A Monologue, A Rant, and a Prayer” bring together staff, faculty, students and members of the community

Sofia University has committed to taking a stand against violence towards women and girls worldwide. In conjunction with the international movement known as V-Day, Sofia University Public Programs hosted two events on campus: One Billion Rising and “A Memory, A Monologue, A Rant, and a Prayer.”

One Billion Rising is a call-to-action event with the goal to gather one billion people across the globe on February 14 to demonstrate solidarity and commitment to ending violence against women and girls. At Sofia U, the special event took the form of the school’s first ever school-wide dance open to students, staff, faculty and the general public.

This past Valentine’s Day, guests – new and old friends alike – enjoyed dancing to the music spun by a top DJ. The air of optimism and unity seemed infectious, as the party continued into the night. It’s no wonder spirits were high – it was all for a great cause! In conjunction with V-Day.org and One Billion Rising, Sofia University (formerly Institute of Transpersonal Psychology) presented, “A Memory, a Monologue, a Rant and a Prayer,” a performance honoring the worldwide V-Day movement. “A Memory, a Monologue, a Rant and a Prayer” was the second Sofia University event in observance of the V-Day movement. This was the first year Sofia University put on this particular production, which involved student, staff, faculty and community members as actors. In the past, as Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP), the school put on a production of the widely known, “Vagina Monologues.”

This year, as an offering of Sofia University’s Public Programs, “A Memory, A Monologue, a Rant and a Prayer (MMRP)” took place on Saturday, March 2 in the Sofia University Auditorium from 7:00 to 8:30 PM.

In total, Sofia University raised \$1,350. All proceeds from both events went to the following local nonprofit organizations: Impact Bay Area and The Art of Yoga Project. Impact Bay Area reduces violence and promotes healing by teaching self-defense, personal safety, violence prevention, and empowerment to adults, young adults, teens, and kids. Art of Yoga Project leads teenage girls in the California juvenile justice system toward accountability to self, others and community by providing practical tools to affect behavioral change.

To learn more about One Billion Rising, please visit: [www.onebillionrising.org](http://www.onebillionrising.org).

To learn more about V-Day, please visit: [www.vday.org](http://www.vday.org)



# Teaching the Transpersonal through Aikido: Unity, Spirituality, and...World Peace?



## Sofia University's New Aikido Center Named in Memory of the Late Aikido Master, Hiroshi Kato

Since the early days as Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, our university has included the martial art of Aikido as part of its transpersonal philosophy and core curriculum. Today, Sofia University has established an Aikido center named in honor of the late Aikido master, Hiroshi Kato, lovingly known as “Kato Sensei.” Connections sat down with Sofia University founder Robert Frager – who trained with Kato Sensei in Japan for many years – to learn more about what the center will offer the community, as well as discuss the deep connection between Aikido and transpersonal ways of being.

“Kato Sensei had visited the university twice a year since 2000 to teach Aikido,” says Frager. He continued, “Aikido is a spiritual art that teaches unity rather than conflict or combat with one another. In the past as ITP, when we were primarily a psychology school, Aikido was a way to prepare our students for their professional career as a psychologist. In transpersonal psychology, as with virtually any therapeutic practice, it is important that the therapist be able to modify his or her responsiveness to a client's behavior.” Because Aikido deals specifically with conflict and its peaceful resolution, the study of Aikido, complete with its philosophy and practice methods, therapists report that it is helpful in keeping them grounded, centered and connected within themselves while simultaneously being more sensitive and aware of the client.

Now, as a university that features additional disciplines as well as undergraduate courses, students at Sofia University learn Aikido practices that are focused on mindfulness, developing therapeutic presence, staying centered, and blending empathically with others.

And Frager would know, having trained with Kato Sensei in Japan starting in 1965, then later studying with him in the U.S. from 1996 onward. Both Frager and Kato were students under the original Founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba (“O’Sensei”).

The new Aikido center at Sofia University will house two exclusive multimedia archives: the Morihei Ueshiba archive featuring more than 5,000 photographs of the Founder of Aikido, and the Hiroshi Kato archive featuring both video and photo collections. In addition, the Aikido center will sponsor Aikido events such as trainings, conferences and publications, as well as sponsoring Aikido research — for example, the psychological and spiritual effects of Aikido training, working with Aikido and conflict resolution, and other related topics.

Aikido has long been a part of the transformative, transpersonal curriculum at Sofia University, formerly ITP. The school is best known for its experiential educational model that integrates six aspects of human existence into coursework: intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual, creative, and relational. Frager commented, “Aikido and the other body aspects of the six areas of study at Sofia University make it possible for us to embody transpersonal principles. The founder of Aikido believed the aim of the martial art was to purify yourself first; the larger aim is to create world peace.”

“Aikido is a spiritual art that teaches unity rather than conflict or combat with one another. In the past as ITP, when we were primarily a psychology school, Aikido was a way to prepare our students for their professional career as a psychologist. In transpersonal psychology, as with virtually any therapeutic practice, it is important that the therapist be able to modify his or her responsiveness to a client's behavior.”

Bob Frager





# To the Other Side and Back:

**Two acclaimed authors visit Sofia U  
Anita Moorjani spoke last November;  
Proof of Heaven author, Eben Alexander, to visit this June**

Sofia University's new Public Programs department has launched with a bang! Last November, we hosted "An Evening with Anita Moorjani," author of the bestselling book, *Dying to be Me*, and currently one of the most sought after motivational speakers around the world. And, on June 19, Sofia U will host Eben Alexander, M.D., author of New York Times bestseller, *Proof of Heaven*.

Eben Alexander, M.D., is a renowned academic neurosurgeon who spent 54 years honing his scientific view of how the brain and mind worked. When he suffered a rare brain infection resulting in a week-long coma, Dr. Alexander had a Near-Death Experience (NDE) that would change his life forever. He has spent the last two and a half years reconciling his spiritual experience with contemporary physics and cosmology. His book, *Proof of Heaven*, tells the story of Dr. Alexander's journey and the link between spirituality and neuroscience.

Dr. Alexander has appeared on various television programs including Oprah, Larry King Now, Good Morning America, and Nightline. *Proof of Heaven* is a New York Times #1 Best Seller.

Moorjani, who drew more than 200 attendees from across the Bay Area at her Sofia U event, has frequently appeared with Dr. Wayne Dyer on the PBS television special, "Wishes Fulfilled."

Diagnosed with terminal cancer and told she had only hours to live, Anita Moorjani "crossed over" in 2006 and experienced what is

known as a near-death experience (NDE). Moorjani worked in the corporate world for years before becoming ill with cancer, but is now dedicated to spreading the concept that all individuals have the inner power and wisdom to overcome life's most adverse situations. As a living example of this concept, her work is embedded with the depths and insights she gained while in the other realm.

Both events are part of the newly developed Public Programs department here at Sofia U, which is comprised of arts programs, talks/lectures, academic certificate programs, and other public events. Sofia University plans to further engage the external community through the public programs initiative, led by Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Tracy Byars. Byars commented, "Both Anita Moorjani and Eben Alexander are exactly the kind of speakers we hope to feature more often as part of our Public Programs. They are increasing public awareness of topics such as "near death experience" and the power of our minds to overcome adversity – topics that scholars at Sofia University have been studying for over 35 years."

Dr. Eben Alexander is scheduled speak about his book and his experiences at the Sofia University Auditorium on Wednesday, June 19. The Moorjani event can be accessed on Livestream ([livestream.com/sofiauniversity](http://livestream.com/sofiauniversity)).



## Publisher's Description

### A Scientist's Case for the Afterlife-

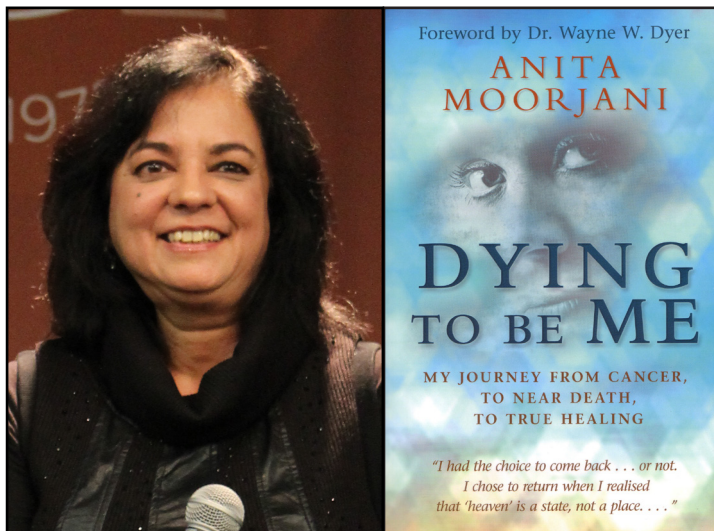
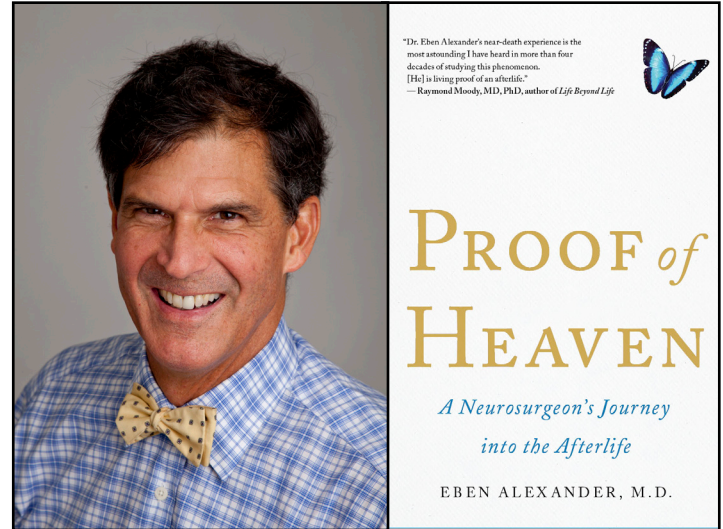
Thousands of people have had near-death experiences, but scientists have argued that they are impossible. Dr. Eben Alexander was one of those scientists. A highly trained neurosurgeon, Alexander knew that NDEs feel real, but are simply fantasies produced by brains under extreme stress.

Then, Dr. Alexander's own brain was attacked by a rare illness. The part of the brain that controls thought and emotion—and in essence makes us human—shut down completely. For seven days he lay in a coma. Then, as his doctors considered stopping treatment, Alexander's eyes popped open. He had come back.

Alexander's recovery is a medical miracle. But the real miracle of his story lies elsewhere. While his body lay in coma, Alexander journeyed beyond this world and encountered an angelic being who guided him into the deepest realms of super-physical existence. There he met, and spoke with, the Divine source of the universe itself.

Alexander's story is not a fantasy. Before he underwent his journey, he could not reconcile his knowledge of neuroscience with any belief in heaven, God, or the soul. Today Alexander is a doctor who believes that true health can be achieved only when we realize that God and the soul are real and that death is not the end of personal existence but only a transition.

This story would be remarkable no matter who it happened to. That it happened to Dr. Alexander makes it revolutionary. No scientist or person of faith will be able to ignore it. Reading it will change your life.



After years of struggling to forge her own path while trying to meet everyone else's expectations, she had the realization, as a result of her epiphany on the other side, that she had the power to heal herself . . . and that there are miracles in the Universe that she had never even imagined.

In *Dying to Be Me*, Anita freely shares all she has learned about illness, healing, fear, "being love," and the true magnificence of each and every human being!

This is a book that definitely makes the case that we are spiritual beings having a human experience . . . and that we are all One!



# PSYCHEDELIC SCIENCE AND SOFIA UNIVERSITY

Sofia University is gaining a worldwide reputation in the area of psychedelics research, thanks in large part to Sofia University co-founder, James Fadiman. Like his colleague, Stanislav Grof, Fadiman was originally involved in psychedelics research in the early 1960s before they were effectively banned by the U.S. Government. A resurgence of interest over the past 10 to 15 years has led to more research and greater acceptance of these substances by governments and the public.

Recently, Sofia U co-sponsored the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) Psychedelic Science Conference 2013 in Oakland, California. James Fadiman, Ph.D., featured as one of the international experts in the field, held a workshop titled, "Psychedelic Horizons Beyond Psychotherapy." The MAPS conference also included a presentation going into more detail about the challenges and benefits of teaching future therapists to be more sensitive and competent in working with clients who have used or are using psychedelic substances.

At Sofia U, Fadiman co-teaches courses on psychedelic research and clinical issues with faculty member David Lukoff, Ph.D. The two-unit residential course was first offered in the fall quarter of 2010 and has been well received. The class covers clinical research on psychedelic drugs as adjuncts to psychotherapy for the treatment of addiction, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and existential distress at the end of life, as well as how to address psychedelic experiences that clients bring into psychotherapy. While not all students who enroll in the class intend to be clinicians, clinical aspects are discussed throughout the course.

Lukoff commented, "Our fondest hope for this course is that it paves the way for other universities, particularly those offering graduate training for mental health professionals, to use this precedent at an accredited graduate program to advocate for including similar courses in their curriculum."

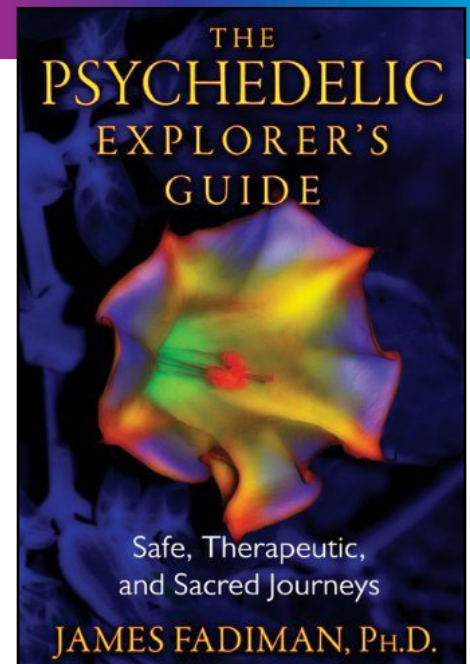
Understanding psychedelic experiences requires knowledge about the interdisciplinary context, traditional uses, and applications behind modern research on psychedelic drugs for treating trauma and addiction. Lukoff commented on the specific need for this type of course: "With all of these clinical and research advances, how could a doctoral psychology program not provide

training in this area? The recent research is beyond compelling that therapy, experientially supported with psychedelics, helps resolve combat trauma in veterans as well as other forms of trauma and reduces anxiety in cancer patients."

Sofia University is currently developing an online course for its global students and has plans to offer the class through other institutions. In addition to the psychedelics course at Sofia U, increasing interest in psychedelics in higher education is reflected in Sofia students' dissertations and research.

Fadiman commented, "Our students whose dissertations have dealt with psychedelic issues are doing psychedelic clinical studies at Yale and Johns Hopkins University. Sofia University is one of the few academic institutions in the world that supports graduate study in this area, thus fulfilling part of its mission to remain at the forefront of clinical training and emerging research areas."

In addition to sponsoring the Psychedelic Science Conference this year, Sofia University also held an event on May 2, 2013, called, "Psychedelic Experience: Healing, Growth and Discovery" hosted by James Fadiman and Brad Burge, the Communications Director for MAPS. The event can be viewed on Livestream at [www.livestream.com/sofiauniversity](http://www.livestream.com/sofiauniversity). The event included engaging dialogue on new research opportunities including discoveries in neuro-science, long-term effects of ongoing use, and work done in indigenous settings. The evening's dialogue also considered the application of psychedelic substances for chronic sleep disturbances, severe life-long allergies, academic test-taking, neuromuscular improvements, successful withdrawal from anti-depressants, as well as the almost totally unstudied effects of micro-dosing as well as experiments in accelerated scientific problem-solving.



# Alumni Spotlight: Albert Garcia-Romeu, Ph.D.

At Sofia University we're lucky to have alumni who treat us like family. Our wonderful alumni keep in touch, sharing with us their post-grad activities and accomplishments. We are proud of the positive changes our alums are making in the world and feel fortunate to share their stories with you.

Albert Garcia-Romeu, Ph.D., graduated from Sofia University in June 2012 after completing the Doctorate in Transpersonal Psychology (PHDTP) program. Albert also served as adjunct faculty at Sofia, teaching courses in Social and Cognitive Psychology.

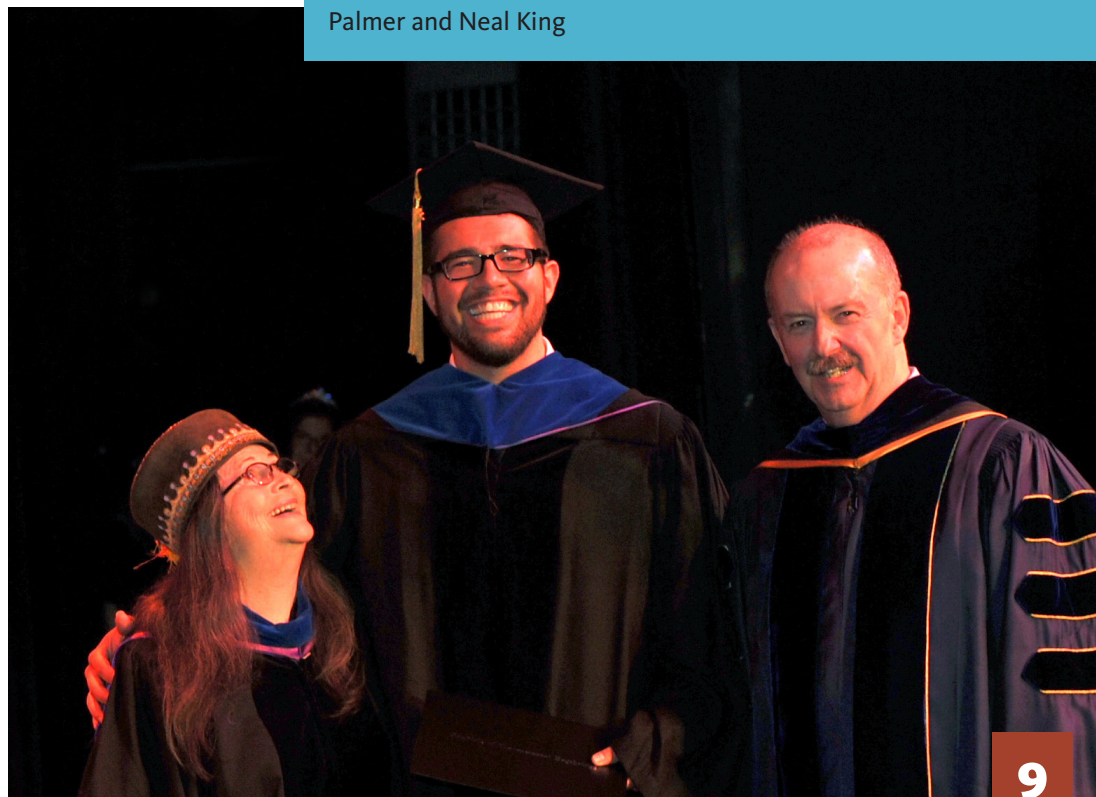
After presenting his doctoral research on self-transcendence at the "Toward a Science of Consciousness" conference in April 2012 in Tucson, Arizona, Albert was invited to interview at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland. He subsequently accepted a post-doctoral research fellowship at Johns Hopkins to assist in their psilocybin research program, which is currently engaged in projects studying the effects of psychedelics on spirituality, end-of-life anxiety and addiction.

Albert is currently managing a study focused on treating cigarette addiction through a combination of cognitive behavioral techniques, mindfulness and high-dose psilocybin administration. This is the first study since the 1970s to legally resume examining the use of psychedelics in the treatment of addiction. The Hopkins team includes Dr. Roland R. Griffiths, Dr. Matthew W. Johnson and Dr. Katherine A. MacLean, and has published many notable findings on the effects of psychedelics, including a significant relationship between psilocybin administration, mystical experience, and persisting positive shifts in personality. The Hopkins team will be presenting the current state of their research at the upcoming MAPS (Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies) conference this April.

In addition to this work, Albert has co-authored a chapter on altered states of consciousness with Charles T. Tart for Wiley-Blackwell's upcoming Handbook of Transpersonal Psychology. He has a

published his self-transcendence research in peer-reviewed journals and presented at numerous conferences, including SAND (Science and Nonduality) 2010 on the genetic and neural correlates of self-transcendence, at the University of Pennsylvania's 2012 Psychedemia conference with Dr. Peter Addy (ITP alumnus, currently at Yale University School of Medicine) on the subjective effects of Salvia Divinorum, and published and presented on the effects of mindfulness-based interventions in incarcerated youth with Dr. Sam Himmelstein (ITP alumnus, currently research director for the Mind-Body Awareness Project), and colleagues at Stanford University. Albert is also working on a popular book examining the cultural significance of self-transcendence, based partly on his dissertation research, and recently met with author Ken Wilber to discuss this project.

Albert at Commencement 2012 with Dissertation Director Genie Palmer and Neal King





On January 28, 2013, Sofia University announced that the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) approved its first Bachelor of Arts degree completion programs. The Sofia University bachelor's completion programs in psychology and liberal arts will be offered in a combined online/on-ground format starting Fall 2013.

Within the bachelor's completion offerings, the psychology degree will offer specializations in Coaching, Business and Leadership and LGBTQ Studies, while the liberal arts degree includes concentrations in Transpersonal Studies, Business and Leadership, and LGBTQ Studies. These programs have been developed and will be administered under the leadership of program director Dr. Kris Brandenburger.

Kris commented, "Formerly (as ITP), we were primarily a graduate school with an emphasis on psychology programs. Now as Sofia University, we will offer both undergraduate and graduate programs in multiple disciplines. The projected numbers for Fall 2013 are looking great, and reason enough for us to get excited. We received our first student application for the program the day after the WASC accreditation news was announced. We've also sensed the enthusiasm from the internal and external communities, even globally."

An undergraduate education at Sofia University offers students an engaged and rigorous academic experience while keeping the whole person at its core. It encourages students to become better thinkers, writers and citizens, fully acknowledging the complexities and varied relationships students face in their lives as individuals. Sofia U's undergraduate degrees provide the analytic, technological and human tools to work with information across and among disciplines. Learners also need to learn to work effectively with people unlike themselves. At Sofia, students work both individually and collaboratively in preparation for them to succeed in a world of difference and ever-changing complexity.

Sofia's experiential educational model incorporates the six aspects of human existence into all coursework: the intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual, creative, and relational. The rigorous curriculum challenges and supports students to succeed in whatever path they next take, be it graduate school, business or community service-based.

Cheryl Hoke, Dean of Admissions at Sofia University, has been busy over the past few months, overseeing marketing and recruitment activities in the admissions office. Like



**Kris Brandenburger, PhD, Director of Bachelor Completion Programs**

Kris, Cheryl is just as optimistic and feels Sofia is offering something special to a niche group of individuals. Cheryl noted, "I think many times for many people, life gets in the way of earning their degree. I am proud that we are launching a bachelor's completion program in Fall 2013 to allow people to finish what they started and fulfill a lifelong dream. In the admissions office, we are experiencing a high level of interest in the program and applications come in daily. We're excited to meet the inaugural class."

Sofia University is currently establishing three major schools: the Graduate School of Transpersonal Studies, the Graduate School of Clinical & Spiritual Psychology, and the School of Undergraduate Studies. Graduate programs include degrees in Psychology, Women's Spirituality and Spiritual Guidance. As part of its transformation from a graduate school to a university, Sofia also now features Public Programs and events open to the public, which can be attended on a one-off basis.

Sofia University President, Dr. Neal King, stated, "We are excited to move forward building upon our distinguished past as the world's only transpersonal university. The Bachelor's completion programs in psychology and Liberal Arts will be our initial undergraduate offerings, which we hope to extend in the near future. We will be offering new programs and deepening our connections in the community, while continuing to champion transformative, transpersonal education."

# Article about Judy Grahns Event



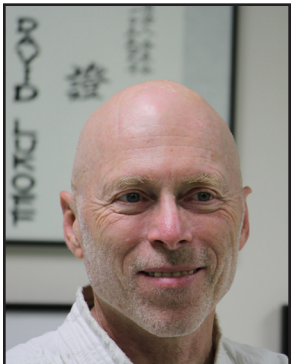
# Making Sofia University



**Judy Grahn** has written a memoir titled, *A Simple Revolution – The Making of an Activist Poet*. *A Simple Revolution* is Judy's first memoir and tells her life story from the age of eight to the age of forty. Widely recognized as one of the most iconic figures of the gay women's liberation movement, Grahn's memoir reflects on women's and gay rights movements of the 1960s

and 1970s. The book has been nominated for the Northern California Book Award in Creative Nonfiction as one of the best works by a Northern Californian published in 2012.

Judy Grahn, along with Susie Griffin, will appear on stage at the Opening Event for WordTemple Arts & Lectures on October 26, 2013. The two noted writers/poets will be on stage to have a conversation together about their ideas, life experiences and writing, followed by a reading or performance by each and ending with questions from the audience.



**David Lukoff** and **Kartik Patel** have been invited by the American Psychological Association (APA) Journals to serve on the Editorial Board of its newly approved journal, *Spirituality in Clinical Practice* (SCP). The Journal will appear in print beginning in 2014, spanning a number of divisions APA-wide.



*Spirituality in Clinical Practice* is a practice-oriented journal that encompasses spiritually oriented psychotherapy and spiritually sensitive cultural applications. SCP will publish various articles, reviews, commentaries and case reports. It will serve as a forum for those engaged in clinical activities to report on and have a dialogue regarding their activities and future research initiatives.



**Aaron Mishara** has contributed a chapter to the book, *Making the DSM-5, Concepts and Controversies* – Paris, Joel; Phillips, James (Eds.). The book examines the debate about psychiatric nosology and observes conceptual and pragmatic issues underlying the new manual. Taking historic controversies into consideration, this volume addresses significant concerns of the future of

psychiatry, and questions whether the DSM legacy can truly improve the specialty and advance its goals. The book is expected to be released in June 2013. Mishara's contribution with Michael A. Schwartz, is titled "What does Phenomenology Contribute to the Debate about DSM-5."

Additionally, Mishara, with co-author Paolo Fusar-Poli, has an article published in the *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, published by Oxford University Press, titled, "The Phenomenology and Neurobiology of Delusion Formation During Psychosis Onset: Jaspers, Truman Symptoms, and Aberrant Salience."



**Shiloh McCloud** addressed the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women at their annual conference in New York on March 4, 2013. The conference drew over 4,000 women attendees across diverse global regions. McCloud was invited by Lois Herman of the Women's United Nations Report Network to speak on how art and poetry can contribute to the ending of violence against women.



**Ryan Rominger** has been invited to act as guest editor for an issue of *The Journal of Near Death Experiences* by Jan Holden.

Ryan Rominger to serve on Academic Editorial Review Board for SAGE Publications (London Division) for a project called "Cases in Methodology" – see press release

## Wendy Peters, Ph.D. (Ph.D.

2011), was selected as one of six fellows for the inaugural cohort of a newly established Leadership Development Institute sponsored by the Council of National Psychology Associations for the Advancement of Ethnic Minority Interests (CNPAEMI). She was also elected and is currently serving as the President of APA's Division 35: Society for the Psychology of Women, Section 6: Alaska Native/American Indian/Indigenous Women. President of Section 6 – Indigenous Women, which is part of Division 35 in APA (Society for the Psychology of Women). In addition, Wendy wrote the \$3.5M grant her department received at the University of North Dakota. The project is called "Seven Generations Center of Excellence in Native Behavioral Health" and it is the first and only Center of Excellence in the country for Native Behavioral Health.

## Karen Ander Francis (MATP 1994)

has been a spiritual companion and writer. She has trained therapists and spiritual directors in the U.S. and Canada in the model of spiritual companionship called "The Soul Friend," that grew directly from Karen's graduate research at Sofia. Karen has published two books on spirituality: *The Soul Friend: Spiritual Direction with Adults Abused as Children* and *On the Edge of the Known World: Prayer and PTSD: A Memoir with Workbook*. A short memoir, "Winter Solstice," was selected for inclusion in the anthology *When One Door Closes: Reflections from Women on Life's Turning Points*. Karen has designed workshops on contemplative writing and is now in collaboration with four women who attended my workshops to produce an anthology of personal prose and poetry: *Sophia's Table: Women's Wisdom in Five Voices*. For more information, visit [www.innerworkresources.net](http://www.innerworkresources.net).

## Professor Fred Luskin Receives the 2013 Distinguished Contribution to Psychology Award by the California Psychological Association (CPA)

Award conferred at 2013 CPA Convention in Newport Beach



For over 35 years, Sofia has offered transformative education for the whole person, probing the mind, body, spirit connection. Naturally, our world-class faculty is the foundation upon which our groundbreaking curriculum and research are built. We are proud – beaming, even – to highlight their accomplishments, awards, recognitions and milestones.

Sofia University is honored to announce that Professor Fred Luskin, Ph.D., was named the recipient of the 2013 Distinguished Contribution to Psychology Award by the California Psychological Association (CPA). The award is considered widely

as a lifetime achievement, a high honor to be awarded to any psychologist. This prestigious award honors a psychologist who has improved the image of psychology by increasing public understanding of the discipline, and/or the profession of psychology in a significant way. To honor Luskin's achievements, the presentation of the Distinguished Contribution to Psychology Award took place at the 2013 CPA Convention on Friday, April 12, 2013 in Newport Beach, California.

The California Psychological Association (CPA) is a nonprofit association for licensed psychologists and others affiliated with the delivery of psychological services. In addition to advocating for the profession of psychology, CPA's members provide free public service through programs such as its Public Education Campaign as well as its disaster response service. CPA works closely with the media, providing accurate information to demonstrate the positive role that psychology plays in our everyday lives.

Luskin is a professor in the Psy.D. program in clinical psychology at Sofia University, teaching the clinical assessment sequence as well as quantitative research methods. In addition, he chairs the university's Research Ethics Committee and has an extensive background in assessment and research, as well as teaching positive psychology.

In addition to teaching at Sofia University, Luskin is a senior consultant in wellness and health promotion at Stanford University, where he teaches the positive psychology class. He also teaches forgiveness and stress management to groups around the globe. He has taught and lectured on forgiveness worldwide and has been featured for his forgiveness work in many major media outlets. He is one of the most recognized researchers and teachers of forgiveness in the world. He has clinical licenses as a marriage and family counselor, educational psychologist and clinical psychologist. He also holds credentials in counseling and school psychology.

Fred is the author of *Forgive for Good: A Proven Prescription for Health and Healing*, and co-author with Ken Pelletier, Ph.D. of *Stress Free for Good: 10 Scientifically Proven Life Skills for Health and Happiness*.



# Will YOU avoid the IRA Tax Trap?

Your largest asset may be your retirement plan, whether an IRA, Keogh, 401(k), 403(B), or other account. You've invested it for growth and have been cautious about taking withdrawals. With luck, you figure, you and your spouse will not spend the current total in your lifetimes, so there should be a substantial asset to pass on to your heirs.

**Watch out!** The IRS considers the balance left in your retirement account to be untaxed income. They call it "Income in Respect of a Decedent" (IRD), and if you bequeath that balance to your heirs, the IRS will subject it to both income and estate tax. This potential double taxation (not to mention state inheritance taxes and possible Generation-Skipping Tax if the balance goes to grandchildren) can consume as much as 70 percent of the value of your account, leaving less than one-third to your heirs.

**What to do?** Think charitably, and your heirs can actually come out ahead.

Name Sofia University as the beneficiary of your retirement plan, and then use other assets, not subject to income tax, to make gifts to children, family, and friends. Since Sofia is a non-profit organization, it won't pay income tax on the distribution (nor will the plan balance be included in your taxable estate). In turn, your heirs will receive more of your estate by taking assets not burdened by extra taxes.

## The Benefits:

- You will escape both income and estate taxes
- You can continue to take withdrawals from your retirement plan during your lifetime
- You can change the beneficiary designation if your circumstances change
- You can make a significant gift to Sofia University that costs you nothing during your lifetime, is revocable, and does not affect your income or cash flow



## Planning Points:

- You can make Sofia University a partial beneficiary of your plan, and direct the balance to your heirs. At your death, the plan administrator will withdraw Sofia University's share, providing an immediate gift to the school, and leaving the balance to benefit your loved ones.
- Use your plan's beneficiary designation form to direct your gift to Sofia University. Don't use your will. If you do, your retirement plan will be included in your probate estate and will be subject to the estate administration process.
- Don't use the balance in your retirement account to satisfy a dollar-amount bequest to Sofia University that is already in your will. Your estate will be treated as having received taxable income in the amount of the bequest that you paid with the retirement plan assets.

## How do I do it?

First, consult with your plan administrator and your advisors. When you're ready to move forward, simply notify your plan administrator of your wish to change the beneficiary designation. We are ready to assist you through every step of the process.

**Questions? Already including Sofia/ITP in your will or trust?  
Contact Tracy Byars, VP of Institutional Advancement at  
Tracy.Byars@sofia.edu or 650.493.4430 x267**

This publication is intended to provide general gift planning information. Our organization is not qualified to provide specific legal, tax or investment advice, and this publication should not be looked to or relied upon as a source for such advice. Consult with your own legal and financial advisors before making any gift.

**NEW Sofia U  
website launching  
May 2013 —  
[www.sofia.edu](http://www.sofia.edu)**



**NEW Online  
Women's  
Spirituality  
Certificate Offered  
through Public  
Programs Starting  
this Fall**



**Sofia U to host Eben  
Alexander, MD  
(Proof of Heaven  
author) May 19— for  
his ONLY Northern  
California visit!**



**NEW Campus  
Management System  
with Student/Alumni  
Portal coming this  
fall!**



## **Whats NEW at Sofia U**



**Bachelor's  
Completion  
Program/Degrees  
Approved by WASC**



**NEW Expressive Arts  
Therapy Certificate  
Offered through  
Public Programs  
Starting in August**



**Switching from  
"Angel" to "Canvas"  
– NEW, more  
sophisticated, user-  
friendly, online  
learning platform**



**California  
Campus Compact  
celebrating 25 year  
anniversary – Nov  
14 2013 – at Sofia U**





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## Public Programs

For the latest event information and details, please visit [www.sofia.edu/calendar.php](http://www.sofia.edu/calendar.php)

### June

AN EVENING WITH EBEN ALEXANDER III, MD  
Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey through the Afterlife  
Wednesday June 19

#### PRESENTATION DAY

2013 Doctoral graduates present their research  
Friday June 21

#### SOFIA COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES

Master's Ceremony 10:00 am  
Doctoral Ceremony 2:30 pm  
Saturday June 22

### August

MASTER OF TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY INTENSIVE  
Public Keynote: TBA  
August 10 – 15

#### EXPRESSIVE ARTS THERAPY CERTIFICATE

Course 1: Nourishing the Soul  
August 16 - 22

### September

Ph.D. PSYCHOLOGY SEMINAR  
Public Keynote: TBA  
September 15 - 20

#### WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY CERTIFICATE INTENSIVE

Public Keynote: TBA  
September 19 - 22

### October

AIKI EXTENSIONS/SOFIA U AIKIDO CONFERENCE  
October 25 - 27

### November

California Campus Compact's 25th Anniversary  
November 14

**To submit a proposal for Sofia University's Public Programs, please complete the proposal form at:**  
**<http://tinyurl.com/b4xkd7m>**