

Dr. Riel S. Miller, the Panda Lecturer of Education College: A Transcendent Interpretation of Escaping Certainty with An Astonishing Performance

The College of Education hosted the Tamkang Clement and Carrie Chair (the Panda Lecture) on September 22nd in the Chang Yeo Lan International Conference Hall of Hsu Shou-Chlien International Conference Center. They have invited Dr. Riel S. Miller, the former Chief of Foresight and Strategic Planning at UNESCO from 2012 to 2022, to give a lecture titled “Escaping Certainty: Humanity, the Universe, and Anticipation as Liberation.” Dr. Miller encouraged the students and faculty in attendance to bravely “anticipate the future, imagine the future, and create the future.”

As joyful music played, Dr. Miller performed a dance before his lecture. Watching his exuberant moves on stage, the teachers and students in the audience were pleasantly surprised. They quickly grabbed their phones to capture the moment and erupted in thunderous applause at the end of the performance. "This is uncertainty," Dr. Miller told the audience, emphasizing diversity and transcending planning, and focusing on the present moment. Some may have had doubts about the opening dance, but we can live in an emerging and creative world. What's important is that it changes the present and brings about change and anticipation. “We cannot control the future, which leads to anxiety and stress," he said. Throughout history, people have always wanted to master the future, which can be divided into 2 categories. One is certainty, such as the certainty that the sun will rise tomorrow. People use predictions to contemplate the future course of events in order to ensure certainty. The anticipatory system operates through people's current actions and consciousness. The other category is uncertainty, filled with changes that render the future unknown. This uncertainty leads to people's unease and even attempts to solve non-existent problems. The fervor of ideology can cause humans and the world to become separated from each other.

Dr. Miller believes that "imagination begins with assumptions, and

assumptions stem from individual expectations." Just as a baby expects to receive food and care by crying, people do the same. In different contexts, people imagine the future in different ways, and our existing conditions, knowledge, values, and experiences all make us feel the need for something. This need is expressed in life through anticipation and imagination, bringing about change. However, the framework required for imagining the future must also be constructed within certain norms; it's not purely fanciful. For example, in an era when medicine was not yet advanced, you might assume the existence of bacteria but also propose that washing hands can reduce bacterial load, leading to a decrease in infections and deaths. However, you must provide evidence and theory, using bold imagination, careful verification, and creating the imagined future through your own efforts.

On September 21st, Dr. Miller, accompanied by the Dean of the Education College, Dr. Kuo-Hua Chen, the Chair of the Department of Education and Futures Design, Dr. Jian-Bang Deng, and Associate Professor Shun-Jie Ji, paid separate visits to President Huan-Chao Keh and Chairperson Flora Chia-I Chang who respectively presented the panda trophy and a vase imprinted with calligraphy by Master Chi-Mao Li and painting by Master Ben-Hang Chang, featuring Tamkang campus scenery and the school anthem as a commemoration.

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