

ISSUE NO.33 / AUGUST 2024

THE MANTA

THE UWC THAILAND COMMUNITY

Pulse

INTERACTIVE E-MAGAZINE



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“There exists within everyone a grand passion, an outlandish thirst for adventure, a desire to live boldly and vividly through the journey of life.”

Kurt Hahn, UWC Founder



Learn more about UWC Thailand and follow us on social media



Growth and Discovery



We are delighted to welcome Mark Beach as our Interim Head of School for the 2024-25 academic year. Mark brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to fostering a vibrant learning community at UWC Thailand.

Mark's distinguished career in education spans roles as a teacher and principal across New Zealand, Tonga, Qatar, and Hong Kong. Most notably, he was the founding principal of Discovery College in Hong Kong, where he led the school from its inception in 2007 until 2019. His extensive experience also includes working with the Council for International Schools (CIS), the International Baccalaureate (IB), and various educational consultancies.

Mark is passionate about the concept of schools as learning communities, united by a common vision, values, and culture. This belief will guide his leadership at UWC Thailand, where he aims to further develop our "One School" ethos—a community where every member, whether day or boarding, primary or secondary, PYP, MYP, or DP, feels a shared responsibility for one another.

In addition to his professional expertise, Mark brings a personal passion for outdoor activities and community involvement. Having recently moved to Phuket with his partner, he enjoys surfing, reading, and spending time with family and friends. An avid runner, Mark has completed several marathons and is now exploring the trails around Phuket.

Mark's leadership will also be instrumental as we approach significant milestones, including the upcoming CIS Preparatory Visit next month. This visit is a key step in our journey towards the full CIS and IB Evaluation in September 2025, a process that Mark is well-equipped to support given his extensive experience as a CIS Team Chair.

As we embark on this new academic year, we are excited about the direction in which Mark will lead UWC Thailand. His vision, experience, and commitment to our values make him a valuable addition to our community. We encourage everyone to take the opportunity to get to know Mark and to be actively involved in the vibrant life of our school.

We look forward to a fantastic year ahead under Mark's leadership, filled with learning, growth, and a strong sense of community.



[Click here to learn more about our Interim Head of School, Mark Beach](#)

New Family Orientation

The New Family Orientation was a special day filled with fresh faces as new students, along with their parents and guardians, met our leadership team, staff, and teachers. With the help of our wonderful current parents and students, new families were warmly guided through the day's activities, which included a school tour, insightful discussions about our curriculum, and the chance to ask questions.

Seeing all these new faces around campus filled us with excitement and joy. A heartfelt welcome to all to our UWC Thailand Family!

[Click here for more photos](#) 



Welcome back to a new Academic Year!

The UWC Thailand campus is alive with excitement as we welcome both returning and new students at the start of this academic year. With changes in our leadership team, the addition of new staff members, and a community now over 600 students strong, this year promises to be one of discovery and growth for everyone. The upcoming months will bring continuous learning, engaging events, and the strengthening of our school community across all levels.

As we navigate this period together, we eagerly anticipate the challenges and triumphs that will shape our collective growth, making this year a memorable chapter in our educational journey.

2024/25 Academic year in numbers:

Total number of UWC Thailand students:

603

Number of student national identities:

81

Number of UWC Thailand staff members:

192



Embracing a Vibrant Community

We are thrilled to welcome 20 new staff members to our vibrant UWC Thailand community this year!

With more than 190 dedicated staff and faculty, these new additions bring a wealth of knowledge and experience from all corners of the world, further strengthening our commitment to excellence in education and holistic development of our school.

The campus was buzzing during their first days and the New Staff Orientation, a week filled with impactful activities designed to introduce our new colleagues to the rich culture, values, and expectations that define UWC Thailand. From cultural trips around our beautiful island of Phuket to bonding with fellow staff members and setting up their classrooms, the new teachers quickly became an integral part of our community.

As we begin this academic year, we extend our warmest welcome and heartfelt gratitude to our new staff members for choosing to join us. We are excited to embark on this journey together and look forward to a school year filled with growth, learning, and unforgettable experiences.

Welcome to UWC Thailand family—let's make this the best year yet!

Welcome to the new staff members:

Alexandra Gomez, Secondary School Teacher
Alice Greenland, Secondary Student Life and Whole School Systems Coordinator
Amanda Olberding, Primary-Middle School Art Teacher
Bianca Starck, Primary School Teacher
Chase Greist, Secondary School Teacher
Curran Russell, Cover Teacher
Andrew Akam, Secondary School Teacher
Elizabeth Tinnon-Akam, Secondary School Teacher
Ellie Pankhurst, Secondary School Teacher
Erica Denison, Secondary School Teacher
Feiyan Xu, English Language Acquisition Teacher
Paco Vazquez, School Counsellor
Guia Adiao, Primary School Teacher
Jasmine McClure, Secondary School Teacher
John Powell, Director of Sports, Activities and Camps
Joseph Leithhead, Physical Education Teacher
Kongpol Sangwan, Human Resources Administrator
Kritsanasak Phibun, Outdoor Education Centre Assistant
Kylie-Anne Millar, Secondary School Teacher
Lucy Habel, Primary School Teacher
Marisa Hoskins, Design Technology and IB Diploma Film
Nicol Fernandes, Secondary School Teacher
Rebecca Pohl, Future Pathways Advisor
Satchel Prairie, Outdoor Education Programming Instructor
Sonam Gurung, Boarding Houseparent
Timothy Olberding, Learning Support Teacher
Zharina Casil, Boarding Houseparent



Learn more about our new Staff members 



Welcoming our diverse student body

We are delighted to welcome 50 new students to our campus through the **National Committee (NC)** and **Global Selection Programme (GSP)**. After an extensive selection process, we are excited to have these students join our UWC Thailand community.

This year, 49 of these students will join the grade 11 cohort of 37 UWC Thailand direct entry students, forming a graduating class of 86 students for 2026.

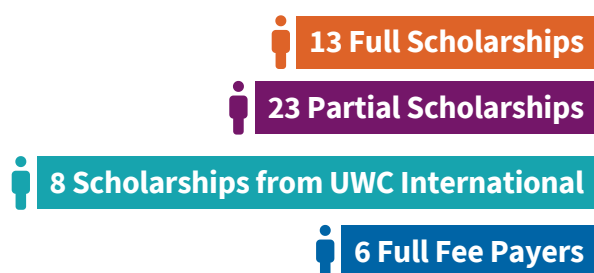
For the first time, we are welcoming a scholarship student into grade 10 through a new pathway called **"Fulfilling the Promise"**. This UWC Thailand initiative allows the student an additional year to settle in before starting the IB Diploma. We hope this grade 10 entry option will continue to grow, supporting those who have been out of school for an extended period, need more time with English fluency, or are using technology for the first time.

We hope you will take every opportunity to meet all our new students!

Our students have arrived from:

 Afghanistan	 Morocco
 Bangladesh	 Myanmar
 Bhutan	 Nepal
 Burkina Faso	 Nicaragua
 Cambodia	 Oman
 Canada	 Palestinian camps in Lebanon
 China	 Panama
 Colombia	 Portugal
 Costa Rica	 Refugees from Western Sahara
 Croatia	 Romania
 El Salvador	 Serbia
 Ethiopia	 Somalia
 Germany	 Spain
 Hong Kong	 Sudan
 India	 Thailand
 Ireland	 Timor Leste
 Libya	 Turkey
 Macedonia	 Uganda
 Mexico	 United States of America
 Mongolia	 Venezuela

Our 50 NC & GSP students are made up of:



 [Learn about UWC National Committees](#)

 [Learn about the Global Selection Programme](#)



All Roads Lead to Phuket

Our boarding community has welcomed more than 50 new members this year, coming from all corners of the globe, largely through the efforts and support of National Committees or through the Global Selection Programme. These new Diploma Programme students bring a rich tapestry of cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives to our campus, enriching the global learning experience that UWC is known for. Their presence enhances classroom discussions, broadens horizons, and fosters a deep sense of mutual understanding.

We hope you find our boarding house to be your home away from home.

Confluence

One of the most memorable events for our Diploma Programme students in the early weeks of the new academic year is the Confluence Dinner.

Now a cherished tradition, this event allows our Grade 11 and 12 students to connect with board members, teachers, and staff. More than just a dinner, Confluence is a celebration of our diversity and unique identities, fostering meaningful connections and a strong sense of belonging within the UWC community.

“

“An evening filled with genuine emotions, hugs, and love from my new teachers and seniors. It was a benevolent and warm welcoming ceremony to the UWC Thailand community.”

Brian,
Grade 11 (South Sudan and Uganda)



[Click here for more photos](#) 



Middle Years Programme Orientation Day

Our Middle Years Programme students kicked off their school year with an exciting Orientation Day.

The day was packed with activities aimed at boosting essential skills like communication, self-management, critical thinking, and social bonding. These experiences will equip students to confidently face the challenges of the Middle Years Curriculum and beyond. Activities included sports, cognitive challenges, and team-building exercises, all designed to develop their Approaches to Learning and Learner Profile, while providing a great opportunity for students to connect with each other and their teachers.



— “66 —

“The Middle Years Programme Orientation was fun! It helped me reconnect with returning students, warmly welcome new ones, and get to know them better. It was the perfect start to the year, helping us smoothly transition back into the rhythm of school life.”

Chantal Kruger,
UWC Thailand English and Individuals & Societies Teacher



Building Community and Embracing Culture

Reflections on Orientation Week at UWC Thailand

Orientation was an exciting start for grade 11 students at UWC Thailand, marking the beginning of their two-year Diploma Programme. This week offered students opportunities to connect with peers, forge new friendships, and begin building a community and culture they will nurture over the next two years.

With the return of school-based students and the arrival of new ones, the week was a whirlwind of activity and excitement. The campus buzzed with energy, and a three-day camp at the UWC Thailand Outdoor Education Centre added to the dynamic atmosphere.

The week kicked off with a cultural exploration where students immersed themselves in Thai traditions through activities such as tasting local food and drinks, trying on traditional Thai attire, and learning Thai dance. They also visited Wat Phra Thong to reflect on Thailand's cultural heritage.

Following this enriching experience, students went camping to experience the true essence of learning beyond the classroom. Whether familiar with such adventures or trying them for the first time, students hiked, kayaked, and shared stories around campfires, forging connections that will shape their journey at UWC Thailand.

“

“The camp experience resonated deeply within me, as the vibrant social interactions and the forging of new friendships, combined with the remarkable activities and outstanding facilities, created an unforgettable experience.”

Tselmuun,
Grade 11 (Mongolia)

[Click here for more photos](#) 



UWC Thailand Alumna Competes at the Paris 2024 Olympics

We are immensely proud to see our alumna, Jehanara Nabi (UWC Thailand '24), competing at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. As a recent graduate, Jehanara has been a cherished member of our community, and her dedication and hard work have led her to this remarkable achievement. Despite her disappointment with her performance, Jehanara's words capture the essence of her experience:

“My first Olympics! What an experience that’s for sure!! I am so proud to have been able to represent Pakistan at the Olympics and share the honor of flag bearer! Although the experience was incredible, I am disappointed with my performance. However, this only motivates me to strive for better and prove what I am capable of. This is only the beginning for me and I am going to continue to put in the work and come back even stronger after a short break!”

Her resilience and determination are truly inspiring, and our entire community was cheering her on. We can't wait to see what the future holds for Jehanara as she continues to chase her dreams and achieve new heights.



Host Families

Host families play a vital role in our school community by offering a welcoming home environment to our boarding students. They help deepen cultural connections, provide a sense of belonging, and offer students a chance to reconnect with their home culture through shared meals, traditions, and support. Becoming a host family is a wonderful way to expand your own 'family' and get involved with our boarding community, enriching both your life and the lives of our students.

Thank you to all parents who joined our recent Host Family Introduction session and expressed interest in signing up.

For more information about Host Families, please reach out to [Kru Nicki](#) or [Kru Celeste](#).



If you wish to discuss sponsorship opportunities here at UWC Thailand, please contact Nicki, our Director of Philanthropy and Strategic Initiatives: nicki.robertson@uwcthailand.ac.th or go to the [support us page](#) on our website.





UWC Thailand Residential Summer Programme 2024

The UWC Thailand Residential Summer Programme 2024, in partnership with Amala Education, has been a truly enriching experience for all participants, students, and faculty alike, providing a home away from home during the extended school break. Students from UWC Mostar, UWC Adriatic, UWC Dilijan, Good Shepherd Phuket Town, and Chengdu Experimental Foreign Languages School gathered in Phuket to engage in activities aimed at developing ethical leadership and fostering a strong sense of community.

Over a few weeks, these young leaders embraced both the challenges and joys of the programme, participating in insightful sessions on ethical leadership and team-building exercises. A highlight of the programme was also a vibrant visit to Old Phuket Town, where students explored local markets and immersed themselves in the rich culture of Phuket.



[Click here](#) to watch an introductory video about the Residential Programme



[Click here](#) to watch the recap reflection video on the Residential Programme

UWC Thailand Summer Camp 2024

What a fantastic three weeks we've had at UWC Thailand Summer Camp 2024!

Our campers showed great team spirit and enthusiasm in various sports activities. In our STEAM sessions, they explored exciting projects, sparking curiosity and creativity.

Throughout the camp, numerous activities helped everyone bond and form new friendships. We've enjoyed days filled with fun, learning, and memorable moments.

[Click here for more photos](#) 





The Addams Family Musical

We are thrilled to announce that UWC Thailand's whole school production of **The Addams Family Young@Part** is officially in the works!

With casting auditions completed and the cast selected, our talented singer-actors are gearing up for the shows scheduled for 3 and 4 December. But before they dive into rehearsals, our Musical Theatre Cast Camp this upcoming weekend will bring them together. This exciting opportunity will allow cast members to immerse themselves in rehearsals, learn new skills, and bond with one another.

We can't wait to see the magic unfold!



Counsellor's Corner

The first Counsellor Coffee Morning of the school year for Primary Years parents centred on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). The session focused on how parents can nurture SEL's core components—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—through daily interactions with their children.

Parents explored practical strategies to apply at home and shared their personal experiences in fostering these essential skills.

Join us on **Wednesday, 25 September, from 8:00 to 9:00 pm** for a virtual Future Pathways University Evening. Stay tuned for further details.



Sustainably Sourced Coffee Beans at Shaka Café

Shaka is excited to introduce a new line of coffee beans sourced directly from the Integrated Tribal Development Foundation (ITDF), marking a significant step forward in our commitment to sustainability and community support. These premium beans, now available for purchase at Shaka, come from the same trusted suppliers as Boncafe and Nescafe, ensuring top-tier quality while making a positive difference... **[Read more.](#)**

[Click here](#) for the full article 

Co-Curricular Programme Fair

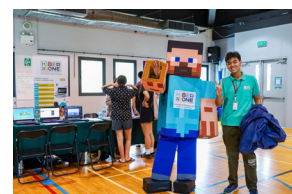
The Co-curricular Fair was a highly successful and memorable event, impressing everyone with the wide range of exciting clubs and activities available. The interactions between our instructors, external providers, and students were dynamic and full of enthusiasm.

We hope you have a fantastic time during Rotation 1 as you dive into your chosen co-curricular activities.

“

“At one point I looked around and really smiled at the learnings and fun that are about to come starting September 2!”

John (JP) Powell,
UWC Thailand Director of Sports, Activities and Camps



[Click here for more photos](#) 



Sport tryouts for the new season

Our sports department hosted tryouts for basketball, football, volleyball and swimming as a way to kick off this sports season. These sessions highlighted both individual talents and the importance of teamwork. Basketball, volleyball and football tryouts showcased personal skills while our students who participated in swimming tryouts demonstrated agility and technique in the pool.

“

“It's encouraging to see new players adding depth to our teams as we build towards the 2024-25 season”

Steve Wallace,
UWC Thailand Football Coach

The Pulse Noticeboard

Stay informed and engaged with what is happening at UWC Thailand

WHOLE SCHOOL

Wai Kru

Wai Kru, or Teacher Appreciation Day, is a Thai ritual in which students pay respects to teachers in order to express their gratitude and formalize the student-teacher relationship. **5 September**

LIBRARY

Read a Book Day

Middle School students buddy up with our younger readers. A chance for them to lead and mentor younger readers and foster a love of reading. **6 September.**

Contact: [Kru Rebekka](#)

PRIMARY

Coffee Morning: Kindy to Grade 1

Explore the **Science of Reading** and how UWC Thailand approaches learning to read and how you can help your children at home. **9 September.**

Contact: [Kru Jen](#)

COMMUNITY

UWC Day

The annual UWC celebration emphasising global values and community engagement. Taking place on **20 September** under the theme: Together We Change.

Contact: [Kru Heidi](#)

PRIMARY

Coffee Morning: Philosophy

Guest Jason Buckley will provide guidance on how to encourage children to think more deeply and critically. **16 September.**

Contact: [Kru Jen](#)

ATHLETICS

PISAC Basketball Tournament

Join us to support our U15 boys and girls in the PISAC Tournament hosted at UWC Thailand. **26 September.**

Contact: [Kru JP](#)

PRIMARY

Cross Country Event

Join us to cheer on our students at this exciting event. Scheduling information will be provided via Toddle. **18 September.**

Contact: [Khun Mook](#)

EARLY YEARS

Wheels Day

Students bring their wheels to engage in gross motor skills development. Bikes, Trikes, Scooters, balance bikes, skateboards, and rollerblades are welcome. **27 September.**

Contact: [Kru Jen](#)

SECONDARY

Coffee Morning: MYP Introduction

Learn about IB Middle Years Programme and distinctions in assessments and grading as compared to other educational programmes. **19 September.**