

CARP President V. Roomet Resigns

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V. Roomet has recently announced to Headquarters Staff that she is moving on from her position as president of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP). The News team took the opportunity to interview her about her accomplishments and lessons learned.

CARP was founded by Unification Church members at Waseda University, Japan, in 1964, and began chapters in the United States in November 1973, according to church historian Dr. Mike Mickler, in the book, *A History of the Unification Church in America*. In Japan, CARP was one of the Unification movement's major recruitment vehicles on college campus, where it also challenged communist student organizations during the 1960s and 1970s.

In the United States, CARP in the early 1970s was largely inactive until the leadership of Rev. Choon Goo "Tiger" Park, who grew the organization from less than 100 members in January 1979 to nearly 1,000 members in June 1980. The bulk of the members came not through recruiting, but rather due to reassignment of members. CARP had created rock bands, such as "Blue Tuna" and "Prime Force" and touring martial arts groups to counter leftist groups on college campuses.

In the 1980s, under Dr. Joon Ho Seuk, who became the president in 1983, CARP became a genuine national organization while maintaining a distinct identity and a high profile on campus, according to Dr. Mickler. During the 1980s CARP became a major source of new members and also organized anti-communist demonstrations throughout the country. Determined to make CARP self-sufficient Dr. Seuk established CARP MFT, a fundraising arm. True Parent's eldest son, Hyo Jin Moon, became he CARP president in 1984, and his first rally was at the Berlin Wall in 1987.

In the early 1990s, Rev. Moon assigned the responsibility to CARP to educate and fill an ideological void left by the then-splintering Soviet republics after the demise of Communism. CARP conducted Divine Principle workshops in Eastern Europe with its custom-made Divine Principle slide presentation. In the mid-1990s, Jin Hun Park, Choong Goo Park's son, became president of CARP and focused the attention to ethical issues of love and sex. CARP was instrumental in forming the Pure Love Alliance, a leading international purity movement. At this time, the Special Task Force (STF) was conceived as a one- to two year activist education program for high school graduates to emulate the regime of first-generation members during the earlier period of the Unification movement in the United States.

Hyun Jin Moon, Rev. Moon's second son, took over as president of World CARP in 2000 and Joshua Cotter served as CARP USA president from 2002 to 2005. CARP was involved with supporting Service for Peace and the STF and ran college-age workshops.

Under the leadership of Rev. In Jin Moon from 2009 to 2012, CARP transitioned into a new organization with a focus directed towards empowerment of Unification youth on campus as well as the natural testament of True Parents. 23-year-old Hero Hernandez of Dallas was hand-picked by Rev. Sun Myung Moon to lead CARP in August of 2011. On December 9, 2011, CARP welcomed its first woman president, V. Roomet, who succeeded Hernandez. During Roomet's leadership CARP strove to empower college students to be the best representatives of themselves by supporting four core values of: Nurturing a Spiritual Life, Excelling in Academics, and Creating a Generation of Peace.



Q: What have you accomplished as CARP president?

“I think that we changed the culture of CARP and the image that it has. I remember when I first started working for CARP how difficult it was sometimes it was to have a conversation with somebody, such as college students, because they knew I was working for CARP and assumed that I was speaking with them to give them some sort of responsibility. A lot of people were closed off and resistant to my conversation for whatever reason. I was usually pretty careful not to bring up responsibilities and instead just ask the college students how they are doing and actually show that I care about them, regardless of whether they take on some responsibility or not. I think that was very important and refreshing for a lot of people.

“That was pretty impactful. I did have people in the last few months tell me that they feel like what we did over the last couple of years has transformed their image of CARP.

Q: Was the idea of changing the image of CARP a sole decision or was it something that you and In Jin Nim worked on?

“I think it was a joint effort because In Jin Nim was putting out this vision of internal excellence, external excellence, generation peace, which became our mission statement. Also, based on my background on campus I was very involved in student activities doing all sorts of work on campus and had experience working with college students who were not in the church. So, my perspective based on this experience of the vision that In Jin Nim was putting out worked really well. It made sense. I felt we were on the same page about those things and I agree that encouraging people to be as successful as they can in whatever area they are pursuing is a good thing.

I also felt that I had some success at college, and sometimes it was not recognized by the church because it was not a church activity per se, but I felt that I was investing my energy towards the common good. I don't think that God would mind because it was not specially a church endorsed activity. I thought about that a lot while I was in this position, and I knew what that felt like to not really have those things valued as much as I thought they should be. So, I tried to recognize the talents that these college students have. That is why we started the 4.0 Club and sending out gifts to graduates even, just to recognize their achievement of graduating from college, which is amazing.

Q: What were some of the highs working as president of CARP and what were some of the lows, or difficult times?

“I think definitely the CARP Refresh (a two-day retreat in California) was a high because it was a solid representation of what we were trying to build and create for CARP, and people could actually see it. It made a pretty significant impact, because people are still talking about the retreat and they bring it up and ask ‘When is CARP going to do another one?’ We had over 80 college age students come and from such different places in terms of their faith. We had all different types of perspectives represented, people excited or not excited with the church, young first-generation members, but it was a safe space where we could make the most of that kind of representation and share ideas and perspectives and people were respectful towards each other “Mr. the Fish was a moment that I would call a high. Mr. the Fish was my baby. He was an expression of how much fun we were having. It's okay to goof off. Life is hard.

“Working with Generation Peace Academy (GPA) interns earlier this year when we started taking was a lot of fun. It was really cool to try new things with them and have them experience different things. We had them do the ‘Atheism vs. Theism’ debate, which they loved

“Another cool thing we did at the closing interview with the GPA/CARP interns was to ask them ‘Does God Exist?’ Because they read all the arguments and counter arguments, they were able to come up with their own answers. In the end their answers were brought down to a personal level and they would say “I've read all these argument, but what it comes down to me is that my belief in God has encouraged me to be a better person and I decided to keep believing in God because I believe it is a good thing.” When I would hear these responses I would start tearing up. I told myself ‘These kids are ready for college.’

“Hosting the Winter Balls was fun. Creating and sending out care packages were fun. It is such a simple act, of giving without expecting anything in return. But we would get thank you letters from people who were on campus and were feeling lonely and would talk about how much it would brighten their day. The small gestures like these were meaningful. I totally could relate to how they felt because when I was on campus and got care packages from my mom, it made my week. It is these simple moments that let us know that we were doing something to make someone a little bit happier or helping them along in college, which can be a little challenging at times.

“I would have to say since September [when In Jin Nim resigned] till now, it has been pretty tough. It has been one of the most challenging times in my life actually. Before when we were working together with our team, we were working towards a relatively clear vision, which was so amazing. We could see how our contributions were helping the greater effort. We felt like we were part of something great. And this is something that is really important to me. That is why I jumped on the team because I saw something that I liked and wanted to see if there was something I could contribute to CARP. But then we kind of lost that vision. A lot of us were pretty hurt by things that happened, and everything that came out and it affected us very personally here, because we were all working towards something, and we lost almost all of that.

“It has been tough but I am glad I stuck around. With Dr. Balcomb as president I could see some stability in the near future. Of course it would take some time for everything to be implemented, but the reason that I wanted to stay was to aid with the transition phase. I have already been working for CARP for three and half years, which I think is a really good amount of time, but I never imagined me as a “lifer,” working for the church my entire life. I was planning three to four years and then moving onto the next phase. So the timing is pretty good for me now.

Q: You said you are in this transition period right now, what are your lessons learned from your experience and what kind of advice would you give the next CARP president?

“First of all it doesn’t really matter what this next president does. The activities don’t matter too much. What matters the most is your perspective behind the activities, why are you doing something, and what kind of culture are you trying to create.

“I think that is why we were able to change the image of CARP. It was very important to us that we were not taking something from the college student, but we were more of a resource for them. We wanted to give them something without any strings attached, without any expectations. From what I understand, that is the way love works, or at least how I think it should work. So, practicing that on an organization level is what really matters. I would encourage that. That is the reason why our care packages are free. That is the reason I buy coffee for people. That is why I don’t bring up people’s responsibilities unless they want to talk it out with me. What matters is that we are in a position to take care of and support people and encourage them to be the best possible person they can be. Doing that over an extended period of time pays off. It might be a little slower and may not produce numbers right away. But that is what an investment is. We are making investments in human beings. Human beings are attracted to where they feel loved. College students are so sensitive. They know when someone has an agenda and they can tell if someone is concerned for their wellbeing. I would recommend that the new president maintain a concern for the college student’s wellbeing and not solely focus on the agenda.

Q: If and when you faced tough situations as president, were there people who you could confide in and who supported you?

“There was definitely the Lovin’ Life team. While they were around, Heather Thalheimer and In Jin Nim were my up lines. I think that they understood a lot of my struggles because we were women, working in an environment that is totally male-dominated. It was challenging to have a different way of leading, and if that is not getting the support that it needs, then it becomes dead in the water and doesn’t go anywhere. But for me having them, even if I was coming up with silly ideas, like sending out care packages for free, which doesn’t make much sense to some people, but it made sense to them. And they recognized that aspect of leadership for the need to invest in people and [that] eventually results would come, trusting that would happen. It was pretty hard to see them leave, so that was a very frustrating experience for me, and it was difficult. So, anyway in the past six months, my mom has been the best support. She has been very patient with me and understood how much my work meant to me and the things that I was doing. I was very passionate about this, and she understands how hard it was for me to see everything just go. My idea of how I was going to exit this game was to build something and have a great team and have something sustainable going on in order to hand it off to someone else easily. But what happened was that we were building and working towards something, but then all of a sudden it comes crashing down and gets taken away, and I am left standing alone. People expect more from me, and I ask myself ‘How much more energy do I have to keep this wheel turning after all of that investment? How am I supposed to start over?’ I was ready to move to whatever is next.

Q: What are your plans after CARP?

“I have a few short-term plans. One of them is to go to Hawaii and live with my brother. I am an ocean person, and that is where I connect the most with God and my dad, who passed away. I think it is going to be a beautiful experience to reconnect with myself in this new context. A lot has happened in the last four years, and I am excited for the next chapter. Going to Hawaii will be great as I will be able to reorient and reground myself.

“Afterwards I will head to Kodiak, Alaska. I will work as a deck hand for Mr. Chris Fiala till the end of the fishing season. Surfing and fishing are two things I had on my mental bucket list into which I’ve wanted to invest a good amount of time. I figured now is the best opportunity to do that before I have to be responsible again. At some point I am probably going to have to have a family, and it would make it difficult to just up and leave and become a fisherman

Q: Any last words before we conclude our interview?

“I am so grateful for this experience because I came to CARP because I really wanted to do it. There was so much freedom to experiment and explore and to create something vibrant and new and exciting. It was so much fun. I am excited to see what is in store for CARP and ready to support the next president.