Happy Lunar New Year!

The Price School currently enrolls students from 49 different countries around the world. We are proud of our diversity and believe it affords all Price students the opportunity to learn their respective disciplines with a global perspective. Since many of our students are from East Asian countries where the Lunar New Year is celebrated, I want to take a moment share some of the customs associated with it.

The Lunar New Year festival, often called the Spring Festival or Chinese New Year, is centuries old and is based on the traditional Chinese lunisolar calendar. This year, the Year of the Fire Monkey, the Festival begins on Monday February 8 and lasts for 15 days. In China, schools and offices close for a week in recognition of this important time where families come together to honor their ancestors and prepare for good fortune. Some of the customs associated with the Chinese New Year include:

- Prior to the start of Chinese New Year, the family thoroughly cleanses the house in order to sweep away bad fortune and make way for incoming good luck.
- Window and doors are decorated with red paper cutouts in popular themes of good fortune, happiness, wealth, and longevity.
- *Nian Ye Fan*, a traditional family reunion dinner the night before the start of the festival is where families gather together. In modern China, migrant workers in faraway places return home and celebrate with their families.
- A dish consisting of special meats is served at the tables of Chinese families, as a main course for the dinner and as an offering for the New Year. Some families will go to local temples to pray for a prosperous new year by lighting incense.
- Other activities include lighting firecrackers to scare away evil spirits and giving money to children and the elderly in red paper envelopes.
- The final day of the New Year is the *Yuanxiao* or Lantern Festival. *Tangyuan*, sweet glutinous rice balls prepared in a soup, are eaten and families walk the streets carrying lighted lanterns.

According to the Chinese zodiac, People born in the Year of the Monkey are lively, quick-witted, curious, innovative and mischievous and their gentleness and honesty often bring them everlasting love. Famous people born under the monkey sign include Leonardo da Vinci, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Selena Gomez.

For those of you who want to learn more about this holiday, here are some links that describe the Spring Festival and celebratory events in southern California and around the world.

[Lunar New Years Celebrations around the U.S. 2016](#)

[What you need to know about Chinese New Year](#)

[Advice to get through the Lunar New Year — from kids, Grandma and L.A.’s Miss Chinatown](#)

[Lunar New Year is morphing into an all-American holiday with taco trucks, beatboxing and beer](#)

Please join me in wishing a Happy New Year to our students, alumni, and friends from around the globe who celebrate this significant and ancient festival.

Jack H. Knott