

# STRENGTHENING ARMENIA'S FOUNDATIONS

In October 2003, AUA hosted the 8th World Seminar on Seismic Isolation, Energy Dissipation and Active Vibration Control of Structures. Held first in San Francisco in 1989, the seminar brought to Armenia over 100 academic and field specialists representing over 23 countries to exchange and disseminate information on new technologies in anti-seismic systems.

“The scale and importance of this event demonstrates our lead in this field. Armenia is the only developing country where modern anti-seismic technology is highly developed, particularly for apartment buildings, schools and hospitals,” said Dr. Mikayel Melkumyan, Chair of the Seminar, and Senior Research Associate & Principal Investigator at the AUA Engineering Research Center. “Without interrupting the use of buildings, we can retrofit structures using base and roof seismic isolation techniques.” Currently, the number of isolated buildings per capita in Armenia is the highest in the world.



Students at Vanadzor's School #4 know their school is now one of the strongest in the city. Seismic isolation bearings (shown above left) were used to retrofit the building.

The outcomes of this scientific exchange will hopefully help avoid future devastation and loss as experienced in the 1988 earthquake in Armenia. “Our technology is also being considered by the Government of Romania and the World Bank, to train Romanian engineers at AUA and assist them with the use of base isolation technology to retrofit their buildings,” noted Melkumyan.

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# INSIDE AUA

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## TAKING A LEADERSHIP ROLE

As the Armenian health care system faces new challenges brought on by market economics and a legacy of a Soviet health-care system dominated by clinical perspectives, AUA's College of Health Sciences is taking a leadership role with Armenia's Ministry of Health and other NGO's toward building a national public health system.

Deputy Minister of Health, Tatul Hakobyan, who earned his MBA at AUA in 1994 and his MPH in 1997, boasts, "AUA provided me with a wide range of competencies to assess, analyze, and make policy decisions in the health sector. AUA gave me a broad perspective of health system performance and emphasis on population health. These skills allowed me to head the Ministry's recent initiative in policy analysis and development."

Affiliated with Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, AUA's College of Health Sciences offers a Master of Public Health (MPH) and provides health professionals with a population-based perspective of health and a focus on quality health services and systems. "The College of Health Sciences is gaining regional recognition. Our active membership in the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER), has provided a forum for AUA to both promote and measure itself," said MPH Associate Director, Dr. Michael Thompson. Recently, the Open Society Institute (OSI) designated AUA as one of two training sites (the other is in Israel) to provide MPH training to junior faculty from throughout Central and Eastern Europe and the NIS. Three students from Moldova and one from Mongolia have joined the 2004/2005 MPH cohort.

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~ Tatul Hakobyan, AUA alumnus  
Deputy Minister of Health

With support from the Zvart Onanian Endowment, the Center for Health Services Research and Development (CHSR) is an applied research center within the College. Through the CHSR, students receive supervised field training experiences that complement their classroom training. For example, Lusine Abrahamyan, MD, MPH (2003) began by assisting with data entry and moved on to translating and adapting health education materials before taking on a hospital-based quality assurance project looking at losses to follow-up following cardiac surgery and outpatient procedures. The latter project resulted in a full-time job following graduation.

Through CHSR projects, AUA collaborates with Armenia's Ministry of Health School for Health Care Management and Administration (SHCMA), and with organizations such as the Nork Marash Cardiology Center. "AUA/CHSR has been an effective contributor for the development of appropriate programs in other institutions in Armenia: the SHCMA and the Nork Marash projects are excellent models for other health care institutions to emulate," noted University President and Dean of the College of Health Sciences, Dr. Haroutune Armenian. This network is expanding with the launching of another project on tobacco control which brings together several AUA centers and a growing coalition of NGOs including the Armenian Public Health Association and the Armenian Public Health Union.

Further, the CHSR's Garo Meghrigian Eye Institute for Preventive Ophthalmology (GMEIPO) has screened over 6,000 people, mostly children and other vulnerable groups, to minimize blindness and eye diseases.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is important to highlight that the American University of Armenia is the product of the synergy that has been developed from the inputs of two institutions of excellence: the Armenian General Benevolent Union and the University of California, and the valuable support of the governments of Armenia and the United States. However, it is important to highlight as well, the daily contributions to the growth and development of the University of the many individuals who make up the family of the AUA. As presented in this newsletter, it is the faculty, students, staff and alumni of this unique institution who are able to justify the reputation of excellence of the AUA on a continuous basis. As we move forward with a number of new initiatives, this University is poised to assert itself not just as a unique model for Armenia but also for the broader region of the Caucasus and the Middle East. It is a future of achievements that we will continue developing at the AUA.

~ Haroutune K. Armenian

## FACULTY NEWS



Dr. Kenell Touryan joins the AUA faculty and staff in 2004 as Vice President for Research and Development. Dr. Touryan holds a Doctorate Degree in Aerospace and

Mechanical Sciences from Princeton University and has worked extensively with countries of the Former Soviet Union in his capacity as Chief Technology Analyst of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado.



A Fulbright Scholar, Sara Anjargolian was appointed in 2004 Associate Professor and Assistant Dean of AUA's Law Department. She received her J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law. Upon admittance to the California Bar, she joined the Justice Department in Washington D.C. as a trial attorney, where she litigated cases on behalf of the United States.



In September 2003, the Board of Trustees of the American University of Armenia Corporation approved the appointment of Dr. Marianne Celce-Murcia as AUA Dean of

English Programs. A long time colleague of former Dean, the late Dr. Russell Campbell of UCLA, Professor Celce-Murcia is one of the most distinguished academics in applied linguistics at UCLA. She has been internationally recognized as one of the leaders in the field of the teaching of English as a Second Language, and will lead our English programs to new levels of excellence.



Hasmik Mehranian joins AUA's College of Engineering as a Visiting Lecturer to teach a course in Operations Research and in Production Systems Analysis. She received her MS from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



A partner of Bournazian & Luna law firm specializing in immigration law, Jack Vahan Bournazian joins AUA as lecturer on law. He received his J.D. at the University of San Diego and has served on various human rights missions to Iraq, Mexico, Guatemala and Cuba.

## NEW SPRING APPOINTMENTS

Traver Gudie, AUA Lecturer on Law  
Economic and Commercial Officer, US Embassy

Sharon Wood, AUA Lecturer in Teaching English as a Foreign Language  
Winner of the Senior English Language Fellow Program, US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

G. Shainesh, AUA Visiting Associate Professor of Marketing  
Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore

Anindya Sen, AUA Visiting Professor of Economics  
Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta



Above left: Suzy Antounian with President Haroutune Armenian

Above right: President Haroutune Armenian, Ara Nazinian, and Sona Hamalian

Right: AUA alumnus Dr. Petros Keshishian, President Emeritus Mihran Agbabian, Dr. Michael Kouchakdjian, AUA alumna Hasmik Kouchakdjian, AUAC Trustee Edward Avedisian.



## CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Michael Kouchakjian, Suzy Antounian, and Sona Hamalian received the AUA Tenth

Anniversary Medal in 3 separate ceremonies. This medal was established to recognize individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the mission, spirit, and vision of AUA during its first decade through their leadership, dedication, generosity and service.

Dr. Kouchakdjian was a key executive member of the University Administration for seven years, first in the capacity of Associate Director of the Center for Business Research and Development, then Director of Administration, and later as Project Executive for the design and construction of the AUA Business and Conference Center.

During her 7 years of service, Suzy Antounian was instrumental in laying the legal framework for AUA operations and initiating new projects and programs in her capacity as Special Assistant to the President, Dean of Extension Programs, and later as Vice-President for Development and External Programs.

Sona Hamalian worked with Dr. Mihran Agbabian, President Emeritus, in the earliest and most critical years of AUA's founding as the University Administrator. She set the groundwork for AUA's administration, overcoming many emergencies and keeping high the University's standing in Armenia as an institution of higher education. She later headed the University Extension Program.

# REACHING OUT

**AUA's** arms are reaching out into the regions of Armenia and internationally to diversify its student body. In parallel, AUA alumni are working in communities that have not experienced the dramatic economic, social and cultural changes as Yerevan over the last decade. Please meet a few of these students and alumni...



"Without AUA I could have never realized my goals in the way I wished," said Ashot Aslanyan (M.Eng. '94). He is the Director of the Ararat Gold Recovery Company (AGRC), which specializes in gold mining

and employs approximately 1000 workers in plants in Ararat, Zod and Megradzor. "Making educated choices and taking responsibilities are the key criteria for people to successfully occupy responsible positions," said Aslanyan. "To my great pleasure, AUA graduates occupy key positions in the company today. They are all professionals and are very competitive for local and foreign specialist positions."



Anahit Tadevosyan (MBA, '99) is the Finance Officer and Chief Accountant for the Armenian Ecumenical Church Loan Fund (ARMECLOF) located in the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. ARME-

CLOF deals with 1,300 beneficiaries in remote regions, providing them with loans and other organizational support activities. Pleased to bring hope to people living in impoverished areas, Tadevosyan said "I enjoy serving people with love and care, and with God's help to encourage and support somehow the spiritual and economic transformation of our clients."



Ruzanna Ohanyan, a linguistics graduate of Artsakh's State University, learned about AUA's MATEFL Program during a visit by Dr. Atken Armenian, AUA Dean of Extension. "He visited

our university to teach students new methods of language learning through video."

Two years of saving her earnings as a teacher of languages in the State House of Art in Artsakh, and with help from her relatives, Ohanyan was able to afford her AUA education. She is now renting an apartment in Yerevan and studying full time. "After graduation I hope to work as a lecturer in the Yerevan State University, or if my dream comes true in AUA," said Ohanyan.

Alexander Sahakian-Masihi, a 33 year-old Armenian from Tehran, is currently a first year student in



the AUA Law Department. "I did not know about AUA before coming to Armenia in 1994 as a tourist. I had asked one of the passers-bys where the American Embassy was located, and was told that it is near the American University of Armenia," said Sahakian-

Masihi. Despite the fact that Alexander's family is settled in the United States, he made a decision to live in Armenia. He recently married, bought an apartment and is settled in Yerevan with his wife. Working full-time in Mellat Bank, Yerevan and studying law part-time, his parents are very pleased that he has this opportunity to pursue higher education in his homeland. "AUA fundamentally differs from the universities in Tehran. Here I see the American style in action, it is a new approach to learning and a new methodology for me," noted Sahakian-Masihi. "Every student is encouraged to analyze the subject independently and share his or her own opinion with the professors. It is wonderful."



Nvard Grkikyan, a native of Gyumri, graduated from Anania Shirakatsi University, and was admitted into the TEFL program in 2000. She is the first in her family to pursue an education

beyond a Bachelor's Degree. Her father died in the 1988 Earthquake, her brother

and three sisters live in Gyumri, and her mother runs a small business there. "The main challenge that I face during my studies in AUA is the tuition fee. During the first year of my study here, a kind person helped me to pay the tuition. This year I have applied for a loan to continue my studies." Currently maintaining a 3.96 GPA, Grkikyan appreciates AUA's philosophy on teaching and learning. "I like most the teacher student relationship within the class and out of it. Here the learning process does not take place only in the class-

room, but also by individual meetings with instructors. They assign individual work, teach how to do the work, and provide help whenever it is necessary."

**Currently, 80.5 % of AUA's students are from Yerevan, 16% from Armenia's other regions, and 3.5% from foreign countries.**



Three students from Moldova and one student from Mongolia joined the 2004/2005 Master of Public Health (MPH) cohort.

**L to R:** Olesea Nedera (Moldova); Viorica Rotaru (Moldova); Dr. Barbara Grace Sullivan, MPH Associate Director; Ecaterina Perean (Moldova); Luvsan Munkh-Erdene (Mongolia); Dr. Michael Thompson, MPH Associate Director