

INSIDE AUA

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LINKING THEORY AND PRACTICE

“Because Armenia is a developing democracy, my own research convinced me that it cannot achieve political, economic, or social reforms without the consensus and participation of the public. My hope is that our students’ contributions to the nation will be benefited by understanding the theories and research necessary for achieving democratic policy-making,” stated **Lucig Danielian**, Associate Dean of the School of Political Science and International Affairs, over 5 years ago. Back then she couldn’t have known the impact and experiences students would bring to that reform.

Upon completing an internship in her last quarter of studies, **Anna Kirakosyan** (MA ’00), said “Textbook learning provides you with theory. In real situations, the environment often dictates its conditions, proves or modifies the theory, especially when it comes to foreign policy. Working in the National Assembly enabled me to be aware of the factors affecting policy making and the current foreign policy issues on the agenda of the Government.” Her internship was just part of a pilot study funded by the Eurasia Foundation to incorporate practical experience into the rigorous academic program.

Founded through a generous gift from **Drs. Lucin and Arshaluys Karakashian**, AUA offers a six-quarter graduate program leading to the degree of Master of Political Science. In their final quarter of studies, students must write either a Master’s Essay or complete a Policy Internship Project.

The internship offers students the opportunity to participate in and observe daily policy-related activities. The goal is to provide students with hands-on experience in analyzing policy options and to provide specific policy recommendations to the internship host.

“During my internship at UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) in Armenia, I had a unique opportunity to not only have a closer look at the work of the United Nations in this area, but also participate in the process of cooperation with other agencies,” said **Alina Topchyan** (MA ’01). “Besides,” she continued, “the strong expertise of my supervisor at UNHCR helped me better understand the problems of Armenian refugees as well as the situation with the state legislation and NGO sector.”

The impact of the Master’s Essays are evident through their publication in the Occasional Papers of the Network of Institutions and Schools of Public Administration in Eastern and Central Europe. **Yulia Ghazaryan’s**

(MA ’99) paper attracted special attention. “It was an incredible reward to find in the mailbox numerous invitation letters to participate in international conferences and seminars. The valuable input and healthy criticism of the international scholars helped me polish the outcome of my two-year studies at AUA, and to have my first publication.” Yulia is just one of 170 Poli Sci graduates working in local and foreign state and non-governmental organizations making a difference in the policy and decision-making of Armenia.

“My hope is that our students’ contributions to the nation will be benefited by understanding the theories and research necessary for achieving democratic policy-making.”

—Lucig Danielian

FROM THE PRESIDENT

While we have the opportunity to celebrate our student and graduate achievements almost on a daily basis, we also feel the pain when misfortune hits. On July 30, 2002, one of our most active alumni, **Vahan Gevorkyan** (MBA ’00), was the victim of a car accident while returning to Yerevan from Gyumri with his colleagues from the last of a series of training sessions developed by them, in the city that still carries the heavy scars of the 1988 earthquake.

Vahan symbolized much of what we would like to see in our graduates. He was a good student and President of the Student Council (1999-2000), a member of AUA’s Accreditation Steering Committee, and an active board member of our newly formed Alumni Association. After graduation, he established with

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INSIDE AUA

MEET AUA'S NEW DEAN OF FACULTY, GEORGE JAKAB

Not unlike most small institutions running a big operation on a tight budget, administrators receive one title, yet play many roles and take on multiple positions and responsibilities. AUA's newest appointment, Dean of Faculty, **Dr. George Jakab**, knows this all too well. "Sometimes I do windows on the weekend," he light-heartedly remarked as he reviewed the slate of responsibilities in this position. "Seriously though, my main role is to work with AUA's multiple constituencies to facilitate an environment in which the maximum potential of each faculty member can be achieved."



This can be a challenge admits Jakab, given the complex and singular administrative structure of AUA, whereby US based deans are the leaders of the academic programs which, in turn, are implemented by the resident associate deans at AUA. He noted that although the resident faculty is constantly growing, the majority of the faculty comes to Yerevan to teach their courses and then returns to their home institutions in the U.S. "With everyone scattered over a wide geographic area, I cannot hold a committee meeting "down the hall", as would be possible at a centralized university."

However, the new Dean of Faculty doesn't believe that the role of the faculty will significantly change as the primary responsibility of faculty members, at any institution, is to

teach and mentor students, perform research and publish the results, and participate in service to the institution by serving on various administrative committees. "I foresee that the resident faculty will continue to grow, thereby bringing additional expertise to AUA's programs. This will allow changes in each program's curriculum through the addition of elective courses while also providing a critical mass for the purposes of fostering research," stated Jakab.

A Johns Hopkins University Professor, Jakab first came to Armenia in 1998 and has returned 7 times to teach various courses and to assist in the strategic planning of AUA's Environmental and Conservation Research Center. "The classroom experience, the dedicated faculty, the AUA culture, and the President's plans for AUA's future caught my imagination as representing an opportunity with tremendous challenges that I could contribute to." After 10 years of remarkable growth, AUA is consolidating and planning its expansion. Toward this end, Jakab's greatest challenge will be getting prepared for accreditation where institutional integrity and educational effectiveness are the primary standards to be addressed. "There are no models and few guidelines for AUA's evolution since the situation is unique, yet we must facilitate an environment where the academic excellence of AUA will be perpetuated as the institution builds for the future."

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colleagues an information technology company focusing on e-commerce.

Vahan was a **leader-entrepreneur** who was a change agent, his concern with the community around him moved him to share his **competencies** in a number of **service** projects. He had a vision of the future of Armenia where **information technology** played a major role and where **quality assurance** was an irreducible part of professional practice.

He believed in **participatory democracy** and was

an active participant in organizational life whenever it was important for him to contribute. He was committed to Armenia and worked hard to succeed in a difficult environment.

I met him last in an informal AUA Alumni gathering in one of the cafes of Yerevan. His presence added a special sparkle to the evening. We have much to learn from the adversity of Vahan's passing away. AUA is an institution where we try to transform adversity into positive achievement.

-Haroutune Armenian

CHANGING VISION OF NURSING IN ARMENIA

"My ultimate educational goal is to get a PhD in nursing," said **Lusine Poghosyan**, a first-year student and woman who has already accomplished many firsts. Lusine is the first student with a nursing background accepted into AUA's Master of Public Health (MPH) program, and one of the first graduates who earned a baccalaureate degree in nursing from Erebuni State Medical College, the first four-year nursing program established in Armenia. She is AUA's first recipient of the Abgar L. and Loretta Asman Babaian/University of Michigan Award for Excellence in Health Care Studies and Leadership, established in 2002 to encourage baccalaureate nurses to pursue an MPH at AUA.

Lusine, who also works at AUA's Center for Health Services and Research & Development, added, "Traditionally, nursing education consisted of one year and ten months of education, and then nurses were sent to the field without further specialization. Deeply rooted among Armenians is the assumption that their primary role is to only give injections. But I think that nurses can become qualified professionals and build careers in other fields."

Dr. Michael Thompson, Associate Director of the MPH program, concurred that this is a good start in establishing a cadre of public health nurse professionals who can support both population-based and clinical-based health systems.

"Having a nurse in the MPH program opens new career pathways to the baccalaureate nurses in Armenia who will have limited career options until the practice of medicine evolves to western practice models and enriches the diversity of the MPH class," stated Thompson.

AUA LAW CLUB: JUSTICE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



'Court Watching' is the latest project of the AUA Law Club, which was established informally in 2000 by AUA's law students, working with their Professor,

Lowry Wyman, to help a defendant. "The students helped as lawyers and as court watchers, ensuring by their very presence that the judge and other officials would take their responsibilities seriously," explained Associate Dean **Barnabas Johnson**.

One year later, and with over 30 members, AUA's Law Club includes students, alumni, faculty, and other allies of legal education reform in Armenia and the region, with a significant focus on supporting fair trial standards through court attendance and case

presentations, lectures, conferences and seminars. Arayik Ghazaryan, President of the Law Club and a graduate of AUA's LL.M. program, spoke with a realistic tone, "Our appearance at the trial court may not have any direct impact on the outcome of the judgment. The purpose for attending the trials is to gain practical knowledge of court procedures, as well as of case development and defense strategy."

Artak Khachatryan, Vice-President of the Law Club, said the main goal of the organization is to raise public awareness particularly among students of different universities. "For example, we organized Constitutional Discussions inviting representatives of both proposed draft constitutions so that students could ask questions directly to the authors and clarify what they are going to face when they vote."

BREAKING NEW GROUNDS

Projected to open in 2004, AUA's newest construction venture, the Paramaz Avedisian building, is foreseen as a state-of-the-art 21st century educational building located behind the Baghramian building. It is planned to be four stories tall and cover 10,000 square meters, providing additional space to meet AUA's growing needs. With an \$8 million pledge from a generous patron, and an already fulfilled promise to Yerevan's City Mayor to reconstruct School #113 as a goodwill gesture toward improving local educational facilities, the Paramaz Avedisian building will attract regional attention as a contemporary academic facility, housing teaching and learning centers, research units, and student services.



AUA's President Armenian, Yerevan Mayor Robert Nazarian, Yuri Sarkissian, Rector of State Engineering University of Armenia, Trustee Ed Avedisian and wife Pamela, and other AUA university officials, attend ceremony.



ALUMNI NEWS

Almost 1,000 alumni and growing strong, an AUA Alumni Association (AA) was formed in June 2002 with renewed spirit and sense of purpose. "We need an Association which will be a forum for all AUA alumni and will support AUA and its graduates" noted AA board member, **Anaida**

Allakhverdyan (MA '97), with enthusiasm about the many directions the organization can go.

Over the past five years, a growing number of graduates have felt that there is a need for networking and uniting a family of AUA alumni. "Looking back

"AUA is a vibrant force in modern Armenia, reflecting Armenian tradition as well as the needs for building a vital economy to match the needs of our times."

~ C. Judson King, Provost & Senior VP, University of California, Chairman, AUAC Board of Trustees

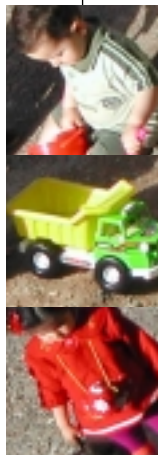
at the first attempts to create a representative body to fulfill projects and ideas of alumni, I can see how little experience we had in setting such organizations," said **Ara Hamazaspyan** (MBA '94), AA board member. "Today we have clear and concrete objectives to reach, first to clarify organizational issues such as our charter, registration, etc. Then we are going to research alumni interests, areas of expertise, ideas, in order to plan activities in a realistic way."

With the additional support of the Alumni and Career Development Office (ACDO), a special fundraising campaign was held this summer, in which over \$1,100 was raised to landscape and light the neglected front grounds of the University building. "We would like to express our deepest gratitude to our graduates for their enthusiasm and generosity," said ACDO Coordinator, **Ruzan Balayan** (MBA '99), "AUA changed our lives and it's our turn to give back."

POISONED PLAYGROUNDS?

New research completed by the Environmental Conservation and Research Center greatly clarifies the problem of lead contamination in Armenia and overturns existing misconceptions. After completing an analysis of over 1,000 soil samples collected in Yerevan in 2000 and 2001, the Center discovered that throughout Yerevan, the disposal of lead-acid car batteries onto the soil of apartment and school yards has created very high concentrations of lead in soils. These high levels create unhealthy blood lead concentrations in an estimated 25% of Yerevan's children. This, in fact, represents a significantly greater health threat than the industrial activities and automobile emissions previously assumed to be the primary sources of lead in Yerevan.

The Environmental Conservation and Research Center will initiate programs in 2002/3 to help apartment residents



prevent and clean up hazards. "Yerevan has not escaped the troubles of urban lead contamination that are found in most of the world's cities. But with a well-educated and concerned population, it is prepared to address the problems and solve them," concluded **Dr. Dunlap**, Director of the Center and Assistant Professor at AUA, as he noted their activities to move from research results to community projects.

The Research Center has been analyzing lead from throughout Armenia since 1998, in collaboration with scientists at Armenia's Institute of Geosciences of the National Academy of Sciences and the University of California at Santa Cruz. Funding for the work has come from the NATO Science Programme, the Civilian Research Development Fund, and from the generous support of **Mr. Sarkis Acopian**. Results have been published in the international research journal *Atmospheric Environment*.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

December 13, 2002
AUAC Board of Trustees Meeting

December 15, 2002
Public Health Workshop and Retreat

January 21-22, 2003
Academic Administrators' Annual Retreat for Strategic Planning

CONTACT INFO

Send comments, stories, and new contacts to: gohar@ix.netcom.com

Editor: Gohar Momjian

Associate Editor: Elmira Danelyan

Graphic Design: Nicole Vasgerdsian

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