UCA Helps Expand Role of Museums in Kyrgyzstan

The Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit (CHHU) of UCA’s Graduate School of Development, organised a training on “Museum Collection Management: Storage, Accounting and Exhibition” on November 28th in Bishkek. It was held as part of CHHU’s ongoing efforts to build human resource capacity of national museums in Kyrgyzstan.

The event was hosted by the Gapar Aitiev Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts, and organised by UCA in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Tourism of the Kyrgyz Republic. The event gathered over 30 Chief Specialists from 17 state museums in Bishkek, Naryn, Osh, and Issyk-Kul regions.

During her welcoming address, Dr. Elmira Kuchumkulova, Head of CHHU, briefed the audience on UCA’s work aimed at preserving the cultural heritage of Central Asia. She highlighted the important role of museums as guardians of the historical and cultural heritage of the country.

The training provided a platform for museum staff to discuss the challenges of their work. These included issues of collections, lack of specialised human resources, inadequate infrastructure for storing exhibits, as well as poor labour conditions and salaries. Participants also discussed the complicated procurement procedures, which causes obstacles for museums to purchase valuable exhibits for its collection. As a result, these valuable pieces end up in private collections, including foreign collections, which leads to a loss of the country’s cultural heritage. Participants also were provided a unique opportunity to visit the storage facility of the Gapar Aitiev Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts, and get acquainted with current museum exhibits.

UCA Chancellor and Tajikistan President Meet in Paris

UCA’s Chancellor, His Highness the Aga Khan, met with Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, ahead of the Paris Peace Forum on November 7th.

The two leaders discussed areas of regional cooperation, and the Aga Khan Development Network’s (AKDN) shared agenda to promote social and economic development in Central Asia, including the contribution of the University of Central Asia in Khorog, to the development of education. The UCA campus in Khorog was inaugurated by President Rahmon in September 2018.

Central Asia is facing severe challenges related to water quality, management and availability, that calls for joint efforts among the countries. Scientific and technological cooperation can act as a key enabler in addressing these problems by providing innovative solutions, informing policies with sound and reliable evidence, and enabling broader regional cooperation.

Representatives from UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) and the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) delivered presentations at a workshop on “Water Quality, Water, Ecosystems and Energy” on November 11-15. It was organised by the European Union Central Asia Network for Water Science and Technology.

“UCA is a young regional university with huge capacity in conducting research in the region, covering topics such as natural resources management, food security, land degradation, mountain livelihood and social dynamics,” said Dr. Ben Jarihani, Assistant Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences with UCA’s SAS, and Senior Research Scientist at MSRI.

The workshop was aimed at addressing cross-cutting issues in the region, including data accessibility, skills development, training and education, socioeconomic issues, research, as well as innovation and funding issues.

Dr. Ben Jarihani (UCA), delivered a presentation on the “Application of New Techniques in Hydro-logical Science.”

The Institute of Public Policy and Administration of the University of Central Asia (UCA) signed an agreement in November with the Institute of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan in Dushanbe. Under this agreement, IPPA will deliver its Certificate Programme in Economic Policy (CPEP) to two intakes of learners in 2019 and 2020.

The current cycle was launched on November 11th, and engages over 20 Tajik civil servants. This initiative is funded by Canada’s International Development Research Centre and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada.

IPPA delivered a similar programme for learners in Kyrgyzstan in 2018 and 2019. The first cohort includes 10 graduates from government agencies, NGOs, international organisations, academia and the private sector.

IPPA Economic Policy Programme Now in Tajikistan

IPPA Economic Policy Programme Now in Tajikistan

UCA to Provide Training at New Aarhus Centre in Naryn

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MSRI Support for Dialogues on Water Science Technologies
Evidence Based Research to Tackle Climate Change

Water in the Isfara river region has become a source of tension in the relationship between water departments and local governments. There is a need for improved natural resource management in order to respond to growing climate change concerns. Through research conducted by MSRI, UCA aims to provide local stakeholders with qualitative, evidence-based research to help them reconsider that water issues are complex, and the need for cooperation.

Maksim Kulikov (pictured), Research Fellow at UCA's MSRI, delivered a presentation at an Isfara Small Basin Council meeting on November 5th. He outlined research on vegetation trends, and its relationship to precipitation and water discharge in the Isfara river basin. Such research will be used as an important tool to navigate the adoption of a new Isfara river basin plan. It also aims at supporting the improvement of water governance, accounting for climate change, new precipitation dynamics, and vegetation scenarios. MSRI’s research is conducted under the framework of the “Improving Stability and Better Natural Resource Management in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan” project, funded by the Conflict Security and Stability (CSSF) Programme in Central Asia.

An Oxford Afternoon at UCA's Naryn Campus

Luke Grenfell-Shaw, Doctoral Researcher at the University of Oxford, and Visiting Faculty at UCA's School of Arts and Sciences, organised "An Oxford Afternoon" at the UCA Naryn campus on November 22nd.

Oxford graduates, Jeremy Sigmon, Michelle Tran and Olivia Becher, shared their research and experience with UCA students. Topics included fecal sludge management in refugee camps, the impact of climate change, green and sustainable buildings, the potential of growing bananas at 2,000m elevation, and how saltwater-cooled greenhouses could increase food and water security in desert environments. The visit inspired UCA students, and provided a platform to discuss possible collaborations between the two institutions.

Academic Partner Lauds Caliber of UCA Students

Monica Attard, Dean of the Department of Journalism at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), visited the Naryn campus, and delivered a masterclass on multimedia platforms to sophomore and freshmen students at UCA. Her trip was part of ongoing visits by the University’s international academic partners. UCA’s Communications and Media curriculum is developed in collaboration with the University of Technology Sydney in Australia.

“I was really surprised and delighted with the caliber of students that I came across at the University of Central Asia – in fact it was extraordinary. When we did a pitching session, the kinds of stories that they were thinking about or wanting to do, were really sound and ambitious,” said Monica Attard, who visited UCA in November. “I think that young journalism in this part of the world is in pretty good hands, and on track to do exactly what they need to be doing.” Learn more in a recent interview with Azattyk in Kyrgyz: http://bit.ly/MonicaAttard.
Students Welcome Over 3,000 Guests to the Khorog Campus

Over 3,000 residents of the Gorno-Badakhsan Autonomous Oblast visited UCA’s Khorog Campus on November 23-24 for an Open Doors event. Guests were introduced to UCA’s academic programmes and facilities, as well as its unique architectural and interior design, through a series of campus tours led by UCA students.

This is the second Open Doors event held at the Khorog campus. In 2018, over 4,900 people visited the campus from the Khorog region and surrounding districts.

Simon Fraser University Discusses Partnerships with UCA

Representatives from Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Canada visited UCA in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to discuss potential collaborations between the two universities. As a part of their trip, they held information sessions for UCA faculty, staff and students to learn more about SFU, and discuss potential future collaborations.

This includes post-graduate scholarships, mobility between the two universities, as well as research opportunities for UCA faculty and staff.

French Ambassador Visits UCA in Naryn

Michaël Roux, the French Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic, visited the Naryn campus on October 30th, and met with undergraduate students.

UCA Naryn Campus Welcomes Swiss Delegation

Véronique Hulmann (2nd from left), Swiss Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as representatives from the Embassy of Switzerland, Mr. Tunzhurbek Kudabaev (2nd from right), National Programme Officer of Water Infrastructure and Climate Change, and Mr. Lucien Aegerter (right), Programme Manager of Development Cooperation, visited the UCA Naryn campus on November 27th.

The delegation met with UCA faculty and staff, toured the campus facilities, and learnt more about UCA programmes and activities in Naryn.

Good to Know!

UCA has become the first Central Asian University to sign an academic alliance with the leading Robotic Process Automation (RPA) software firm, UiPath. UiPath is one of the fastest growing IT companies in the North America, and aims at preparing the society for automation. Through this partnership, basic RPA courses are available to UCA students, faculty and staff.
Famous Tajik Artist Performs at UCA

Daler Nazarov, famous Tajik songwriter, singer and composer, and his band, performed at the University of Central Asia’s Khorog campus on November 17th.

Over 300 guests attended from UCA and the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast community. The performance was also streamed live through the band’s YouTube channel, and a video recording will be publicly available at a later date.

Tourism Development Training Implemented in Kazakhstan

UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education in collaboration with the Almaty Region Department of Tourism held a two-day training on the “Implementation of the State Programme for Tourism Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2019-2025”.

The training was attended by over 80 civil servants in the tourism sector, and was held in the Uygur district of the Almaty region in Kazakhstan.

Computer Literacy Courses Boost Adult Education in Naryn

Short-term trainings in computer literacy were launched in November at SPCE Naryn for staff from the Family Group Practice, and kindergarten workers in Naryn town. It was organised as part of the framework of the National Digital Transformation Programme - Digital Kyrgyzstan 2019-2023.

The training consists of three modules including Word, Excel and PowerPoint, and upon completion, students will receive International Computer Driving License (ICDL) certificates, an advanced international computer literacy qualification.

SPCE Students Return Home as International Champions

Seven mental math students from UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education in Khorog competed in the Fourth International Olympiad on Mental Arithmetic in Tbilisi (Georgia). All SPCE participants received prizes including Super Champion, Champion, first, second, and third place in various categories. Congratulations! The Olympiad was organised by the Global Association of Mental Arithmetic (GAMA), and was held on November 22nd.

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Roya (pictured on right) and Abdul Wadood are from the Baharak District of Badakhshan, which is located about 30 km south-east of Faizabad (Afghanistan). They study English three times a week at UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education in Faizabad. "There are many institutions which provide English courses in Faizabad and Baharak; however, SPCE is an internationally recognised centre which provides high quality education within a conducive learning environment," said Roya. “Despite commuting a long distance from Baharak to Faizabad, we are delighted with our choice. I am a midwife, and also work for a private organisation. Improving my English is helping me a lot in my work.”

A Festival of Togetherness was held at UCA’s Naryn campus to celebrate diversity and pluralism. Students organised an exhibition where each table represented a different nationality, and showcased clothing, national food, musical instruments, as well as information on the country. UCA students also performed traditional dances, and songs.

Fifteen students of UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) learning centre in Faizabad (Afghanistan) successfully completed the Intermediate level of its Conversational English course (pictured) in October 2019. In November, 12 students also completed the International Computer Driving License Online Essentials course. Congratulations!

Launched in 2014, SPCE has now helped train over 12,500 learners through short-term courses and programmes in Afghanistan to date. It currently offers programmes in Darwaz, Ishkashim, Faizabad, and Shugnan.
Naryn is a mountainous region, located over 300 km from Kyrgyzstan’s capital, yet experiences environmental problems at a higher intensity. With this in mind, a group of UCA students organised a training session for the Naryn community to raise awareness on these issues, and discuss how they can play a more effective role in protecting their environment.

Participants were called to plant more trees, use less plastic, and raise awareness in their communities and beyond. The training was held at the Naryn campus on November 17th. Read the full story, written by Rukhmina Imronshoeva, UCA undergraduate student at: http://bit.ly/GreenNaryn.

Cleanup Day Promotes Recycling in Naryn

A clean-up day event aimed at protecting the environment from plastic waste was organised by UCA’s SPCE in Naryn. Students collected 34 bags of plastic bottles.

Prior to the clean-up campaign, Bermet Isakova, SPCE staff, delivered a presentation on plastic pollution, and the importance of recycling to Access Microscholarship programme students. This programme provides free English language classes to students through after-school sessions. It is funded by the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek.

Young Khorog Residents Learn about the Environment

Children aged 5-7 from the Khorog town attended a presentation on waste management and environmental sustainability at UCA’s Khorog campus on November 3rd. This was the third Early Childhood Development session organised by UCA’s student-led Green Community Club.

Through interactive games, puppet shows, and drawing activities, young participants were introduced to environmental issues, and ways to be more environmentally friendly.
Intelligent Robots in Science and Society

Prof. Dr. Alan Winfield, Professor of Robot Ethics (University of the West of England), Visiting Professor (University of York), and Associate Fellow (Cambridge Centre for the Future of Intelligence), delivered a public lecture at UCA on "Artificial Futures Intelligent Robots in Science and Society" on November 19th.

In his talk Prof. Dr. Alan Winfield presented the amazing reality of intelligent robots, illustrated with real examples from current research in the Bristol Robotics Laboratory, and discussed future possibilities for intelligent robots in science and society.

It was organised by UCA as one of the outcomes of the "Digital Transformation in Central Asia" conference, held in Bishkek and Naryn (Kyrgyzstan) in October 2019. Watch the lecture at: https://youtu.be/fSuQa6kzdhw.

Classroom Management in Kyrgyzstan

Hamid Ali Khan, Senior Lecturer of English for Academic Purposes at UCA, delivered a lecture on classroom management for English language teachers in Bishkek on November 29th. It was attended by over 40 participants from various schools in Kyrgyzstan.

The lecture was organised by UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education in collaboration with the Bishkek City Mayor’s Office of Education.

Climate Change is Here to Stay

Dr. Tariq Banuri, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of the Government of Pakistan, delivered a lecture on climate change at UCA in Bishkek.

Dr. Banuri highlighted that climate change is here to stay, and while some changes are irreversible, a concerted worldwide effort needs to be launched to mitigate a global calamity. Watch at: https://youtu.be/VmkvPkxG9s8

MSRI Director Presents Lectures in Japan

Professor Roy Sidle, Director of UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI), visited Japan for one month as part of a Distinguished Professorship at the Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology (TUAT).

During his visit, he delivered a presentation on “New Observations, Approaches, and Understanding of Hydrogeomorphic Processes: Examples from Japan, Australia, and Central Asia,” at a meeting of the Japanese Geomorphological Union at Kyoto University.

Dr. Sidle also presented at a Global Innovation Research Symposium on November 19th, and to TUAT students, faculty, and guests. He discussed the “Assessment of Hydrogeomorphic Hazards in the Context of Sustainable Land Management,” and “Hydrogeomorphic Processes and Hazards in High Mountain Environments,” and covered hazard issues in Central Asia.
UCA's Institute of Public Policy and Administration has published research on “Climate Change in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan: Trends and Adaptation Policies Conducive to Innovation," by Parviz Khakimov.

This working paper analyses adaptation technologies for agricultural, water, transport and health sectors, as well as disaster risks management technologies, that contribute to the climate resilience of the population, and sectors of the economy. It also provides policy insights into guiding Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan to avoid the negative consequences of climate change.

This research is available for free download from UCA's website: https://ucentralasia.org/Resources/Item/2460/EN

Lidiya Chikalova, Reporting Officer at UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education, has contributed to a book published by UNESCO on “Rethinking Pedagogy: Exploring the Potential of Digital Technology in Achieving Quality Education.” Chikalova served as a member of the Drafting Group for a Global Literature Review on Digital Textbooks and Other Digital Educational Media, coordinated by the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development. The book will be presented during the TECH2019 conference in Visakhapatnam, India in December.

It is available for download at: https://d27gr4uvqxfbqz.cloudflare.net/files%2F5dc9ce78-2873-4b43-9c70-44ed-80cd30e5_Rethinking%20Pedagogy.pdf

The Journey Begins Here

Undergraduate admissions are now open for the 2020-21 Academic Year at the University of Central Asia. UCA offers an international standard of education, dedicated and qualified faculty, full scholarships and grants, and a vibrant student life.

The University offers undergraduate programmes in Communications and Media (BA), Economics (BA), Computer Science (BSc), and Earth and Environmental Sciences (BSc). Based on the specialisation they choose, students can attend UCA's campus in Naryn (Kyrgyzstan) or Khorog (Tajikistan).

Education at UCA is heavily subsidised, and once admitted on merit, a student's financial constraint is not a barrier to quality education.

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply by March 15th 2020 at: www.ucentralasia.org/admissions

Publications

Climate Change Trends and Adaptation Policies Conducive to Innovation

Rethinking Pedagogy Using Technology

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