UCA Signs Agreement for Student Internship Programme

The University of Central Asia (UCA) signed a memorandum of understanding on January 23 with ACDI/VOCA, a non-profit and economic development organisation, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Enterprise Competitiveness Project. This collaboration aims to promote employment opportunities for UCA students and graduates through the establishment of an internship programme. ACDI/VOCA will also link UCA students to other relevant private business partners of USAID’s Enterprise Competitiveness Project. ACDI/VOCA aims at fostering broad-based economic growth to raise living standards and create vibrant communities.

Education Improvement Training in Khorog

UCA’s Education Improvement Programme conducted professional development training at UCA’s Khorog Campus for 30 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and English teachers in Khorog from January 4-10. The ICT programme equipped teachers with basics skills of C++ programming, Visual Basics and computer maintenance and repair, while the English programme covered language skills and teaching techniques.

“Everything was excellent. This was my first experience at UCA, and I liked everything including the teaching methods and materials, as well as the environment,” said Bibimo Mirzoniholova, from School #18 in Khorog.

The programmes were conducted by Shams Sharif, UCA Faculty, Lynette Hosek, English Language Fellow at SPCE Khorog, Manuchehr Bobov, Independent ICT Specialist, Sumbulmo Nekqadamova, UCA staff, and Jamshed Lashkarbekov, SPCE Instructor.
Going Green in Khorog

An enthusiastic group of students at UCA’s Khorog campus have formed an initiative to promote awareness of ecological issues and encourage participation in environmentally sustainable practices. The UCA Green Community student club has launched a recycling programme on campus and organised a variety of other awareness campaigns to promote environment sustainability on campus and in the community.

“For us, the word ‘ecological’ is important because it emphasises that these issues involve many different systems,” explained Anisa Abibulloeva (UCA Class of 2021), and the founder of UCA’s Green Community Club, with the support of her team. “It is not just about physical things in the environment, but also about the ways in which our communities are organised, our values, and the ways in which we act on those ideas.”

In January, the UCA Green Community implemented part of an Early Childhood Development (ECD) project in Khorog. UCA undergraduate students led a number of activities on environmental issues for children aged 6-8 years old, including many interactive games, a puppet show, and a cartoon dedicated to environmental pollution and sustainability. The ECD project aims to promote environmental sustainability and teaches children how to reduce waste management. Read more in English or Russian.

Education Sphere in Kyrgyzstan

The Ministry of Education of Kyrgyzstan conducts mandatory General Republican Tests (also known as ORT) each year in May for all secondary school graduates in the country. In 2017 and 2018, the average ORT score of students admitted to UCA from Kyrgyzstan was the highest of all universities in the country. The combined average scores of the students were 186.1 (2017) and 189.8 (2018). The test was conducted by the national Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods of the Kyrgyz Republic. The exams covered mathematics, reading, writing, grammar, and comprehension of Russian or Kyrgyz. See the full report.

Undergraduate Students at UCA

82% Central Asian Countries
50% Women
67% Small Towns and Rural Areas
Mental Math Competition in Khorog

UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Khorog, Tajikistan held its first city-wide competition of Mental Math in January (see photo). About 230 participants competed in two categories, ages 7-9 and 10-14. SPCE learners, Tahmin Jumaeva (7-9), and Dilangez Asaulova (10-14) received the “Champion Cup” at the competition, and 24 participants were also awarded medals and certificates.

Well done! SPCE in Khorog has admitted over 1,362 learners into the programme since its launch in June 2017, with the aim of enhancing the intellectual abilities of children.

Developing Regional Postgraduate Curriculum

UCA’s Aga Khan Humanities Project (AKHP) has launched a new initiative to develop the curriculum of humanities as a postgraduate programme. AKHP conducted a training workshop for University Masters teachers from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan from January 11-13. The training focused on incorporating aspects of UCA and AKHP curriculum material (texts and case studies developed by renowned scientists from three countries) into the curriculum of the postgraduate humanities programmes. The training was held at the Valikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology of Kazakhstan’s Academy of Sciences in Almaty, and was led by two Senior AKHP Regional Trainers, Prof. Gulmira Bilyalova, and Khadija Shambetalieva (centre, standing).

Later, on January 18, AKHP launched the Masters programme course on the History of Central Asia at the Valikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology. Students will receive 5 course credits for completing modules on History, Environment, Economics, and the AKHP Cross Debate Format.

Aga Khan Humanities Project

In 2018, AKHP conducted nine courses reaching 29,700 students.

Winter has arrived at the UCA Khorog Campus in Tajikistan.
### Entrepreneurship Programme Launched in Kyrgyzstan

An entrepreneurship programme was launched by UCA's SPCE on January 21 for young entrepreneurs aged 18-28 who already have a business or are developing a start-up. The programme was offered free of charge and provided opportunity to increase the level of knowledge and skills of existing entrepreneurs who wish to succeed in growing their businesses. The programme covers intensive training with leading trainers in business promotion, and participants come from several regions of Kyrgyzstan including Bishkek, Osh, Naryn, Kochkor, Suzak, Bazar-Korgon, and Aravan. It was organised with funding from the United States Agency for International Development's “Demilgeluu Jashtar” project.

### English Achievements in Afghanistan

In January, fifteen students (30% women) graduated from a Conversational English programme at UCA's SPCE in Faizabad, Afghanistan. The graduates started from the pre-beginner level in June 2017 and have now passed the intermediate level. Congratulations!

### Promoting Gender Equality

Gender Responsive Learning Environment (GRLE) seminars were conducted by UCA's SPCE for prospective teachers in Faizabad (pictured), as well as in Ishkashim, Shugnan, and Darwaz in Afghanistan. In January, 78% of participants in Ishkashim were women. GRLE supports improvement of gender equity and equality in the education environment, and the seminar covered topics on gender related expressions, gender responsive classrooms, schools, management, language and lesson planning, as well as stereotypes. These seminars are funded by Canada’s International Development and Research Centre. The programme was first launched in April 2018, and over 500 individuals in the Badakhshan Province of Afghanistan have participated to date.

### Providing Employment Opportunities for Women

The Office Assistant programme for women aims to provide vulnerable women, who have graduated from post-secondary education, with a variety of employment options. These women seek training for higher returns to meet their living demands. The programme is based at UCA's SPCE Satellite Learning centre in Faizabad. Fifteen students are enrolled in the programme from different districts of the Badakhshan Province of Afghanistan. This short-term programme includes knowledge and skills in computer literacy, paperwork management, and English that are necessary to work as an assistant secretary or office manager.

### School of Professional and Continuing Education

130,000 learners (53% women) have gone through SPCE courses in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan (2006-2018)
Kyrgyz Republic Economic Update

Mr. Apurva Sanghi (pictured), Lead Economist for the Russian Federation at the World Bank, and Ms. Appolonia Mbowe, Senior Country Economist for the Kyrgyz Republic delivered a Public Lecture providing an update on the Economy of Kyrgyzstan. This World Bank presentation provided an overview of the economic performance over the first 11 months of 2018, highlighting some of the macroeconomic vulnerabilities the country is exposed to, as well as growth projections for 2019 and 2020. The second presentation focused on the Russian economy covering 2018 economic performance, future growth prospects, poverty reduction, and economic diversification. The lecture was organised by UCA’s Institute of Public Policy and Administration on January 31st in Bishkek. Watch a recording of the lecture.

Public Lectures
Technological and Industrial Modernisation

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are currently lagging behind in their technological development, largely due to the drastic post-Soviet de-industrialisation and the subsequent shift to a narrowly specialised, resource-dependent economic model. This was stated by Dr. Nazgul Jenish, Professor at the American University of Central Asia and Senior Lecturer at the OSCE Academy, who discussed an industrial modernisation strategy centered on the application of information and communication technologies. The key elements of the strategy include the revival and development of technology and knowledge-intensive industries such as machine-building, new materials, and chemical industries on the basis of local raw materials, through a well-balanced mix of industrial, educational and research policies. Dr. Jenish delivered this public lecture on “Technological and Industrial Modernisation in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan” at UCA in Bishkek on January 24.
"Dark Horse" of the Export Market – How Talas Achieved International Fame

Several years ago, Kyrgyzstan's smallest and least populated northern region made a surprising breakthrough into the global agriculture market by becoming one of top twenty exporters of kidney beans, rivaling such giants as China, Argentina, and Egypt. The phenomenon, which became known as the "Talas Wonder", is also remarkable due to the fact that historically Kyrgyzstan never had a substantial kidney bean production. Furthermore, the export build-up and global market penetration happened without any government support, and was entirely through the efforts of small farmers.

"Talas Wonder" has generated considerable interest among researchers. In 2018, UCA’s Institute of Public Policy and Administration conducted a study on the "Production and Exports of Kidney Beans in the Kyrgyz Republic: Value Chain Analysis" (English, Russian), which not only detailed how this success came to be, but also offered various scenarios of further development. Read more

Announcement

UCA’s School of Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Applications Open Until March 1st

The final deadline to receive the application form (online or printed version) and all relevant documents is March 1st at 23:59 (GMT+6). Learn more: www.ucentralasia.org/howtoapply

UCA offers four undergraduate major specialisations at Campuses in Naryn, Kyrgyzstan (Communications & Media, Computer Science) and Khorog, Tajikistan (Earth & Environmental Sciences, Economics).