Mountain Universities Collaborate on Research

Representatives from the University of Central Asia (UCA), Khorog State University (KSU) and Naryn State University (NSU) participated at an inception workshop of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) research project on February 4-5. As part of this research project, UCA's Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA) will help build research capacity of KSU and NSU to conduct a study on MSME in mountainous regions of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (Tajikistan) and the Naryn region (Kyrgyzstan), through the delivery of training, and mentorship on research design, and quantitative and qualitative methods. This will allow the project participants to gain indispensable knowledge and skills on questionnaire design, qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as data collection and analysis.

The MSME research project has been initiated and supported by the Mountain Universities Partnership (MUP) programme, an initiative of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and centred at UCA. The overriding goal of MUP is to support four mountain universities, namely - Khorog State University in Tajikistan, Naryn State University in the Kyrgyz Republic, Badakhshan University in Afghanistan, and Karakorum International University in Pakistan. All are located in mountain communities and share many common issues. MUP is a long-term programme committed to helping the mountain universities improve their research capacity, academic programmes, and services, which are serving populations in mountainous areas.

Open House Attracts Over 300 Students

UCA's Naryn Campus Open House welcomed over 300 Grade 11 students and their parents from Akzhar, At-Bashy, Baitik, Balycky, Bishkek, Chok-Tal, Dostuk, Kant, Kara-Balta, Karakol, Naryn and Talas in Kyrgyzstan on February 3rd.

"For the past couple of years, I have been eager to apply to UCA. The University of Central Asia provides really good conditions to its students, as well as financial aid and interest-free loans," said Grade 11 student, Elzar Ulanbek uluu, at the Naryn Open House.

Watch a news report on the Open House by Naryn TV (in Kyrgyz)
Cooperative Education Provides Skills for the Real World

The University of Central Asia’s School of Arts and Sciences held a professional development course for freshman and sophomore students at the Khorog Campus (Tajikistan) with the aim of helping the students understand basic tools to plan and build their career at a professional level during their cooperative education programme placements. As part of the course, students participated in mock interviews to practice their interview skills and received feedback and suggestions.

Interviewers included representatives from Mission East Tajikistan, the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, the United Nations World Food Programme, Aga Khan Educational Services, Pamir Energy, as well as faculty and staff from UCA’s campus. Through UCA’s Cooperative Education Programme students have internships at companies where they receive real world business experience.

UCA Students Win Public Debate in Khorog

UCA’s undergraduate student debate club organised its first Public Debate at the Khorog Campus with participants from UCA and the American Space Debate Club. The event provided a platform to debate important world issues, meet new debaters, and encourage constructive dialogues.

UCA’s debate teams won first (Munira Malakbozova and Mirzonabot Mirzonabotov) and third place (Zainab Muborakshoeva and Anusha Ashurova), while the American Space team placed second.

UCA debate club members conduct weekly meetings to practice their skills, and plan to hold regular debates with Khorog State University, American Space in Khorog and Aga Khan Lycee students.

UCA Students Win Two Awards at Model UN

Twelve UCA undergraduate students from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan participated in the Imperial International Model United Nations Conference in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from March 1-3. It was held at the Tashkent State Technical University.

Among 300 national and international delegates, two awards were given to UCA students. Nadira Karataeva (Kyrgyzstan) for the Best Position Paper, and Mizhgona Khudododova (Tajikistan) for the Best Delegation Award. Congratulations!

Naryn Community Benefits from Economics Course at UCA

Dr Shabnam Lutafali (seated right), Associate Professor of Economics with UCA’s School of Arts and Sciences delivered a course on “Introduction to Economics” to members of Naryn town as part of a community service initiative.

The 16-week course covered the microeconomics of businesses and markets, their strategies of cost saving and profit maximisation, as well as macroeconomics covering GDP, national income, growth and development, unemployment and inflation, with a special focus on Kyrgyzstan and Central Asian economies.
Mr. Eduard Auer (centre), Ambassador of the European Union to Kyrgyzstan visited UCA’s Campus and SPCE in Naryn on February 15. He toured UCA's facilities, learnt about its activities and programmes, visited SPCE classes, and had an opportunity to meet students.

Mr. Gary Linden, from the United States Agency for International Development in the Kyrgyz Republic, visited UCA’s Naryn Campus on February 7. Mr. Linden met with UCA faculty and staff, and following a campus tour, expressed an interest in developing future collaborations with UCA and other AKDN institutions.

Mr. Alok Amitabh Dimri, Indian Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, and Col. Vishal Goindi, Defence Attaché at the Embassy of India explored potential areas of collaboration with UCA and Indian educational institutes, during a visit to the Naryn Campus on February 8. The visit also provided an opportunity to share information about UCA and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and deepen international relations.

Representatives from the World Bank Group visited the Naryn campus on February 5, to learn more about energy efficiency technologies that are being utilised in UCA's campus facilities. This includes innovative techniques for building envelope and ceilings insulation, a waste water treatment plant, energy efficient pumps for water and sewage networks, and LED lights across the campus facilities. UCA’s buildings are also cooled and heated with geothermal technology, using a source of energy below the earth's surface transferring heat to and from the ground.

The visitors also expressed interest in UCA's work with Naryn town where the University is contributing 50% (4.5 million Kyrgyz soms) towards the cost of developing a Master plan for Naryn. The World Bank Group discussed the possibility of collaborating on energy efficiency as one of the components of the Master Plan. The next day, at a presentation on February 6th by the World Bank, Emilbek Alymkulov, Mayor of Naryn town, highlighted the important role of UCA and AKDN, as well as other international donors in the master planning exercise.

In 2018, UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI), with support from the Government of Germany, held a Silk Roads Conference on “Anticipating Social and Environmental Impacts of China’s Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) in the Mountains of Central Asia”. With 40 experts from 13 countries participating, the conference aimed at strengthening strategic partnerships to study the challenges and opportunities of China’s BRI from a Central Asian perspective. Proceedings from the conference are now available online at http://bit.ly/SilkRoadsProceedings.

Silk Roads Conference Proceedings

VIP Visits

European Union Ambassador

VIP Visits

Indian Ambassador

VIP Visits

USAID Mission

VIP Visits

World Bank Group
UCA to Share IT Expertise with Naryn State University

UCA’s Information Technology Department, led by Shaukat Ali Khan, Chief Information Officer at UCA, visited the Naryn State University to discuss potential for cooperation in technology, visited the computer labs, and met Computer Science faculty. The UCA delegation also met with Dr. Egemberdi Moldaliev, Dean of the Technical Faculty, and other Management Staff at NSU. “I am grateful to UCA for sharing best practices, which will help us transform IT at NSU,” said Dr. Egemberdi Moldaliev.

Conversational English Course Popular in Afghanistan

Fourteen Badakhshan University students (50% women) graduated from a Conversational English Intermediate programme at UCA’s SPCE Continuing Education Unit in Faizabad (Afghanistan).

The course was offered free of charge. From 2014 to 2018, over 2,000 module participants have attended this programme.

Three UCA Students Win at Olympiads

The Regional Education Department of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast in Tajikistan launched a series of Olympiads in math, English and physics in January. Conducted in phases, participants competed at the school level, followed by city, district, provincial and final Republican levels. Three Academic Achievement Programme students from UCA’s SPCE competed in the English Olympiad and won awards. Amniya Azorabekova (pictured) won first place in the city and provincial Olympiads, securing admission to the Republican Olympiad; Nuqra Rahmikhudoeva placed first in the district level and second in the provincial level; and Davlatbegim Tavakalova placed second at the city Olympiad. Congratulations!

Spotlight on Mental Math

UCA’s SPCE is teaching prospective educators Mental Math in Afghanistan. Najeeba Nazari, 22 (standing) became one of the first graduates of this programme and was hired as a Mental Math Instructor in January 2019 at UCA’s SPCE Learning Centre in Ishkashim. She has also completed English and Information Technology programmes at SPCE.

In her new job, Najeeba hopes to provide qualified education to young boys and girls and lay a foundation for quality math teaching in the community. “UCA’s SPCE has a great impact on the youth and aims at improving living standards. The only effort which people need to make is to come to SPCE with a desire to learn.”

Najeeba is happy to have obtained her first job, where she is earning a living, leading an independent life, and providing financial support to her parents, who are proud of their daughter’s achievements.

“SPCE Khorog offers secondary school students with an Academic Achievement Programme that provides skills, competence and knowledge to help them apply to world class institutions,” said Amniya Azorabekova, an SPCE learner. “I have personally had a very positive experience studying at SPCE.”
Historically, the population of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the Fergana Valley have been closely interlinked socially and economically. Over the past ten years, this stable connection has been challenged due to some political reasons related to the processes of delimitation and demarcation of borders, economic protectionism, and the breakdown of infrastructure that used to connect the countries of the region.

UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) held a workshop on “Current Dynamics of the Border Areas in the Fergana Valley” on February 13th in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Forty experts from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the United Kingdom participated in this one-day event, focused on different aspects of life in the local communities’ of these trans-boundary areas. Read more in English or Russian.

Kyrgyzstan is committed to achieving sustainable development goals, including the goal of poverty alleviation. Some individual characteristics and macro-economic variables, such as GDP per capita and the unemployment rate at the regional level, have been identified as major metrics for predicting the probability of being poor in Kyrgyzstan.

This was assessed in a Public Lecture delivered by Ms. Maria Grazia Pittau, and Mr. Roberto Zelli (pictured), Professors of Economic Statistics at the Sapienza University of Rome (Italy), and Ms. Saida Ismailakhunova, Economist in the Poverty and Equity Global Practice at the World Bank. The lecture was organised by UCA’s Institute of Public Policy and Administration on February 12.

Watch a recording of the lecture.

Approximately 370,000 ethnic Kyrgyz people live in Uzbekistan, the majority in the Ferghana Valley regions adjacent to Kyrgyzstan. Dr. Nick Megoran, Lecturer in Political Geography at New Castle University in England, delivered a Public Lecture at UCA exploring the status and fortunes of this minority group after 2010. He presented research based on fieldwork in Kyrgyz communities in Uzbekistan, interviews in Tashkent, and analysis of Uzbekistan media.

Dr. Megoran also discussed the longer-term existence and thriving of national minorities in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The lecture was organised by UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute on February 14th in Bishkek.

Watch a recording of the lecture.
Nazgul Jenish (left), author of UCA’s Institute of Public Policy and Administration research paper on the ‘Tourism Sector in Kyrgyzstan: Trends and Challenges’, was a guest on the NTC Television programme “Real Economy” on February 6th. The show also featured Mr. Damir uulu Maksatbek, Deputy Minister and the Head of the Tourism Department of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Kyrgyz Republic. The programme addressed the latest developments in the tourism sector, including the adoption of the “National Program of Tourism Development 2019-2023’ and the establishment of the Kyrgyz Tourism State Enterprise. Dr. Jenish shared the findings of IPPA’s study on the challenges and opportunities for tourism development in Kyrgyzstan.

Watch the full programme in Russian.

Macroeconomic Policy Frameworks and Technological Development

Nurbek Jenish

UCA’s Institute of Public Policy and Administration Working Paper #49 examines recent macroeconomic performance and management frameworks in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. It also reviews existing literature on macroeconomic policies recommended for technological development of low/lower-middle income countries.

The literature review is complemented with case studies of Japan, South Korea and the Baltic countries that have succeeded in their own technological development. Drawing on the experiences of these countries, the paper provides some policy recommendations. Available for free download in English from the UCA website.

Small Area Estimation of Poverty and Consumption in Kyrgyzstan

Mr. William Seitz (pictured) and Ms. Saida Ismailakhunova, Economists in the Poverty and Equity Global Practice at the World Bank, delivered a Public Lecture providing alternative methods for measuring poverty at the district level in Central Asia. Their presentation on “Small Area Estimation (SAE) of Poverty and Consumption in the Kyrgyz Republic” stated that SAE techniques sharpen the precision of welfare measures to enable reporting with highly disaggregated geographic units.

In addition, by using statistical models for imputation, SAE approaches provide estimates of indicators for small areas that would be impossible to reliably construct with traditional survey data alone. The lecture was organised by UCA’s Institute of Public Policy and Administration on February 20th in Bishkek.

Watch a recording of the lecture.
Certificate Programme in Economic Policy

UCA Graduate School of Development's Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA), is pleased to announce the second cycle of its Certificate Programme in Economic Policy (CPEP). The programme, taught by a team of highly qualified staff, commences on April 15 2019 at UCA in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

CPEP is targeted towards civil servants, independent analysts, and staff at think-tanks and non-governmental organisations who wish to acquire skills that are essential in advancing evidence-based policy analysis. The programme is free of charge for accepted candidates. The deadline to apply is March 25th: http://bit.ly/CPEP2019-form.

Full details

Summer Upgrading Camp

UCA's School of Arts and Sciences is organising a three-week residential academic enrichment camp designed to upgrade English, Math and Science skills among Grade 9 and 10 students living in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The Summer Upgrading Camps will be held at the Naryn (Kyrgyzstan) and Khorog (Tajikistan) Campuses in July 2019. To gain admission, students must submit an online application by April 30th 2019 at 11:59 (GMT+6). Read more.