Renowned TV personality and Co-host of MSNBC's "Live with Velshi and Ruhle", Ali Velshi took several days off from his busy schedule during the end of May to share his knowledge and experience with UCA students in Khorog, Tajikistan. The students were inspired by his sessions on economics, financial investments, entrepreneurship, value propositions, and marketing, and actively participated in applying the knowledge in building business plans and financial models.

“I was most impressed,” said Ali Velshi, “that UCA students seem determined to increase their societal and civic engagement and improve the standard of living in Central Asia.” He added, “While Tajikistan may not have the same infrastructure as the West, these students are not allowing that to limit the way they think about improving the world. Their concerns about global imperatives mirror those of students at the best universities in the world. What is particularly encouraging, is that UCA students are not looking to leave Central Asia. They want to improve the quality of life here, and appreciate that as entrepreneurs they can be job creators rather than job seekers, and take advantage of the many economic opportunities this region has to offer.”

While in Tajikistan, Ali Velshi also gave a presentation in Dushanbe on June 2nd on Challenges and Opportunities in the Global Economy. The lecture was well attended by government officials, academics, development organizations, entrepreneurs, and agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network, and was followed by a lively Q&A session.

In This Issue
01 | News
05 | Connecting to Your Discipline
08 | Happenings at UCA
10 | SPCE in Action
13 | UCA Outreach
14 | Public Lectures
16 | Visitors at UCA
17 | Announcements
Education Improvement Programme

UCA hosted a meeting with Kazakh representatives in Tekeli, Kazakhstan to discuss the University’s Education Improvement Programme (EIP) in schools in the Almaty province on May 3rd. EIP engages 20 government secondary schools (grades 7-11) and a few selected private schools in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. The programme is designed to enhance students’ academic achievements and opportunities for entry to high-quality universities nationally, regionally, and internationally, and to be work ready and equipped for responsible citizenship. Prior to the meeting, guests also toured the UCA Tekeli Campus site location and were briefed on the campus construction preparation.

Following the meeting, the delegation participated in a tree planting organised by the City of Tekeli and UCA. School children in Tekeli, who graduated this year, planted about 50 poplar trees along the pathway that leads to the future site of UCA’s Tekeli Campus. According to Tekeli Tynysy newspaper, the Mayor noted that this would become an important tradition that benefits the city. “The University of Central Asia will open soon, and maybe your own children and grandchildren will study there. You will be able to proudly show them the trees that you have planted today”, said the Mayor at the event. Read more in Tekeli Tynisi newspaper (English, Russian).

Cross Debate Format Training

UCA’s Aga Khan Humanities Project (AKHP) conducted a Cross-Debate Format (CDF) training for history, archaeology and ethnology, and journalism students at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Abylai Khan Kazakh University of World Languages and International Relations, and high school #15 in Almaty. The training took place on May 2nd and 3rd, and was led by Shokirjon Mahmadov, CDF Regional Trainer and Serik Sakenov, Assistant Trainer, and organised by Nurzhauar Issayeva, Coordinator of AKHP’s Faculty Development Programme in Kazakhstan. Nineteen participants expressed their desire to continue developing their CDF skills in Kazakhstan.
Prioritising UN’s Sustainable Development Goals for Mountain Development

UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) conducted an expert survey on prioritising the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets for sustainable mountain development. On May 25th, UCA’s MSRI, in collaboration with the University of Bern in Switzerland, organised a workshop to identify the most critical development issues in the mountain areas of Kyrgyzstan, and to prioritise SDG targets in view of these issues. Chris Hergarten, the Senior Research Fellow of MSRI, presented outputs of the survey. The results emphasised that Kyrgyzstan was the first out of five selected countries to participate in an international effort to identify SDG targets that have high leverage for fostering sustainable development in mountain areas.

The workshop gathered participants of the pre-workshop online survey, including development experts, scientists, and non-government representatives with long-standing experience in mountain development. This initiative is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation within its programme on Promoting Sustainable Mountain Development for Global Change. MSRI, as a partner in this programme, has facilitated the survey and the workshop in Kyrgyzstan, in coordination with the Centre for Development and Environment at the University of Bern, jointly with the Mountain Research Initiative, Swiss Academies of Sciences, Switzerland. Read more.

UCA Participates in Naryn Town Development

The Naryn town administration launched a round-table on May 31st to discuss the Naryn town socio-economic development programme from 2018 to 2022. It was organised as part of the Regional Development Concept of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The meeting discussed possible development projects in Naryn, including potential collaboration with neighboring regions including At-Bashy and Ak-Talaa.

The Mayor of Naryn, Emilbek Alymkulov (2nd from left in photo), the Head of the Regional Department of the Ministry of Economy and the National Institute for Strategic Studies under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as town council deputies, representatives from UCA, the United Nations, and other international organisations attended the event. UCA’s representation included Dastanbui Mamadsaidov, Project Manager of University Town Development Kuban Sydybaev, Facilities Manager, and Nurbek Nisharapov, Head of SPCE Naryn.
UCA Signs MOU to Deliver ICDL Certificate Programme in Kyrgyz Schools

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Republican Institute for Professional Development of Pedagogical Staff (RIPDPS) under the Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic on May 18th. The MOU will enable UCA to deliver the International Computer Driving Licence certificate programme, an advanced computer literacy qualification, to 50 schools in Kyrgyzstan within the framework of the Youth Initiative project. The project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development.

UCA and University of Toronto Partnership Takes Off

Seven representatives from the University of Toronto (U of T) in Canada visited UCA in Bishkek and Naryn from May 11th to 17th. It was part of a contextualisation visit for the Computer Science programme course developers. U of T partnered with UCA in 2016 to develop UCA's undergraduate Computer Science curriculum, as well as build linkages through faculty development, faculty and student mobility and joint research collaborations. "It has been an incredible experience, and I am very invested in making my software design course for UCA as great as possible. We are part of a huge mission that may have a dramatic long-term effect on Central Asia: helping improve the quality of education, invigorating the rural economy, raising awareness about pollution and climate change, and helping people enhance their quality of life," said Paul Gries, Associate Professor in Computer Science at U of T, at the end of their trip.

The U of T representatives learnt more about Central Asia, its current job market, met with UCA students, staff and management, and also attended meetings with various Information Technology professionals, as well as software and programme development organisations in Bishkek. Hamid Reza Zhahbazkia, incoming UCA Computer Science Faculty, also participated in curriculum development discussions. Read more.
05 | News

UBC Partners Visit Central Asia

The University of British Columbia’s (UBC) Geography and Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences departments, are assisting UCA to design 22 Earth and Environmental Sciences (EES) courses for its undergraduate programme. Four UBC representatives visited UCA in Khorog, Bishkek, and Naryn from May 5th to 25th as part of a contextualisation visit for the EES programme.

In Tajikistan, the UBC team explored Alichur, Langar, Darshai and Khorog to scope out potential sites for field trips. In addition, they met with UCA students, as well as various UCA and external experts including from UCA’s MSRI, Mountain Societies Development Support Programme Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and the Pamir Biological Institute. In Bishkek, Phil Hammer from UBC attended meetings with organisations working closely with the environment, including the Aarhus Centre, and the Central Asian Institute for Applied Geosciences.

▲ UBC representatives visit a potential field site for the EES programme.

Connecting to Your Discipline

UCA launched a four-week “Connecting to Your Discipline” (CYD) programme for students in Naryn and Khorog on May 7th. Each week, participants discovered a new discipline through a series of workshops, guest lectures, career panels, interactive activities and field trips, which helped them better understand their specialisations: Earth and Environmental Sciences, Computer Sciences, Economics, and Communications and Media.

COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA

UCA students learnt about communications, digital marketing and journalism from industry professionals. They also attended workshops on photography and storytelling, led by Danial Shah, Freelance Travel and Documentary Photographer and Writer, and Eleonora Proyaeva, Storyteller at Ololo Art Studio. Participants put their learning into practice during field excursions to Ishkashim in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), and Min-Bulak village in the Naryn Oblast, where they interviewed residents about the social life and economic development of the area. Concluding the sessions, UCA organised storytelling galleries in Naryn and Khorog, which presented the work of UCA students.
In Khorog, UCA students visited Pamir Energy, a company of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) which is bringing hydro-power to communities in GBAO including several businesses, schools and health centres. Students toured its facilities, learnt about the Company structure, and also visited the Pamir-1 Hydro Power Plant, where Farida Mamadaslamova, Pamir Energy Strategic Projects and Partnerships Manager discussed the reconstruction and expansion of its capacity in order to improve reliable electricity.

Students went on an excursion to the Barsem village, which suffered from a mudflow in July 2015. Students participated in an interactive workshop on natural disasters and learnt about mudflows, floods, rock falls, avalanches and more. It was led by Markus Zimmermann, Advisor at Natural Disaster Reduction (NDR) Consulting, and the University of Bern. Also in attendance were Beatrice Zimmermann, Social Scientist from NDR Consulting, Ricarda Bender from the Canton of Bern Department of Roads, Daniel Buerki, from the KWO Hydro Power Company, and Tom Gal, Construction Engineer.

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Students went on a field trip to At-Bashy, Kyrgyzstan, where they conducted experiments to build a gabion (container filled with stones and other material used in engineering, construction and landscaping), and assessed the water ecosystem at a fishing farm. They presented solutions for given case studies related to their learnings. Their findings were judged by Dr Diana Pauna, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, and CYD Facilitators Matthew Emmsile-Smith, Research Fellow at UCA’s MSRI, and Amadeus DeKastle, Lecturer from the Environmental Management and Sustainable Development Department at AUCA.

Students in Naryn were introduced to Earth and Environmental Sciences through hands-on sessions related to ecosystems, environmental based adaptation, street mapping and Geographic Information Systems and more. Students went on a field trip to At-Bashy, Kyrgyzstan, where they conducted experiments to build a gabion (container filled with stones and other material used in engineering, construction and landscaping), and assessed the water ecosystem at a fishing farm. They presented solutions for given case studies related to their learnings. Their findings were judged by Dr Diana Pauna, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, and CYD Facilitators Matthew Emmsile-Smith, Research Fellow at UCA’s MSRI, and Amadeus DeKastle, Lecturer from the Environmental Management and Sustainable Development Department at AUCA.

In Khorog, UCA students visited the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH), an agency of AKDN on May 18th. AKAH works to ensure that poor people live in physical settings that are as safe as possible from the effects of natural disasters. Students toured the AKAH office, and met geologists, geographic information systems officers, engineers, sociologists and emergency management teams. The event provided an opportunity for students to explore different career options within the field of Earth and Environmental Sciences. Mr Hadi Husani, AKAH CEO, and other Senior Management representatives informed students about AKAH’s work. Following the tour, students also visited Khidorjev village in the Roshtqala district, where they analysed different hazards, and presented their findings.

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UCA students in Naryn and Khorog received an introduction to computer sciences, and learnt about the internet, encryption, word press, programming, machine learning, and Excel. The programme was facilitated by Alif Khalfan, Vice President at the Walt Disney Company, and Rumi Chunara, Assistant Professor in Computer Sciences and Public Health at New York University in New York City. During the week, students also developed and showcased their own websites, and attended lectures on cybersecurity, blockchain technologies, and e-governance.

In Naryn, students learnt about entrepreneurship, market research, how to develop business and financial plans, globalisation, investing, the stock market, and received an introduction to economics and economic policy. The programme was facilitated by Jahongir Zabirov, Founder of Somon.tj and Head of the adMedia advertising agency, and Robert Wren Gordon, UCA Student Life Advisor. Workshops were also conducted to help students think about their future careers, and how to write CVs and cover letters.

In Naryn and Khorog, UCA students teamed up to develop business ideas, and pitched them to potential investors in a Dragon’s Den simulation. The judging panels included representatives from the First Micro Finance Company, the Community Based Tourism Association in Naryn, SPCE Naryn and Khorog, Pamir Energy, as well as programme facilitators and UCA staff. The winning teams pitched ideas for delivery services start-ups between cities, a portal for organising events, a retail company that uses gamification to create traditional modern clothing, self-cleaning toilets, and food trucks. Another idea included a company that connects local handicraft makers to potential buyers abroad.
In 2017, Zohir Shomusalamov became an entrepreneur and launched the "Pamir Mountain Bike" company, a bicycle rental business for tourists and other mountain adventure seekers. The confidence and encouragement to start his own business came after he acquired financial literacy and business planning skills from the University of Central Asia School of Professional and Continuing Education’s Small and Medium Business Management programme in Khorog, Tajikistan in 2015. He used his new knowledge to secure a 1,000 EUR interest-free loan in investment from individual investors, and was able to make his business profitable.

Although Shomusalamov only has 6 bicycles and limited maintenance equipment for his services, he has made the best use of his resources, in a novel way, developing unique bike tour packages and networking with tourist-related organisations and individuals to promote his services. He has established good partnerships with local and regional tour operators, which is expanding his business opportunities. Shomusalamov now plans to purchase additional equipment, different types of bicycles and spare parts, to extend his business, and meet the growing demands as more tourists visit the Pamirs in Tajikistan.

Over 50 UCA students, faculty and staff planted nearly 300 seedlings of apple, apricot, and poplar trees in Naryn, Kyrgyzstan near the UCA campus as part of a community clean up initiative on May 1st.

Tologon Tursunbaev and Eldos Baktybekov, cooks at UCA’s Naryn Campus, competed in the Second Annual Eurasian Culinary Festival "Kazan-Mangal" in Bishkek on May 3rd. UCA’s cooks won a gold medal in the lamb category, bronze in the trout category, and placed first in the “Black box” competition where participants had to cook a dish from the proposed products in one hour. About 50 professional chefs from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia participated in the competition. The jury consisted of leading chefs from Central Asian and Mongolian restaurants, including Bolot Tentyev, UCA chef at the Naryn Campus in Kyrgyzstan. Congratulations!
The Human Resources department held 14 information sessions on New HR Policies and Communications Strategies for UCA staff and faculty in April and May in Khorog, Dushanbe, Naryn, and Bishkek. The purpose of the sessions was to provide an opportunity for staff to learn more about UCA’s mission, goals, structure, programmes, culture, code of conduct, and key features of the newly approved HR policies. Sessions in Tekeli, Kazakhstan will be scheduled shortly.

Askhat Murtazhan (left), Library Coordinator and Ahmad Ali Shah, UCA Campus Librarian participated in a Night at the Library event on May 23rd. The event celebrated Naryn’s 150th Anniversary at the Sagymbai Orozbakov Naryn Oblast Central Library. Shah delivered a presentation to school children on UCA’s library resources, and stressed upon the need for collaboration, coordination, and resource sharing among the city libraries.

Dr Roman Mogilevskii, Associate Director, at UCA’s Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA) participated in a session “on Experience and Models of South-South Investment in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region” at the Investing in the Sustainable Development Goals through South-South and Triangular Cooperation: Promoting Conducive Policy and Legal Environments in Europe and the CIS conference. It was organised by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, United Nations Development Programme, and the Yingke Law Firm in Prague, Czech Republic on May 15th.

UCA’s AKHP organised a Faculty Development Programme (FDP) workshop for 18 teachers at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, UCA’s partner university in Almaty, Kazakhstan from May 21st to 25th. Since 2009, FDP has been working in Kazakhstan and about 400 teachers from different universities and cities of Kazakhstan have received training.

Kanat Tilekeyev, Senior Research Fellow at IPPA participated in a workshop discussing the Unity, Trust and Building new government programme on May 22nd and 23rd in Bishkek. The workshop covered the agro-industrial complex and ecology, in particular plant growing, livestock, and forest ecosystems, as well as measures for the implementation of these tasks. It was organised by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation.

PUBLICATIONS

UCA’s Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA) published a new research paper in the IPPA Occasional Paper Series:

Occasional Paper #4: Beginners’ Guide for Applied Research Process: What Is It, and Why and How to Do It? by Mahabat Baimyrzaeva. This guide was developed for beginner applied researchers, especially those working in policy and organisational fields. The paper is available for free by download from the UCA website.
UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) held a Social Entrepreneurship “Reboot” training in Almaty, Kazakhstan from May 5th to 9th for 20 participants, including five who are visually or physically impaired. The event aimed at providing advanced training to entrepreneurs who already have social enterprises, and promote social and economic development in the region. Participants will become mentors for future social entrepreneurship programmes at SPCE.

A roundtable on the Standardisation and Licensing of Goods was organised for 30 local entrepreneurs on May 15th by SPCE in Naryn. Kasen Asizov, First Deputy Governor of Naryn attended the roundtable, and delivered closing remarks. Zamira Toktakueva, Specialist of the Controlling and Standardization of Goods Department in Naryn, Nurbek Nisharapov, SPCE Naryn Campus Head, and Samarat Mametzhieva, Manager of Academic Affairs at SPCE Naryn led the discussions. An exhibition of goods and products was also held. The event was organised in cooperation with the Naryn Oblast administration.

Dr. Gulnara Dzhunushalieva, Director of SPCE and Aibek Yessimov, Social Entrepreneurship Project Coordinator for Kazakhstan at SPCE Tekeli delivered presentations on UCA's experience in social entrepreneurship at the Aktobe Social Entrepreneurship International Forum 2018. Over 1200 participants attended the event in Aktobe, Kazakhstan on May 11th.

Twenty alumni of UCA's SPCE entrepreneurship programme with representatives from international partners from the United State Agency for International Development, United National Development Programme and the German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH in Naryn participated in a consultation training on May 21st. The training covered financial literacy and standardisation subjects, and was led by Nurbek Nisharapov, Head of Campus at SPCE Naryn.
UCA’s SPCE recognised 13 learners (77% women) who completed the Academic Achievement Programme (AAP) in Bishkek on May 30th. SPCE has been conducting the AAP programme since 2013. It is a package of well-planned English courses aimed at preparing learners for the rigorous requirements of the academic curriculum of universities abroad. Students begin preparation from Grade 7 and complete the programme in Grade 11.

Dr Bohdan Krawchenko (left), Dean of the Graduate School of Development at UCA presents a Certificate of Achievement to Snezhana Kosiakova.

In the Villages Programme

SPCE Naryn delivered certificates to 52 students from the In the Villages Programme on May 24th. They completed English, Kyrgyz, math, and the National Entrance Exam preparation (ORT) courses. The students come from Kyzyl-Tuu, May, and Kara-Bulun villages in the At-Bashy region. SPCE representatives Aigul Omuralieva, Librarian, and Ainura Abdyldaeva, Student Service Officer, visited schools in rural areas to deliver the Certificates, and also presented Information Technology learning materials to school Directors in these regions.
Grade 8, 9, and 10 students of SPCE Naryn’s Academic Achievement Programme (AAP) recited Chyngyz Aitmatov’s stories and poems in English language. The event was dedicated to the Day of Chyngyz Aitmatov, who was a well-known author of Russian and Kyrgyz literature in Kyrgyzstan. It was led by Aigul Omuralieva, Librarian and Gulum Isaeva, English language Instructor on May 25th.

Thirty cashier programme students (47% women) graduated from SPCE’s learning centre in Faizabad, Afghanistan on May 8th.

Students learn mental math during a class led by Instructor, Majigul Sultani, at SPCE’s learning centre in Ishkashim, Afghanistan on May 26th.

Instructor, Gulbuddin Nasrat (right), led an English-speaking club for elementary and pre-intermediate level students at SPCE’s learning centre in Ishkashim, Afghanistan on May 26th.
UCA Contributes to Naryn Town Development

The Naryn town government organised a fundraising event for the town’s regional development, and to celebrate its 150th anniversary on May 11th. The event raised over 10 million Kyrgyz soms from residents, government departments, corporate representatives and medical institutions. UCA pledged to contribute 50% (4.5 million Kyrgyz soms) towards the cost of developing the Master plan for Naryn. Funds collected during this event will go towards 17 Naryn infrastructure projects such as street lighting, bus stops, reconstruction of the central square, park renovations, repairs to other city infrastructure, and more. “We express our gratitude to all who care about the future of the Naryn and for those who contributed to the 150th-Anniversary fund,” said Emilbek Alymkulov, Mayor of Naryn City.

UCA Contributed 50% of the Naryn Town Development Funds

Community Partnership

SPCE Khorog and Dushanbe participated in the “Cultural Days” of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) in Khatlon, Tajikistan on May 13th. At this event, UCA held an exhibition in Bokhtar city, the administrative center of Khatlon, illustrating the activities of its various units (SPCE, AKHP, SAS) throughout its history. A separate exhibit presented SPCE activities in partnerships with Khatlon universities. The exhibitions were attended by prominent officials, including Jamshed Shodikhon, Governor of GBAO, Davlatsho Gulmam-adov, Governor of Khatlon, Koizidavlat Koidmodov, former Tajik Ambassador to Belarus and Parliament Speaker, Mamadsho Ilolov, Former President of the Academy of Sciences, and Parvona Jamshedov, Head of Foreign Languages Department at the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Cultural Days in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast

▲ The Khatlon Governor, Davlatsho Gulmam-adov, was complimentary about his visit to the UCA campus in Khorog during its construction phase. “I was happy to be amongst those setting the foundation of UCA Khorog Campus, and one of the developers of UCA’s Charter”. A full set of the “Musical Heritage of the Pamir” publications of UCA’s Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit were presented to the Khatlon Governor.

▲ Muzaffar Jorubov (speaking), Chief Operating Officer at UCA conveying congratulations on Naryn’s 150th Anniversary, alongside Naryn Mayor, Emilbek Alymkulov (left).
On May 9th, UCA faculty and staff participated in Victory Day Celebrations in Naryn, Kyrgyzstan with Government officials and the Naryn community. Dr Shamsh Kassim-Lakha (right), Chairman of the Board of Trustees of UCA, laid flowers with Amanbai Kaiypov, Governor of Naryn Town, in a ceremony commemorating World War II (WWII). At the Naryn Campus, undergraduate students and faculty observed a minute of silence in commemoration of those who lost their lives in WWII, and sang patriotic songs.

UCA’s SPCE in Naryn participated in an Academic Career Fair at the Seitaaly Jakypov Park in Naryn. Samarat Mambetajieva, Manager of Academic Affairs at SPCE and Aigul Omuralieva, Librarian, presented information about SPCE courses as well as short-term certificate programmes to over 100 people aged 19 to 55. It was organised by the United States Agency for International Development under the Youth Initiative project on May 17th. Under this project, 20 students from Kochkor region of Naryn Oblast also visited SPCE Naryn on May 21st to learn more about its programmes and tour its facilities.

Public Lectures at UCA

May 16th, Bishkek: Academics from the University of Cambridge delivered a series of Cambridge University Talks to UCA researchers, faculty and staff. The topics included:

- **Introductions**, Dr James Brown, Assistant Head of Office (Strategy), Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

- **Education Innovation & Reform: The Case of Kazakhstan**, Dr Olena Fim’yar, Senior Research Associate, Faculty of Education

- **The Future of Blockchain: Technology and Application in Indelible Property Titles, Individual to Individual (I2I) Trading and Smart Contracts**, Dr Carlos Molina-Jimenez, Senior Research Associate, Department of Computer Science and Technology

- **Large-Scale Water Management Infrastructure in Central and South Asia: The Role of Economic Analyses**, Lucy Goodman, PhD student, Department of Geography and Land Economy

▲ Dr James Brown (4th from right), introducing the University of Cambridge team visiting UCA.

◄ Representatives from the University of Cambridge also visited the UCA Naryn Campus. From L to R: Dr Diana Pauna (UCA), Lucy Goodman, Dr Olena Fim’yar, Dr Carlos Molina-Jimenez, Dr Salim Sumar (UCA), James Brown.
May 22nd, Bishkek: Bubbles on the Steppe: Real Estate Bubble in Kazakhstan, by Dr Charles Maxwell Becker, Research Professor and Associate Chair of the Economics department at Duke University in the United States. The lecture described the patterns of real estate price movements in an emerging upper-middle income economy. The country experienced an explosive, 11-fold increase in real housing prices in urban areas between 2000 and 2007, followed by a sharp decline and stabilisation. On May 21st he also visited UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education in Naryn.

May 23rd, Bishkek: Blockchain Technology: The New Internet, by Shaan Muhammad Khan, Chief Executive Officer of UExel Pvt Ltd. The lecture presented what is blockchain, how it will be used in different sectors in coming years, and how it is changing the internet for good. A blockchain is essentially a distributed database of records or public ledger of all transactions or digital events that have been executed and shared among participating parties. Bitcoin, the decentralised peer-to-peer digital currency, is the most popular example that uses blockchain technology.

May 29th, Almaty: The Role of Universities in Shaping Urban Development, by Dr Piotr Lorens (left), Head, Department of Urban Design and Regional Planning, Faculty of Architecture, Gdansk University of Technology. The lecture covered several issues associated with cooperation between municipalities and universities, with a special focus on city planning and development. In addition, issues associated with developing and implementing the concepts of "smart and attractive cities" was widely discussed.

May 29th, Bishkek: Reforming Education for Economic and Social Development in Central Asia and Afghanistan, by Dr Bernadette Dean, Head, Education Improvement Programme at UCA. The lecture presented an overview of education reform in the three Central Asian Republics: Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan following the collapse of the Soviet Union and in post-Taliban ruled Afghanistan. That emphasis in the current decade is on sustaining and scaling up of reforms that worked, and identifying areas of need.
Visitors at UCA

NARYN

▲ May 11th: Over 50 Tajik students studying in Bishkek visited UCA’s Naryn Campus, SPCE, and the Seitaaly Jakypov Park. Dastanbui Mamadsaidov, Project Manager of University Town Development at UCA and Dr Kholiknazar Kuchakshoev, Associate Professor of Mathematics at the Naryn Campus and delivered presentations on the Aga Khan Development Network, and UCA, which were followed by Q&A sessions.

▲ May 24th: His Excellency Nicholas Brousseau (9th from left), Canadian Ambassador to Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan, and Frederic Laberge (8th from left), Canadian Embassy representative in Kazakhstan, met with senior UCA leadership in Bishkek. Also in the photo are UCA and AKDN staff, including eight Canadians. Dr Shamsh Kassim-Lakha (7th from left), conveyed appreciation of Canada’s over four decades’ of association with AKDN, and support of UCA’s programmes. The Ambassador was impressed by the work of AKDN globally, and UCA regionally, and reiterated Canada’s continued support for UCA’s initiatives. Read more.

▲ May 18th: Her Excellency Monika Iwersen (2nd from left), German Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, and other embassy officials visited UCA’s Naryn Campus. UCA staff presented the University’s programmes, faculty, research and partnerships. Throughout the visit, the German delegation showed a keen interest to learn more about UCA, as well as its links with the local community and institutions. Concluding the visit, the Ambassador expressed interest in future cooperation with UCA. Read more.

KHOROG

▲ May 14th: Andrew Brewery (2nd from right), Deputy Economic Chief of the United States (US) Embassy in Tajikistan and other US Embassy representatives visited the Khorog Campus. They received a campus tour by Rustam Mirzoshirinov (on left), Campus Librarian and a presentation on UCA by Dr Diana Pauna (on right), Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences.

▲ May 17th: Sixteen representatives from the US Embassy and Coordinators of the American Spaces in Tajikistan visited the Khorog Campus. Guests came from Dushanbe, Bokhtar, Khujand, Kulob, Isfara, Panjakent, Gharm and Khorog, and toured the campus facilities. Rustam Mirzoshirinov (2nd from left) also delivered a presentation on UCA’s library and e-resources.

▲ May 21st: Harz Mountain University (HMU) students visited UCA’s Khorog Campus as part of an exchange visit between UCA and HMU. Following a campus tour, they met alumni from UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education.
Call for Applications: SPCE Public Speaking Course

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education in Bishkek is offering a new public speaking skills course, beginning June 25th. Students will learn how to prepare and deliver effective presentations, how to use rehearsal techniques to develop a strong, vibrant speaking voice, and deliver speeches with dynamic movements and gestures. Applicants should have a minimum B2 level (Intermediate) in English. The deadline to register is June 18th.

For more information please email ucasyrgyzstan@ucentralasia.org, or call 0312-910-822 (ext. 201).

Job Opportunities at UCA

The University of Central Asia is hiring at various locations across Central Asia. Visit UCA's website and apply to UCA today. Want to be the first to know about our latest UCA vacancies? Subscribe to our mailing list today to receive job openings directly to your inbox!