UCA and Naryn State University Form New Partnership

Although the University of Central Asia (UCA) and Naryn State University (NSU) have been informally collaborating on numerous academic activities during the past three years, they signed a formal agreement on September 24th 2019 within the Mountain University Partnership (MUP), an initiative of the Aga Khan Foundation.

Among the objectives of this partnership is to identify and prioritise initiatives that upgrade the quality of teaching and research. It also provides a framework for the improvement projects at NSU and broader university systems.

Within this partnership, UCA has conducted English language courses for 27 NSU faculty members, and is implementing a joint research project on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises.

The agreement will also engage agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), including UCA, to support the improvement of academic programmes and capacities in agricultural technology, economics and hydropower at NSU.

Promoting Inclusive Economic Development in Central Asia

Representatives from UCA in collaboration with the University of Oxford's School of Geography and the Environment, and the Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM) met September 9-11 in Issyk-Kul (Kyrgyzstan). The occasion was a writing workshop to discuss fieldwork findings from five mining field sites in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan. Participants in photo (left to right) included Ariell Ahearn, Tsesu Purevsuren, Elita Bakirova, Troy Sternberg, Fiona McConnell, Almaz Tchoroev and Kemel Toktomushev.

Using fieldwork findings, the workshop aimed at developing content for sustainable infrastructure development, which intends to promote inclusive economic development and social welfare in the context of Chinese mega infrastructure initiatives in Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The workshop was organised as part of the “Gobi Framework for Sustainable Partnerships” project, which is funded by the UK’s Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF).
UCA and USAID Partner to Improve Reading Skills in Tajikistan

University of Technology Sydney Visit UCA and Plan Next Steps

UCA’s undergraduate Communications and Media programme had a recent visit by the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) at the Naryn campus. UTS, one of UCA’s international university partners, developed the communication and media curriculum and provided technical expertise for setting up the media lab.

The UTS team led by the Head of the School, Dr. Mark Evans (left in photo), met with faculty, students, and media during their week-long visit, and discussed the next step of the partnership.

Protecting the Environment: Act Locally, Impact Globally

Students and faculty from UCA organised a public discussion on climate change at the Naryn campus on September 25th to raise awareness and discuss climatic conditions of the planet, specifically in Kyrgyzstan.

UCA students discussed possible ways to mitigate the risks of climate change locally, and encouraged everyone to participate in environmental activities to make a positive impact in the world. Local media also attended the event, and interviewed UCA students, who conveyed an important message to the citizens of Naryn about the climate crisis, and what they can do to help save their families and the broader world.

UCA students in Khorog also joined the global climate change movement and promoted various tips on campus including closing the tap while brushing your teeth to reduce water wastage, using recycled paper, printing less hard copies, using reusable canvas bags for grocery shopping, drinking from washable water bottles, and eating more vegetables and less meat, which has a huge impact on the environment from fueling climate change to polluting landscapes and waterways.

The partners also discussed additional opportunities to involve UCA students in promoting mobile and other educational technologies in schools, organising out-of-school events in the community to improve reading skills, sharing best practices between UCA faculty and USAID RWM specialists and trainers in Khorog, and engaging UCA students in internships as part of UCA’s cooperative education programme.

At the ceremony, UCA students, Anisa Abibulloeva, President of UCA’s Green Community student-led club, and Nitasha Aslam Khan, “Book Project” Coordinator, also delivered presentations introducing USAID representatives to student initiatives on UCA’s campus.

Terry Giles (left), USAID “Read with Me” Chief of Project, Dr. Diana Pauna (right), Dean of UCA’s School of Arts and Sciences.

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UCA’s student-led diversity club organised a week long “Spirit Week” at the Khorog campus from September 23-27.

Each day students were challenged to dress on a different theme, including sports day, tourist day, back to school with a twist, patriotic day (pictured), and look alike day. Spirit week was aimed at promoting togetherness, inclusion, pluralism, and fun on campus among students, faculty and the student life team.

Students and staff from UCA’s campuses in Naryn and Khorog participated in a World Cleanup Day activity on September 21st in Naryn (Kyrgyzstan) and Khorog (Tajikistan), collecting over 200 kilograms of trash. It was organised by UCA’s Eco Warriors and UCA Green Community student-led clubs, and aimed at protecting nature and keeping the planet clear of trash. World Clean-up Day is a global initiative that brings together over 18 million volunteers across 157 countries annually to achieve a common goal.

UCA Communications and Media undergraduate student, Zarrina Gafurova, had the opportunity of a lifetime to complete her internship in Prague (Czech Republic) as part of UCA’s Cooperative Education Programme. In a personal reflection, Zarrina shares her journey working at Nielsen Admosphere in the Data Science team.

“My journey started with a simple desire to explore something unfamiliar and challenge my comfort zone. And what can be more offbeat than data science for a media student, who knows how to juggle words rather than numbers? This is how I ended up doing an internship in one of the leading media research companies in the world.” Read her full story.

UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) held graduation ceremonies in Nusai (Darwaz, pictured), Ishkashim and Shugnan (Afghanistan) in September for over 350 students who completed short-term programmes and courses, including mental math, the International Computer Driving License (ICDL), English, and Office Assistant programmes.

They were offered support from the Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan, Canada’s International Development Research Centre, the Aga Khan Foundation Canada; and the Government of the Netherlands. Since 2014, over 11,000 learners have graduated from SPCE courses in Afghanistan.
Naryn Academics Laud SPCE for Improving Student Test Scores

School teachers from the Jumgal district in the Naryn region as well as the Head of the District Department of Education, Fatima Omuralieva, visited UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Naryn (Kyrgyzstan) on September 17th.

“With SPCE’s cooperation, we found a 15% increase in the qualitative indicators in the field of education, in particular our students’ national testing scores,” said Fatima Omuralieva. “We are looking forward to continued partnership with SPCE, which is providing a variety of multidisciplinary training programmes for students and teachers from the remote regions.”

English Teachers Share Best Practices in Afghanistan

UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education in Afghanistan organised a one-day conference for secondary school and university English language teachers of Afghanistan in Kabul on September 19th to share best practices.

The conference provided an opportunity for seven English Teaching Mentorship (ETM) programme alumni and secondary school and university English language teachers in Kabul, to share their experiences and knowledge gained from the ETM trainings in Dushanbe with the English Language Teachers Association for Afghanistan (ELTAA). It also provided a platform for ELTAA senior members from Kabul University’s English Language Faculty, to share their experiences. Participants included 170 representatives from the U.S. Embassy, Ministry of Higher Education, ETM alumni, ALTAA President and Senior members, English teachers from Kabul University and schools across Afghanistan. The event was organised with Kabul University, and supported by the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.

250 Graduate from School of Professional and Continuing Education in Khorog

SPCE in Khorog celebrated the accomplishments of 250 graduates of SPCE programmes on September 28th. Students completed programmes in Business Planning, Management of Small and Medium Business, Accounting Technology, Cashier, English for Civil Servants, Technical Vocational Education and Training, Teaching Knowledge Test, Preparation Programme for U.S. Colleges and Universities, and also underwent courses in English, Chinese, mental math, and information technology (ICDL).
Dean’s List Recognition Kicks off Fourth Academic Year

UCA’s academic year (2019-2020) began at the Naryn (Kyrgyzstan) and Khorog (Tajikistan) campuses during the first week of September. Marking the occasion, each campus held a bell ringing ceremony, and recognised undergraduate and graduate Dean’s List Award recipients from the 2018-2019 academic year. A total of 66 preparatory, freshmen and sophomore students received Dean’s List Award certificates. To qualify for this award, students need to achieve a CGPA of 3.6 or higher, demonstrate behaviour consistent with UCA’s mission, values and ethics, and not have an F grade in any of their courses. Congratulations to all recipients.

Good to Know!

Dr. Elmira Köchümkulova, Head of UCA’s Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit translated subtitles from Kyrgyz and Russian to English of a new documentary film called “My Dear Kyrgyzstan”. Produced by independent film makers Noam Argov and Alex Pritz of the National Geographic Explorer, it has been recently published by Mailchimp.com and can be viewed online at: https://mailchimp.com/presents/film/my-dear-kyrgyzstan/

Publications

The Role of Women in the Economic Development of Afghanistan

UCA’s Institute of Public Policy and Administration has published a working paper on “The Role of Women in the Economic Development of Afghanistan” by Dr. Madina Junussova, Maria Iamshchikova, Naveen Hashim, Muhammad Ajmal Khan, Pakiza Kakar, Freshta Wardak, and Shukria Rajabi. The paper is focused on Afghan women employability and entrepreneurship opportunities for engagement in economic development. The paper is available for free download in English from UCA’s website.

China’s Belt and Road Initiative

Dr. Roman Mogilevskii and Dr. Kemel Toktomushev from UCA’s Institute of Public Policy and Administration, contributed chapters to a recently published book “China’s Belt and Road Initiative and Building the Community of Common Destiny.” The publication was edited by Wang Linggui and Zhao Jianglin, published by the World Scientific (2019), and can be accessed online.

• Chapter 8: Economic Cooperation between China and Central Asia (p.107-113) by Mogilevskii

• Chapter 21: Forging a Community of Common Destiny between China and Central Asia (p. 235-237) by Toktomushev.
Public Lecture on Digital Disruption

UCA held a public lecture delivered by Peter Thomsen, Senior Enterprise Architect at Cisco CX Advisory in Hamburg, Germany, on “Digital Disruption”. Participants from 26 locations, including two educational institutions, joined the lecture on September 12th 2019. The lecture provided an introduction to the Digital disruption dilemma, and in particular the potential to reshape markets faster than perhaps any force in history. Watch the lecture at: https://youtu.be/I5o7PcPvF5o.

UCA Scholarships for Young Scholars to Cambridge and UAlberta

UCA’s Central Asian Faculty Development Programme is offering scholarships for doctoral study at the University of Cambridge (UK) and the University of Alberta (Canada) in the fields of Computer Science, Engineering, Communications and Media, Business Management, Earth and Environmental Sciences or Economics. Applicants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are encouraged to apply, and students from Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and northern Pakistan are also eligible. Interested students are invited to submit required documents to UCA by October 31st 2019 at 18:00 (GMT+6). Learn more on UCA’s website.

Job Vacancies at UCA

Join the University of Central Asia today in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan or Kazakhstan.

Visit http://bit.ly/uca-jobs for more information about current job openings, requirements and deadlines. Sign up for UCA’s mailing list to receive vacancies directly to your Inbox.

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