

## First UCA Rector on Board

With the first Rector on board, UCA achieved another milestone in its history on August 2nd 2018. Prof. Dr. S. Sohail H. Naqvi is currently visiting the University's programmes and activities in the three Founding States of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.

Prior to joining UCA, Prof. Naqvi was Vice Chancellor of the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) for five years. Under his stewardship LUMS launched two new schools, multiple campus development and other initiatives, including the Centre for Entrepreneurship.

Prof. Naqvi was also the Executive Director of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of the Government of Pakistan for eight years. He oversaw the implementation of an ambitious portfolio of programmes which resulted in significant growth of research in Pakistan's universities, and the quadrupling

of student enrollment. He has extensive teaching, research, and entrepreneurial experience, both in the US and Pakistan, and has also been a consultant on higher education for the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. He was awarded the Order of 'Palme Académiques' with rank of Chevalier, by the French Government, and Sitar-e-Imtiaz by the Government of Pakistan for his services to higher education

Prof. Naqvi will formally take over leadership of the University from UCA's Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Shamsh Kassim-Lakha on 24 September 2018.

"I take this opportunity to thank the entire UCA team for their valuable support and dedication during my tenure since 14 June 2014; first as Executive Chairman of the Board Executive Committee, and thereafter as Chairman of the Board of Trustees," said



Dr. Kassim-Lakha. "I am immensely proud of their outstanding teamwork, and the success we have achieved could not have been possible without their hard work and commitment. I am looking forward to continuing my responsibilities as Chairman of the Board."

## Executive Masters Programme in Naryn

"UCA's Executive Masters in Economic Policy (EMEP) programme has been a wonderful experience," said Muhammad Ajmal Khan Karimi. "The teach-

ing is excellent, and the materials and curriculum have been designed in the context of Afghanistan and the work we do there."



▲ Muhammad Ajmal Khan Karimi (2nd from left), EMEP student, greeting Ms Naheed Sarabi (right), Deputy Minister of Finance of Afghanistan, to the Naryn Campus in July.

Muhammad works with the Ministry of Finance of Afghanistan in the Policy Department and is leading the National Policies Monitoring Unit. Since March 2018, he has been one of 25 participants in the EMEP programme. It is being offered by UCA's Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA) through a partnership with the Ministry of Finance, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (MOF AFG). The initiative is supported by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC), and co-financed by MOF AFG. The programme is designed to equip Afghan civil servants with sound theoretical knowledge and the tools of economic management and policy-making required to tackle issues faced by developing economies.

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# Campus News

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## Executive Masters Programme in Naryn



"In our work with the Ministry of Finance, most of us are involved in analysing various policies, and are working on projects that are very good economically for the country. This programme has enabled us

to learn about new policy analysis techniques, data management, and cost benefit analysis. All of these learnings are mathematically and quantitatively useful for our workplaces." said Muhammad.

E MEP is offered in three terms – two in Bishkek and one at UCA's Naryn Campus. Muhammad shared how the Naryn Campus was a great environment where students learned, practiced, and enjoyed the beauty of nature. The third semester of the programme will be conducted in Bishkek from the end of September until mid-October. As a final output, each participant will work on a capstone research project that applies their new knowledge to an aspect of their professional work. Like other participants, Muhammad has already started working on his project. He will cover evidence-based research on the national policies of privatisation.

Inspired by E MEP, Muhammad hopes to continue his learning after completing the programme. "The biggest takeaway is the diverse culture and unique learning environment at UCA. We have really learnt a lot, and on behalf of the group, I can say this programme will help us have productive outcomes in our work in Afghanistan."

## Football Tournament Kicks off in Naryn

The football field at UCA's Naryn Campus was full of excitement as the seventh annual football tournament kicked off on August 24th. The 5-day tournament gathered hundred of residents and sportsmen to cheer on 8 teams representing city districts including RTS, Moskovskaya, Borbor, Gorodok, Almbak, Ak-Korgon, Tosh-Bulak as well as UCA's team.

"Today, a very interesting tournament is taking place. I really love football, and always enjoy watching the Naryn community come together to compete in sports," said Ms Zharkyn Ibraeva Deputy Governor of Naryn Oblast, at the opening ceremony. Also in attendance were representatives from the Mayor's office and Naryn Oblast Sports Department, Esentur Omuraliev and Erkin Arabaev.

The Almbak team won the Champions Trophy after a final match (4-0) against RTS, who came out in second



place. In a close game for third place, Tosh-Bulak beat Borbor (2-1). UCA also presented special awards to Alymbek Duishomambet uulu (Alma-Bak) for Best Goalkeeper; Tolobek Turdakunov (Borbor) for Best Defender; Daniyar Zhumashov (Alma-Bak) for Best Half-back; Syimyk Ryskulbekov (RTS) for

Best Player; and Askhat Kanatov (Tosh Bulak) for Top Goal Scorer.

Concluding the tournament, invited guests noted that if such high-level tournaments continue to be held in Naryn, the teams from Naryn and Kyrgyzstan may soon be able to enter the world arena.

# Building a Healthy Campus Culture



The practice of counselling is a fairly new concept in Central Asia. At UCA, the counselling office is dedicated to ensuring that students and staff receive the support they need to succeed academically, personally, and socially. To better understand the role of these services at UCA, a Summer Counselling Skills workshop pilot project was held at the Naryn Campus from August 5-10. The project aimed at evaluating whether interpersonal skills building approaches would be helpful in the Central Asian post-secondary setting. It was developed to introduce UCA staff and faculty to foundational helping skills, and also provided a capacity building opportunity for staff to increase interpersonal skills and deepen a healthy campus culture.

During the six-day workshop, participants explored different cultural approaches to helping encourage conversations, and enhance their confidence to assist in crisis situations. The participants had multiple opportunities to practice and receive personalised feedback about their active listening and empathy skills. Participants and instructors found the first UCA Summer Counselling Skills

workshop to be a deeply rewarding experience and are excited to take their new knowledge, skills and attitudes about intercultural communication back to their workplaces and home communities. "I realised that counselling is not simply talking to someone. It is more sensitive and complex, and having deep conversation's using certain skills has surprised me the most about learning," said one of the participants. "The skills I have learnt at the workshop have made my conversations more productive."

The sessions were developed and led by Robin Higgins, UCA's Counsellor at the Khorog Campus, and Jonathan Morris, a Canadian counselling and group skills instructor at the University of Victoria and Douglas College in Canada, and Director of Planning and Strategic Priorities at the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. Higgins and Morris are both experienced counsellors and have collaborated with developing "Healthy Minds and Healthy Campus" initiatives in British Columbia, Canada.

"As I look back on my co-teaching experiences at the UCA Naryn Campus,

the six-day workshop stands out as a highlight of my career in higher education," said Morris. "Each and every participant grew throughout the week and tried new skills, while bringing diverse cultural perspectives, beliefs, and practices to the practice of listening. I left thoroughly impressed with the group and I am excited about the ripple effects of the kinds of conversations the participants might go on to have with their new and strengthened skills."

The workshop was offered to 18 participants from five countries, with representatives from human resources, finance, SPCE, SAS and student life departments, as well as two undergraduate students participating in the learning activities. Through anonymous evaluations, participants commented that the week-long sessions were a transformative learning experience and that they gained a much better understanding on how to engage in helpful empathic conversations with students, colleagues, friends and family. The training was also seen as beneficial in building communication skills and relationships across departments, positions and campuses.

# Discovering the History and Culture of the Pamir-Kyrgyz

UCA's Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit organised two public lectures in August in Naryn and Bishkek covering the history, culture and traditional games of the Pamir-Kyrgyz, delivered by Professor Sulaiman Kaiypov, a well-known folklorist and ethnographer from the Xinjiang Pedagogical University in China.

The lecture in Naryn brought together more than 60 attendees and stimulated a great interest among local residents, especially with the recent migration of Pamir-Kyrgyz families from the Pamirs to Naryn. Attendees asked questions about migration, politics, history, and the traditional games of Pamir-Kyrgyz. Professor Kaiypov, relying on his long-term study of Pamir-Kyrgyz, supported the discussion with scientific data and his views on the social processes of Pamir-Kyrgyz people.

"The lecture was important because it broke down stereotypes about the Afghan Kyrgyz and made it clear that there is a huge gap in knowledge about the Afghan Kyrgyz, and how little we know about them," said Historian, Eleri Bitikchi. "It was great that the attendees could ask questions, not only about culture, but also about the geography,



politics, history of the Afghan-Kyrgyz and get answers to them."

Prof. Kaiypov recorded and studied about 100 traditional games of Pamir-Kyrgyz living in Turkey, where he conducted research between 1997 and 2007. It was revealed that local traditional games are aimed at creating harmony between the soul and the body. This feature of traditional games of Pamir-Kyrgyz makes them inalienable, valuable and distinct from traditional

and professional sports games of other nations. It was noted that this feature is directly related to their habitat, the ecosystem of the Pamir region. According to Kaiypov, the composition of the game players, the rules of the games, the objects used in the games, the time and place of the games, the goals of the games and the influence of these games on the players can serve as general sources of such scientific directions as ethnopedagogy, ethno culture, ethnophilosophy and ethno- psychology.

## New Faculty Join UCA



▲ New faculty and staff of SAS visited UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education in Naryn. They learnt about the programmes from Nurbek Nisharapov, SPCE's Naryn Campus Head, and also visited the Seitaaly Jakypov Park (pictured), which was rehabilitated by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in 2016.

UCA's School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) undergraduate programme is entering its third year since opening in September 2016. This year, students will begin pre-requisite courses for their undergraduate specialisation majors. As the institution continues to grow, new faculty are coming on board.

A faculty orientation programme was held from August 10-15 to introduce new faculty to UCA and the broader Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). They learnt about UCA's three schools and research institutes, preparatory and undergraduate programmes, SAS policies, and approach to teaching and learning. Through a series of workshops, faculty also explored topics from work-life balance on the campus to classroom management.

### Faculty Development Programme Launches New Academic Year

Feeling rejuvenated by the summer break, with plenty of reading, writing, and research time during the holidays, UCA's faculty at the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) were keen to arrive back to campus. A Faculty Development Programme was organised from August 16-18 in Naryn for 30 faculty members from both the Naryn and Khorog campuses. Its aim was to bring together new and resident faculty, provide updates on revised policies and procedures, and offer workshops on teaching methodology. It also provided an opportunity to discuss course syllabi, make new academic year resolutions, and get to know new colleagues.

Faculty also embarked on a new project to enhance peer teaching through teaching triangles to make class observations more meaningful. Each triangle of three faculty members will observe each other's classes and provide feedback. This will be supplemented by online session with facilitator, Dr Linda



Strubbe from the University of British Columbia in Canada.

Aga Khan Humanities Project (AKHP) instructors, Obidkhon Kurbonkhonov and Shokirjon Makhmudov, also gave

a session on the humanities curriculum and available AKHP resources. They also delivered a presentation on the cross-debate format, which can be applied to a number of SAS courses and classes.

### UCA Welcomes Undergraduate Class of 2023



Eighty-one incoming preparatory and undergraduate students arrived at UCA's campuses in Naryn and Khorog for orientation week in August. Students represent seven countries including Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Syria. During the orientation

programme, the students toured the campus facilities, played dodgeball in the sports bubble, learnt about campus clubs and academics, received their student laptops, participated in several ice-breaker games and teambuilding activities, and much more.



## Continuing Education Skills Development in Afghanistan and Tajikistan

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education graduated 267 learners (47% women) in Ishkashim, Zebak, and Darwaz, Afghanistan, in August, bringing SPCE graduates in Afghanistan to over 6,000 since 2014. Students were awarded certificates in elementary and pre-intermediate conversational English, and Information Technology.

"I really appreciate all the programmes and services offered by UCA's SPCE in Afghanistan," said Namdar Khan Khaled, Governor of Ishkashim District. "Last year SPCE's programmes were extended, and as a result, it is now offering new mental math and gender responsive learning environment programmes. We are looking forward to continued expansion of SPCE's programmes."

The ceremony in Ishkashim was conducted jointly with the Aga Khan Education Services, Afghanistan.

Also in Darwaz, local Governmental authorities participated in the ceremony including Mr. Mohammad Ibrahim Qayumi, Governor of Darwaz Districts and Mr. Davlat Khudo Pokzod, Head of Education Department of Darwaz District, among other representatives from the Teacher Training College, Aga Khan Foundation and UCA.

"Today the role of information technology and the English language are very high in the contemporary world. UCA's SPCE is therefore doing a great job to address the needs of the local people," said Muhammad Ibrohim Qayumi, Governor of Darwaz.



▲ Dilovar Butabekov (left), Deputy Director of SPCE Afghanistan and Tajikistan, presents certificate of achievement in elementary conversational English.



▲ Over 200 graduates received SPCE certificates in Khorog.

## Over 200 Graduate from SPCE in Khorog



On August 25th, UCA delivered certificates to over 200 graduates (47% women) from SPCE Khorog. The learners completed courses in Accounting Technology; Cashier; Business Planning Management of Small and Medium Business; Conversational English; English for Academic Purposes; Chinese language; Certificates in Technical Vocational Education and Training, and the Teaching Knowledge Test.

"SPCE is looking 10 years from now to improve the existing programme and offer new courses based on labour market needs," said Farrukhsho Fraidonov, Keynote Speaker at the ceremony, and Education Improvement Programme Coordinator at UCA. "SPCE with the collaboration of other agencies and partners aims to improve the quality of teaching of math, science, information and communications technology and English, to enable school graduates to become competitive in entering regional and international universities."

## Continuing Education

### Mental Arithmetic Forum Recognises SPCE Instructors



Samarat Mambetazhieva (left), Manager of Academic Affairs and Nurgul Koilombayeva, Mental Math Instructor at UCA's SPCE in Naryn participated in an annual Akademia Rosta forum in Bishkek on August 25th. With over 100 participants, the forum provides a platform for instructors to share teaching methods and experiences and discover the different learning centers that run Mental Arithmetic courses in the country. SPCE's mental math instructors received an award for "Best instructor of Mental Arithmetic 2018" at the forum. Well done!

### AKHP Cup Debaters Put their Skills to the Test

Over 100 debaters from Khujand, Kulyab and Khorog in Tajikistan, and students from UCA's campuses in Khorog and Naryn, gathered in Dushanbe to test their debating skills on August 4-5. The annual debate tournament was organised by UCA's Aga Khan Humanities Project (AKHP) to promote collaboration between debaters of Tajikistan, and enhance the debating skills of the participants. This year, the tournament was dedicated to the sixth anniversary of AKHP's Debate Club.

"Developing debating across Tajikistan is important, and AKHP conducts at least one training session every year in the capital cities of each region of Tajikistan," said Olimjon Bakhtaliev, event co-organiser, and Former Debate Club President. "Through this event, we aim to inspire, motivate and develop the skills of promising debaters. At the end of the tournament, participants are eager to share their gained knowledge with their communities."



Among the winners of the tournament were members of AKHP's Debate Club, Sabrina Kadirova, and Doriyush Soliev, who also won "Best Speaker" at the event. Zarastin Kholbash, UCA undergraduate student at the Naryn Campus and Jahongir Zabirov, Founder and Head of Somon.tj placed second. Taking third place were Amonullo Fayzullo-

ev, AKHP Debate Club member, and Lutfiya Haydari, Afghan representative from the Information Technology Communications Centre Debate Club in Dushanbe.

Participants also became familiar with the latest activities of AKHP's Debate Club, which is considered the first-ever English-speaking debate club in Tajikistan. The tournament was conducted in British-Parliamentary format, and was judged by representatives from debate clubs, international organisations and Huawei telecommunications company in Dushanbe as well as from Afghanistan. The event was sponsored by UCA and Huawei, who provided prizes for the winners and club volunteers.

### Afghan Minister of Communications



Mr Aryobee Shahzad Gul, Minister of Communications of Afghanistan visited the UCA Naryn campus on August 29th. "Today was a learning day. I very much appreciated the opportunity to engage in lively discussions with UCA faculty and students," said Mr. Gul. "This University offers world class facilities and learning, and I hope to continue seeing Afghan students studying at this University." He also learnt more about UCA's academic programmes through presentations and discussions, and interacted with Afghan students studying at the Naryn Campus.

# Research

UCA's Aga Khan Humanities Project (AKHP) launched a new research project aimed at developing curriculum material and case studies on the "Cultural and Social Practices in Central Asia (past and present)" for master's students. Once complete, AKHP will implement a programme as part of the master's curriculum at universities and research institutes in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Its curriculum will focus on the perception of Central Asia across three subject areas, including history (ethnography, anthropology, culture), economics, and the environment. About 30 leading scholars, scientists and teachers from AKHP partner universities are involved in this project. In addition, AKHP will develop a Teacher's Guide for this programme, focused on presenting pluralism within a particular culture, and between different cultures, and within the context of their connections and differences. It will draw on the principles of innovative pedagogy, tools, and methods developed and piloted by AKHP over 20 years of working in education in Central Asia.

## Multimedia

### UCA in Afghanistan

Since 2014, when UCA established the School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) Satellite Learning Centers in cooperation with Teacher Training Colleges in Darwaz, Ishkashim, Shugnan and the Badakhshan University in Faizabad, Afghanistan, over 5,500 learners have enrolled. SPCE offers courses from entry to intermediate level in Applied English, Information Technology, and Accounting. It is supported by the Multi Input Area Development Global Development Alliance (MIAD GDA) - an alliance between the Aga Khan Foundation USA and the US Agency for Inter-



national Development (USAID). The aim of the alliance is to support long-term stability and growth in Afghanistan's Badakhshan region through improved quality of life and socio-economic development of the residents. Watch: <https://youtu.be/ln-olaz8um0>

### KTRK TV Interviews Dr Shamsh Kassim-Lakha



National TV channels in Kyrgyzstan, KTRK and 24 Ala-Too, aired a 25-minute special TV segment with Dr. Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of UCA in August. Programmes of UCA, as well as other initiatives of the Aga Khan Development Network were discussed. It is available for viewing in the [Kyrgyz](#) language.

## Publications



Dr Pulat Shozimov, Acting Head of the Aga Khan Humanities Project published an article on "An Approach to Fostering Cross-Cultural Understanding in Central Asia through the Development of Cross-Disciplinary Discourse" in "Vestnik", a scientific information journal published by the International Kyrgyz University in Bishkek. The article considers the basic philosophical principles underlying the cross-disciplinary method. Dr Shozimov offers an innovative methodological approach that encompasses both theory and modern social practice, and highlights different approaches to a conceptual rapprochement of different cultures. The article (p.61-67) can be downloaded for free (in Russian) at: <http://www.iuk.kg/documents/arhiv/vestnik-2018-1-34.pdf>



Developing country governments, supported by development partners, have a key role to play in enabling sustainable and inclusive private adaptation in semi-arid lands and in unlocking the potential of the private sector for adaptation. The Pathways to Resilience in Semi-arid Economies (PRISE) recently published a policy brief on "Supporting Private Adaptation to Climate Change in Semi-Arid Lands in Developing Countries." This policy brief distills broad lessons from PRISE about the kinds of policies, institutions, and other public investments that can support adaptation and climate-resilient development across a broad range of private sectors. The empirical basis for this briefing is based on research across several institutions including UCA's Mountain Societies Research Institute. It can be downloaded in English at: <http://prise.odi.org/research/supporting-private-adaptation-to-climate-change-in-semi-arid-lands-in-developing-countries/>

## UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA

Advancement and Public Affairs

138 Toktogul Street,  
720001, Bishkek,  
Kyrgyz Republic  
Tel.: +996 (0) 312 910 822  
[APA@ucentralasia.org](mailto:APA@ucentralasia.org)



[facebook.com/ucentralasia](https://facebook.com/ucentralasia)



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