

## New Archaeological Finds on Naryn Campus



The University of Central Asia's (UCA) Naryn Campus was buzzing with activity as a team from Indiana University (IU) in the USA and the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) highlighted their latest findings. Based on archaeological research over the 6 years on the sites Aigyrzhal-2 and 3 located on UCA's Naryn Campus, it was revealed that the Naryn Valley has a long history of human occupation.

"About 13,000 years ago, a group of hunters came to the place we call Aigyrzhal-2. This is very early, one of the earliest dates ever found for these people, and it sets Kyrgyzstan apart as a place where a Mesolithic lifestyle may be the oldest in all of Central Asia. We know this because of the form of the tools, and from dates that were recovered by analysis of charcoal," said Dr Aida Abdykanova, Associate Professor

▲ The Aigyrzhal-2 archaeological site is located on UCA's Naryn Campus.

of the Department of Anthropology of AUCA, during a public lecture organised by UCA's Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit (CHHU) on July 20th.

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## Co-operative Education at UCA: Blazing a New Trail in Central Asia

Co-operative education is a new concept in Central Asia. UCA's Co-operative Education Programme creates opportunities for students to gain hands-on work experience via structured job placements during three consecutive summers of their five-year course of study.

UCA staff met with various employers and attracted 145 placement options for 68 undergraduate students across 16 cities in 5 countries: Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The students had an

opportunity to apply for placements in fields such as communications and marketing, monitoring and evaluation, business, finance, IT, geographic information systems, project management, research, human resources, and education.

Throughout the placements, UCA's co-op department conducted meetings with managers and students to ensure the programme was running smoothly, and that students were gaining new competencies.

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▲ Adelina Almazova, UCA student from Bishkek, facilitated a training session with local community members on Social Entrepreneurship. The training was conducted in Bokonbayeva village in Issyk-Kul oblast as part of her internship with Good Neighbors.

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## Co-operative Education at UCA

“My job at the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat concentrated on the design of a new website. As one of their main communications projects, I was given a lot of responsibility. I improved my skills in visual design, colour theory, and learnt how to work with Adobe Photoshop,” said Sear Ahmad, undergraduate student from Balkh, Afghanistan. “All in all, the skills I gained will definitely benefit me in my professional life.”

One host organisation was Good Neighbors International in the Kyrgyz Republic (GNIKGZ), where four students interned. “Over 3 months, students worked with us in the Chui and Issyk-Kul regions. They delivered presentations to school children on children’s rights, worked with data management systems, developed project proposal forms and more,” said Elvina Kazakbaeva, Sponsorship Service Department Officer at GNIKGZ. “Students completed their tasks efficiently, worked well in challenging environments, and were always ready to take on new tasks. We look forward to cooperating with UCA again.”

Firuzai Muzaffar, an undergraduate student at the Naryn Campus worked as a Communications Intern at the British Embassy in Tajikistan. “Firuzai was an essential part of the team and helped us explore new areas for our public diplomacy, including setting up and running an Instagram account,” said Shuhrat Sharipov, Communication and Project



▲ Firuzai Muzaffar (right), UCA student, with Shuhrat Sharipov, Communication Officer at the British Embassy in Dushanbe.

Manager at the British Embassy. “She had great ideas and enthusiasm for helping us to shape content for our young audience, which helps us build a bridge between UK and Tajikistan by highlighting the work we do in the country.”

Co-operative education applies practice-based learning, offering students an opportunity to apply in-class learning to real life professional experiences within their fields of study across private, public, and community-based sectors. Learning takes place throughout the process, from seeking employment, to learning valuable interpersonal skills and on the job training, as well as participating in field studies and

jointly conducting student development evaluations. This programme is developed in partnership with the University of Victoria (UVic) in Canada.

UVic representatives Norah McRae, Executive Director, Co-operative Education Program and Career Services, and Karima Ramji Manager, International Co-op and Career Program visited UCA and its co-op programme employers in June. “It has been a pleasure working with the UCA team as they develop and establish co-operative education in Central Asia. Considering how new this concept is to the education industry, students and faculty in Central Asia, UCA is taking on a significant undertaking,” highlighted McRae. “The progress made to date is something to be truly proud of. It will be wonderful to hear about the many successes and contributions that the graduates from UCA’s programmes will be making in the future.” During the visit, UCA and UVic representatives also worked on a co-op policy and are creating a manual for UCA co-ops across Central Asia, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.



◀ UCA and UVic representatives visited the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) office in Kyrgyzstan, where two students completed their internships. L to R: Myrza Karimov, Head of Co-operative Education Programme at UCA, Nora McRae (UVic), Fred Huston, Regional Director of IDLO, Beknazar Jumabaev, Computer Science student, Suiuna Dadybaeyva, Computer Science student, Karim Ramji (UVic), and Munira Amidkhonova, Co-op Programme Manager at UCA.

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## New Archaeological Finds on Naryn Campus

Mesolithic hunting was followed by Bronze Age herding in mixed pastoral economies. Traces of the cultural heritage from the Iron Age, Hunnic and Turkic people were also documented on the site. Subsistence and lifestyle changes brought in during Soviet times still reflect these earlier lifestyles in the modern era. These findings help to understand the complex formation and interaction of different cultures and significantly contributes to a fuller picture of the prehistory of the Naryn Valley, often considered an unappreciated cultural heritage of Kyrgyzstan.

In collaboration with UCA, twenty undergraduate and graduate students from IU and AUCA participated in the Naryn archeological project (NAP), which supports an annual archaeological excavation of sites located on the territory of UCA's Naryn campus. NAP involves collaboration between UCA's CHHU, AUCA and IU, and brings together an international team of researchers from Kyrgyzstan and the United States. The Naryn sites, located in a valley of the Tian Shan mountain range, is one of the most important in Central Asia, and its study yields significant insights into human and environmental history.

At the end of the fieldwork from July 1-21, UCA's CHHU hosted a public lecture on NAP, attended by over 60 people from the Naryn community. It was aimed at informing the public about NAP and promoting the preservation of Naryn's historical and archeological heritage, and socio-economic development in the region. Dr Aida Abdykanova, Associate Professor of the Department of Anthropology of AUCA and Dr Anne Pyburn, Provost Professor in the Department of Anthropology at IU in Bloomington, Indiana delivered the lecture to share the project findings and artefacts on the Aigyrzhal-2 archaeological site. They highlighted the importance of local community's engagement in the study and preservation of historical sites, and invited young researchers to obtain valuable archeological knowledge and experience by participating in future diggings.



▲ A petroglyph found on Naryn Campus showing an ibex (Upper Paleolithic Age, 45,000 - 15,000 BP)



▲ Clay vessels from the Saka period found whilst excavating AGZ 2 burial mounds. It was a ritual to place vessels with food next to the deceased (Saka Era 2,800 - 2,300 BP)



▲ Golden bead (Hunnic Era, 1,900 - 1,700 BP)



▲ Stone beads (Bronze Age, 3,600 - 3,500 BP)



▲ Bronze knife (Bronze Age, 3,600 - 3,500 BP)

Radiocarbon ages are expressed in years before present (BP), where "present" is defined at AD 1950. The year 1950 was chosen because it was the standard astronomical epoch at the time.

Representatives of the educational and cultural institutions from Naryn and other neighboring districts of Kochkor and Ak-Talaa, youth organisations, Naryn town library and museum, Naryn State University (NSU) as well as media representatives attended the event. At the end, audience members expressed their deep gratitude to the presenters. "The lecture was very informative and interesting. Majority of the people in Naryn are not aware of the existence of such ancient historical sites located in Naryn region, and therefore do not appreciate their value in promoting socio-economic development in the region. Such educational events are necessary to enlighten and raise public awareness" said Dr Esenbay Sargyshbaev, History Professor at NSU.

## Fourth Summer Upgrading Camp Concludes on Emotional Note



As the 77 students prepared to return home at the end of UCA's fourth Summer Upgrading Camp (July 1-16), emotions ran high amid tearful good-byes. Driving home in the bus, the students reflected on the richness of their experience and the cross-cultural friendships they had forged. Students had come from 31 cities in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and faculty and staff from the region and overseas. The Camp was designed to upgrade math and English skills among Grade 10 students, and ensure they are ready



for a world-class university education. Students attended classes daily, worked on personal development, leadership, public speaking skills, teamwork, and much more.

### RESEARCH INSTITUTES

## Certificate Programme in Economic Policy

UCA's Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA) launched a new seven-month Certificate Programme in Economic Policy (CPEP) for thirty-six Kyrgyz citizens in May. CPEP is targeted at civil servants, independent analysts and staff at think-tanks, and representatives from non-governmental organisations, embassies, academia and the private sector in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The programme is designed to equip learners with sound theoretical knowledge and tools of economic management and policy-making required to tackle issues faced by developing economies.



### OVERHEARD AT UCA

*"I have been working in the educational sphere for over 30 years, and I must say that UCA's Summer Upgrading Camp is a great opportunity for students to gain useful knowledge and skills in English and mathematics,"* said Kuban Tukeshevich Mambetov, Head of Education Department of Naryn at the camp's closing ceremony.



*"This is a wonderful opportunity for youth from mountain regions of Central Asia to experience a high-quality education, to improve their English and math, make new friends, and fall in love with UCA."* said Olga Rubtsova, participant from Aktau, Kazakhstan.



*"We made lots of friends and have become one big family. Our camp teachers and counsellors always helped, supported and inspired us."* said Sadridin Sadullozoda, participant from Panjakent, Tajikistan.



*"I learnt how to be more creative; not be afraid of asking questions; how to work as a team; how to listen and support each other and to work hard,"* said Baizak Asylbek uulu, participant from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.



# Research Institutes

## Researchers Study Environmental Diversity of Naryn

UCA's Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) and the German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ) held a 'Learning Landscapes through Environmental Research and Monitoring' Summer School in Naryn.

"This school provided a great opportunity for students and researchers to gain valuable knowledge on different environmental topics, and practice the theoretical knowledge in intensive field activities by using different devices and equipment for environmental monitoring and research," said Dr Lira Sagynbekova, Research Fellow at MSRI.

The programme included lectures and field surveys, covering different topics such as climate and phenology, dendrochronology, soil and water resources, paleoclimatology, wild life studies, participatory monitoring and citizen science. Students conducted field visits to the Naryn State Nature Reserve, Dobilu village, Salkyn Tor National Park, Chattyr-Kul lake, Tash Rabat Caravanserai and the Koshoi Korgon ancient fortress. They also visited the Naryn State Historical Ethnographic Museum and UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Naryn.

The Summer School was led by Dr Lira Sagynbekova (MSRI) and Dr Jens Mingram (GFZ). The trainers were from MSRI, GFZ Potsdam, Max Planck Institute Jena, CAIAG, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, SAEPF, Naryn State University and CAMP Alatau. It was aimed at enhancing capacity of students and researchers who study en-



▲ Students conduct field work led by GFZ trainers at Chattyr-Kul Lake.

vironmental sciences or conduct scientific research. Twenty participants from different universities in Kyrgyzstan (Osh State University, J. Balasagyn Kyrgyz National University, Talas State University, AUCA, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (KRSU), Naryn State University and Kyrgyz State University of Construction, Transportation and Architecture) successfully completed the summer school from July 2-9 at UCA's Naryn campus.

The Summer School is a part of the *Palaeoclimate, Environmental Change and Social Interaction in Central Asia* (PALESCA) project, and is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). It brings together active partners in the mountain regions of Kyrgyzstan from the areas of "paleoclimatic research" and "mountain societies" in order to translate scientific results into

improved living conditions of the population, especially in remote mountainous regions. In addition to MSRI, PALESCA implementing partners include GFZ Potsdam, Central-Asian Institute for Applied Geosciences (CAIAG), KRSU, and the State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.



▲ Students work with microscopes during a session led by Dr Jen Mingram.

### PUBLICATIONS



In the Pamirs of Tajikistan, meeting food needs is an ongoing struggle. One of the challenges of local agricultural production is water scarcity.

Dr Chorshanbe Goibnazarov, Junior Research Fellow of UCA's Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit and Dr Andrei Dorre, Research Associate at Freie University Berlin published an article on "Small-Scale Irrigation Self-Governance in a Mountain Region of Tajikistan," in the "Mountain and Research Development" quarterly publication.

This paper presents a case study of a small-scale, self-organised irrigation governance system in a village in the western Pamirs, applying the concept of "hydrosocial arrangements" to explore its physical and social components and the interactions between them. It concludes that the system has proven sustainable and resilient, largely because of its strong sense of community ownership and its flexibility. The chapter (p.104-113) can be downloaded free at: <http://www.bioone.org/doi/full/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-17-00085.1>

## VIP Visits to UCA

### Uzgen District College



June 24th: Eighteen college faculty members and leadership from the Uzgen District College visited UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) and the main campus in Naryn in June. They toured the facilities and learnt about SPCE and UCA's programmes in the Naryn region. "My colleagues and I were very much impressed by the work of UCA. During the visit we were able to see how UCA is helping people to improve their lives through investments in education, and creating intellectual resources for mountain societies. It is truly a major investment in the education system of the Kyrgyz Republic," said Prof. Asan Akmatyaliyev, Director of the Uzgen District College of Technologies and Education at Osh Technological University.

### Deputy Swiss Head of Mission



July 19th: Ms Danielle Meuwly Monteleone, Deputy Swiss Head of Mission, visited UCA's Naryn Campus to learn about the University's collaboration with local community and town government. "UCA and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) are contributing to improving the quality of life in Naryn through its contribution to town planning," said Ms Monteleone. "AKDN has been deeply involved from the very beginning – both technically and financially." The Swiss Government recently launched water rehabilitation works in town, and during the UCA visit, discussed potential future collaboration in town planning of Naryn.

### Etimesgut District, Ankara



July 23rd: A delegation from the Etimesgut district in Ankara, Turkey visited UCA's Naryn Campus to learn about existing education projects in the Naryn town. Enver Demirel, Etimesgut Mayor, Recai Ucar, Tahsin Polat, Hamza Yanik, Vice Mayors, and 23 other Deputies and Department Heads were in attendance. The delegation plans to invest in a kindergarten project the Naryn region. Mayor of Etimesgut district Enver Damirel commented on the high quality of UCA's campus facilities and was impressed by the opportunities being provided to the Naryn region.

### Afghan Deputy Minister



July 28th: Ms Naheed Sarabi (standing, 3rd from left), Deputy Minister of Finance of Afghanistan visited the Naryn Campus during the second term of the Executive Masters in Economic Policy (EMEP) Programme, offered through the Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA) at UCA. During her visit to Kyrgyzstan, she learnt about UCA programmes in Afghanistan, toured the campus, SPCE facilities in Naryn, and met EMEP students and faculty. EMEP is offered primarily to Afghan civil servants through a partnership with Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Aga Khan Foundation Canada, and the Afghan Ministry of Finance.

# Continuing Education

## 200 Attend SPCE Orientation



UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Shugnan (pictured), Ishkashim and Darwaz in Afghanistan organised information sessions for nearly 200 students, educators, government representatives and community members in June and July. The sessions were aimed at promoting SPCE programmes including general and mental math courses, as described in the gender responsive learning environment component of IDRC project. "SPCE Shughnan is continuing to expand and is starting new initiatives in the region. I encourage all students not to miss this great opportunity to learn," said Nazar Mohmmad Hasas, District Director of Education in Shugnan.

## ICDL Builds IT Capacity in Kyrgyzstan



UCA's SPCE held a graduation ceremony on July 13th in Bishkek for 14 Information Technology (IT) instructors from Naryn and Kochkor secondary schools, and 3 IT specialists from the Republican Institute who completed the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) training. The training covered four modules including Computer Basics, and Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint. From September, the IT instructors will deliver classes on these modules to Grade 6-9 students in their schools. Specialists from the Republican Institute will use their new skills to further improve capacity in IT of instructors throughout Kyrgyzstan. The training was funded by the United States Agency for International Development.

## Summer School Combines Learning and Fun



UCA's SPCE in Naryn conducted a Summer School programme in Naryn in June and July to improve students' English, information technology and mental math skills. Over 100 learners aged 6 to 16 received certificates of completion. During their programme, they also visited the UCA Naryn Campus, and were taught some classes in the Seitaaly Jakypov Park. SPCE summer school courses will continue through August 2018.

## Did You Know?

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education has graduated over **119,300** learners since 2006, and published over **300** textbooks in support of its programmes.



## UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA

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