

Bell Ringing Ceremony Ushers Class of 2027



Bell Ringing in Khorog. From left to right: Dean Maxim Khomyakov and Mr Aminjon Mirzoqandov along with SAS faculty.

On 5 September 2022, the University of Central Asia (UCA)'s School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) celebrated the start of classes for the 2022-23 academic year with a Bell Ringing Ceremony on the campuses of Naryn, Kyrgyzstan and Khorog, Tajikistan. A hundred and three new students were welcomed from Central Asia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia, and an exchange student from Norway.

In his opening remarks Dr Maxim Khomyakov, Dean of SAS, spoke about the historical per-

spective of universities and highlighted the significant role played by UCA and its alumni and students in Central Asia. He added, "The University of Central Asia is a universal diverse community of co-learners, seeking to contribute to the development of mountain communities through the production of knowledge, whose residential life together on campus is based upon equal respect."

Sharing aspirations for the new Class, Dr Christopher Gerry, Dean of UCA's Graduate

School of Development, said, "Your higher education at UCA will endow you with professional knowledge and skills, with mastery of analytical techniques and methods, with the capability of reflection and critical thought... And, if you seize the opportunities before you, this education will open doors to a world of possibilities – possibilities that promise an exciting, rewarding, challenging future that will empower you as leaders to shape the world around you."

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Warm Farewell for UCA Rector

On August 30, 2022, a farewell ceremony was held at the UCA Central Administration Office in Bishkek for the Rector of the University, Professor Sohail Naqvi. The event was hosted by Dr Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, Chairman of UCA's Board of Trustees, who, along with senior management and staff, conveyed gratitude to the Rector for his invaluable services over the past four years. Professor Naqvi responded with deep appreciation for the team he had the pleasure of working during his tenure, and would be following the progress of UCA in the years ahead with keen interest. The Rector stepped down at the conclusion of his contract which began in September 2018. The event was also broadcast live to other UCA campuses.



Dr Sohail Naqvi with the plaque of gratitude presented to him by UCA.

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Bell Ringing in Naryn. L to R: Dr Chris Gerry, Ms Elmira Sadykova, and Dr Soheil Ashrafi, Associate Dean of SAS.

Conveying a message on behalf of the Board of Trustees (BoT), Dr Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, Chairman of UCA's BoT welcomed all new and returning students. While sharing the vision and values of the University, he said, "We hope you will not only learn about your future professions but also graduate with the values of a good human being. We expect you to embrace diversity and pluralism, and respect your fellow students and teachers. You should always put honesty and integrity at the forefront of all considerations."

Also speaking on the occasion was Mr Aminjon Mirzoqandov, Head of the Education

Department of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast in Tajikistan. He reminded the students that "The goal of UCA is to promote the development of social and economic aspects of Central Asia, including the mountain communities, and to empower the people of the mountain regions to protect their cultural heritage by providing an international level of education."

During the congratulatory address by Ms Elmira Amanatovna Sadykova, Deputy Governor of Naryn Oblast, she said, "UCA is of great importance for the Naryn region. I would like to emphasize that with the

U.S. Ambassador to Tajikistan Visits UCA Campus in Khorog



Ambassador John Mark Pommersheim (left) discussing areas of potential collaboration with UCA's Associate Dean, Kholiknazar Kuchakshoev (right).

United States Ambassador to Tajikistan Mr John Mark Pommersheim (left), and Mr Pablo Tutillo, US Embassy Public Diplomacy Officer visited UCA's Khorog Campus on August 16, 2022. After a tour of the facilities, they met with the Faculty and discussed the Embassy's cooperation with UCA in the fields of research and exchange of the faculty and students.

opening of the School, not only an international center of education and culture has appeared in the city of Naryn, but also excellent opportunities have been created for the social, economic, strategic, and infrastructural development of the Naryn region."

UCA Supports Naryn Sportsmen

On August 29, 2022, representatives of the Naryn Oblast "Er-Enish" (Horseback wrestling) sports team together with Kuban Chymyldakov, director of the Naryn Physical Education and Sports Department for Youth Affairs, visited UCA's Naryn campus. They were taken on a tour of the University and introduced to its many programs and achievements. UCA was a major sponsor of the sports event held in Naryn to commemorate the Independence Day of Kyrgyzstan. Mr Chymyldakov also emphasized the importance of such an investment and cooperation with young athletes who want to improve their skills and competitiveness and do their best to contribute to their region and the country.

Team captain and Nomad Games champion, Turdubek uulu Jekshenbek (standing left in photo), expressed his gratitude to the Uni-



Er-Enish athletes in the media studio at UCA during their visit to the campus. They proudly displayed the UCA logo on their uniforms.

versity of Central Asia and added that he was most impressed with the opportunities offered to the students. He noted that UCA is not only a pride for Naryn, but Kyrgyzstan as a whole. He looks forward to encouraging his sons and daughters to apply to UCA.

Summer Institute on Mental Health and Conflict Analysis

Miscommunication is one of the biggest challenges at the workplace, and to avoid its consequences organisations around the world are investing significant resources to organise workshops dedicated to creating a healthy working environment.

Continuing its ongoing efforts to promote communications, UCA's School of Arts and Sciences organised an annual Summer Institute bringing its employees from various locations in Kyrgyzstan to the Naryn Campus in August.

The Summer Institute based on two modules was attended by 45 staff members. Module One, on Mental Health Awareness and Counselling Skills, helped participants to explore their personal and cultural identities, discuss emotional intelligence, identify their strengths and areas of growth, and learn verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

Janyl Ismailova from the Mountain Societies Research Institute of UCA remarked that, "An important take away was that while

mental health and mindfulness are important, good communication is the key to a harmonious life."

Module Two, on Conflict Analysis and Transformation, assisted participants in exploring personal and cultural basis of conflicts. The four-day module allowed employees to analyse situations, deescalate tensions, and practice skills that create mutual understanding. The sessions were conducted by Randy Janzen, an instructor at the Peace and Justice Studies at Selkirk College in Canada. Training was also provided by Moik Alisher, Counselor at the Naryn campus.

Kseniia Maiatskaia, Instructor at UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education, shared her take away that the modules helped her understand the importance of actively listening as a result of the practical exercises and real-life techniques presented during the sessions.

The Summer Institute is one of the legacies of Robin Higgins, University Counsellor. For



Saule Chalbaşova, Research Associate at the Institute of Public Policy and Administration at UCA, sharing her Tree of Expectations.

over six years she has been involved in designing and implementing the Counselling Department's services and programmes at UCA.

UCA Lecturer Receives Grant to Study in Germany



Samat Turdumamatov is a Senior Lecturer at the UCA's School of Arts and Sciences, where he has been teaching since 2018. He has been granted UCA's highly competitive and prestigious Central Asian Faculty Development Programme – DAAD joint scholarship, to pursue his PhD studies at the University of Applied Sciences FH Aachen in Germany.

Samat Turdumamatov (second from left): "I believe CAFDP does a brilliant job to fulfill the needs of Central Asian scholars to build bridges with developed countries and exchange knowledge".

The University of Central Asia announces graduate and postdoctoral fellowship opportunities at the University of Cambridge, UK ([UCA-Cambridge Trust Scholarship](#)) and in Germany ([UCA-DAAD Doctoral Scholarship Programme](#)).



Simplifying Economics and Financial Literacy



Dr Kemel Toktomushev explaining why one needs to develop a personal brand.

Get a loan from a bank? Buy Bitcoin or Tesla stocks? Get a job or start your own business? Invest in real estate or gold? These were some of the questions answered by Dr Kemel Toktomushev, senior researcher at UCA's Institute for Public Policy and Administration (IPPA), at a book launch in Bishkek on August 26. Other topics discussed were

how to apply economic knowledge in life, plan a family budget, create passive income, and where to invest savings.

At the initiative of Dr Toktomushev and his UCA IPPA colleagues, a Kyrgyz edition of "Common Sense Economics: What Everyone Should Know About Wealth and Prosperity"

book was presented to a house-full audience. The book aims to increase economic literacy among citizens, and particularly important is that the book is published in the Kyrgyz language, which currently has very few introductory textbooks on economics. The book was published with the support of the Akchasana Project.

Kyrgyz Kairyk Performance Revives Silk Road Heritage

On August 11th, 2022, UCA's Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit (CHHU) hosted a performance of the traditional music of "Kyrgyz Kairyk" 2022 at the National History Museum in Bishkek.

Prior to the performance the musicians had performed in Mongolia, Khakassia, Buryatia, Republic Altai, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. They had worked together on creating new compositions that were presented during the performance "The Sky Reflects Within Us".

According to Aibek Baiymbetov, CHHU research fellow and artistic director of the performance, the organisers of the school were inspired by a story of a heavenly caravan, which laid the foundation for the great Silk Road. The performance became an opportunity to share with the audience 20 original musical pieces, that became symbolic representation of the musical Silk Road.

The unique musical educational project "Kyrgyz Kairyk" was launched in 2018 and for the past five years has been bringing to-

gether talented young musicians to create original music. "Kyrgyz Kairyk" also develops music textbooks and manuals for students. Since 2018, "Kyrgyz Kairyk" has produced more than 50 original musical compositions and 30 young musicians have participated in the project and received training.

In 2022, the camp was implemented thanks to financial support from the World Union of Spiritual Practitioners of Indigenous Peoples, the Arga Bilig Mongolian Association of Custodians of Traditional Knowledge, and the Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit of the University of Central Asia.



Aibek Baiymbetov, CHHU research fellow (in the forefront) and artistic director of the performance, with the group of international musicians.

SPCE Completes Another Digital Marketing Course

A Digital Marketing course was implemented in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and Dushanbe and Khorog, Tajikistan, as part of the Local Impact project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF). Over 80 participants developed new virtual digital marketing skills. The course used practical and theoretical strategies to teach the tools and features of digital marketing and social media.

The participants of the course were given the opportunity for further employment within the framework of the Local Impact project. At the end of the course, many participants took advantage of this opportunity and applied for the position of Digital Mar-

keting Trainer. Lola Imomyorbekova, one of the graduates of this course, was accepted as a trainer at UCA SPCE in Dushanbe on a competitive basis. Currently, Lola is teaching digital and marketing courses part-time in Dushanbe as well as Khorog.

Local Impact is an innovative framework for meaningful and sustained impact on the most critical development priorities in Asia and Africa. AKF, an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), partners with communities to improve the quality of life for the long term. AKDN, one of the world's leading poverty solutions networks, is making substantial, long-term investments in local systems and institutions that promote a path to self-reliance and resilience.



Lola Imomyorbekova finds joy in preparing for her classes as a Digital Trainer.

SECO Representatives Visit UCA Khorog Campus



SECO delegation on a tour of the Khorog campus.

On August 29, the Swiss Economic Cooperation Office (SECO) delegation consisting of Mr Martin Saladin SECO Head of Operation, Mr Philipp Arnold SECO Infrastructure Financing Programme Manager, Ms. Salome Steib, Director of Cooperation Office, and their technical colleagues, visited the UCA campus in Khorog. They were accompanied by Mr Nurali Riozoda Deputy Chairman of the Local Development Committee under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. After a tour of the campus facilities, there was a constructive discussion with UCA's Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences and the Mountain Societies Re-

search Institute on exploring common interests in scientific and applicable projects in Tajikistan.

SECO is active in the energy-water nexus in the Badakhshan region in Tajikistan. Among the topics discussed were potential for collaboration in cryosphere and climate change, natural hazards monitoring, and hydrology in high mountains. It was appreciated that UCA research aims to be as practical as possible to respond to the local community's capacities to cope with multiple challenges related to high mountain livelihoods.

Announcement

WORKSHOP
DATA USAGE
ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ
ДАННЫХ
СЕМИНАР
LiK

Call for Participation: The Life in Kyrgyzstan Data Users Workshop

The Institute of Public Policy and Administration of the University of Central Asia (UCA), the Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ), and ISDC - International Security and Development Center invite applications for participation at the Life in Kyrgyzstan Data Users Workshop to be held at the University of Central Asia in Bishkek on October 10, 2022, 09:00-12:30. This is the pre-conference event for the 8th Annual 'Life in Kyrgyzstan' Conference.

Applications are invited from interested individuals who use or would like to use the LiK data to conduct research and analytical work. Participation in the workshop is free of charge.

Please fill out your application by 16 September 2022 following this link: <https://bit.ly/likworkshop>.

The evaluation committee will announce the selection of participants by 21 September 2022.

Nature Magazine Features UCA's Avalanche Frequency Estimation Model

High mountain communities of Central Asia are very dependent on road connections for supplies and evacuations. Road blockages of several hours or days represent a major problem in remote mountain regions which need to be assessed by data as to when, where, and how often avalanches occur. Snow avalanches cause considerable material and human damage in all mountain regions of the world -- but are difficult to predict.

UCA's Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) has developed the first model to automatically inventory avalanche deposits at large scale catchments as an outgrowth of research conducted under the "Addressing Climate Change in Afghanistan (E3C)" project funded by the European Union.

This unique model was tested in the high mountain Amu Panj basin in Afghanistan (28,500 km²) using annual Landsat satellite archives from 1990 to 2021. The model was specifically developed for application in remote areas and for use on low power computers using Google Engine under the name Snow Avalanche Frequency Estimation (SAFE). The findings of the SAFE project were published in a recent issue of Nature magazine.

MSRI's investigation in the Amu Panj basin revealed nearly 810,000 large avalanche deposits during the 32-year study period, 5.7% of the road network was blocked by more than two avalanches per year, and 50 villages were damaged by at least one avalanche



per year. Interestingly, the frequency of avalanches did not significantly change over this 32-year period.

SAFE is available online on Google Engine and is designed to be simple and universal to use. The model can assess the frequency of damaging avalanche deposits on villages, power lines, roads, streams, and farmlands. SAFE predictions will help road authorities prioritize where to establish avalanche mitigation infrastructure.

The paper published in The Cryosphere can be freely accessed at: <https://tc.copernicus.org/articles/16/3295/2022/tc-16-3295-2022.html>

Snow Avalanche Frequency Estimation (SAFE): 32 years of monitoring remote avalanche depositional zones in high mountains of Afghanistan by Arnaud Caiserman, Roy C. Sidle and Deo Raj Gurung

The script of SAFE is available on Zenodo at the following link: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6973757> (Caiserman, 2022), which leads the user to the Google Engine Interface of SAFE. Kindly cite this paper when using the SAFE script and add the date of access.

UCA Alumni:

A Journey from Ishkashim to Poland



UCA's graduate of the Class of 2022, Alidovar Sodatsairov, has received admission to the master's degree in Biology and Concentration in Palaeontology at the Opole University in Poland.

"The undergraduate degree from the University of Central Asia has greatly benefited my professional journey and choices. I feel privileged to be an alum of UCA as it has provided me life changing opportunities. I was fortunate enough to participate in the World Mountain Forum organised by UCA in collaboration with UNICEF, re-

Alidovar Sodatsairov at the graduation ceremony with his UCA diploma.

resented my School at the World Debate in South Africa, and worked with the Polish Academy of Sciences (Botanical Garden in Warsaw) while I was a student."

Alidovar graduated from the UCA's School of Arts and Sciences with a degree in Earth and Environmental Sciences from the Khorog Campus. He believes that the curriculum at UCA, especially courses such as Environmental Impact Assessment, Hydrology, and Natural Hazards, has prepared him for further studies and a more fulfilling professional life.

Summer School at 3400 Meters Above Sea Level



Participants of the summer school discussing complexity of water resources monitoring.



Dr Erkin Isaev, MSRI's research fellow, measures water level at the glacier's foot.

More efficient water resources monitoring is essential to sustainable development of the Central Asian region because water-related challenges present a critical issue for the region's future. The river basin Chon-Kyzyl-Suu contains vital glacio-hydrological data, that helps predict the dynamics of climate and glacial changes in the region. It contributes to the water resources of the lake basins of Issyk-Kul and Naryn - Syrdarya. Monitoring of Chon-Kyzyl-Suu helps adjust models of climate change in the Central Asian region, assess the state of the glaciers of the Kyrgyz Tien Shan and Pamir-Alay, and develop short-term and long-term forecasts of glacial and climate changes.

Dr Erkin Isaev, research fellow from the Uni-

versity of Central Asia's Mountains Societies Research Institute participated in the organisation of the Summer School "Knowledge Transfer and Data Exchange" for meteorologists, hydrologists, glaciologists and ecologists of Central Asia (August 5-11, 2022). According to Dr Isaev, this summer school was important because young researchers exchanged experience and took part in the demonstration of methods of remote and field instrumental observations at Tieautomatic weather stations on the shore of Lake Issyk-Kul (1607 m), hydrological posts and meteorological stations of Chon-Kyzyl-Suu (2550 m), and on the Kara-Batkak glacier (3400 m). The Tien Shan High Mountain Scientific Centre at the Institute of Water Problems and Hydropower of the National

Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic was the major organizer of the event.

The trainers and speakers of the Summer School were scientists and researchers from the Tien Shan High Mountain Scientific Centre at the Institute of Water Problems and Hydropower of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic, Moscow State University, Russian Academy of Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Free University of Brussels, Kyoto University, Laboratory of Space Geophysical and Oceanographic Studies (LEGOS) Toulouse, Research Center for Ecology and Environment of Central Asia, and the University of Central Asia.

Financial Literacy for Unemployed Women

UCA's SPCE Centre for Entrepreneurship in Khorog successfully completed Financial Literacy Training for unemployed women in the Gorno Badakshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO). The training was held for 50 days for 150 women from Rushan, Roshtkala, Murghab, Vanj and Darvaz districts of GBAO. The project was implemented with financial support from the Central Asia Institute of Tajikistan within the framework of the project "Providing Entrepreneurships Opportunities for Migration-Affected Women". The program was designed to help participants learn about investment tools, how to build a family and personal budget, and how to control expenses. During the training, experts gave practical recommendations on how to build a financial strategy.



Participants grapple with financial literacy issues.

Scholarships for UCA Staff at SFU



Simon Fraser University's Beedie School of Business offers the Digital Innovation and Leadership (DIAL) initiative to help individuals and organizations build capacity for digital innovation. The International Office at UCA has worked with SFU to secure scholarships worth CAN\$150,000 for its staff to participate in the DIAL initiative. The first UCA cohort will start this course in September 2022.

In collaboration with the private-sector, public-sector, not-for-profit, and educational partners, the DIAL initiative helps to accelerate economic growth through digital transformation across various sectors. It has been named the flagship capacity building project of Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster and has been developed in close collaboration with industry partners for customisation.

DIAL programmes are offered at two levels:

- The Digital Transformation Management (DTM) programme will develop the mindset and skills needed to understand digi-

tal transformation, and the confidence to take action. This is ideal for contributors across business units such as HR, operations, IT and finance.

- The Digital Transformation Leadership (DTL) programme will help understand the foundations for digital transformation, develop their digital innovation mindset, and teach how to lead digital change projects.

DIAL programmes are offered virtually and conducted by SFU faculty and renowned industry experts, including:

- Dr Blaize Horner Reich, Academic Director, Professor, industry consultant and board member,
- Dr Andrew Gemino, Professor, Management Information Systems & Associate Dean, Graduate Programs, SFU Beedie;
- Dr Sarah Lubik, Director of Entrepreneurship, SFU Co-Champion, Technology Entrepreneurship at SFU Lecturer, Innovation & Entrepreneurship, SFU Beedie; and
- Dr Joseph Peppard, Former Principal Research Scientist, MIT Sloan School of Management, Director, Vitro Software International & Director, I.T. Alliance Group.

Tekeli Summer Camp



SPCE Tekeli opened two summer camp groups in August 2022. Children had an interesting program, different from their school program. They had the opportunity to practice English in a game form, use computers to create graphics, and art to create unique items.

Throughout the course of the programme participants will get an opportunity to interact with a global student body and industry experts. One-to-one support will also be provided to participants as needed. Course and scholarship details for upcoming cohorts will be available soon. For more information and applications for the upcoming cohorts please contact exced@ucentralasia.org.

UCA Publications for free Download

Long Shadows: Contemporary Health Consequences of Kazakhstan's Collectivization-Induced Famine

Authors: Charles Becker, Zhaomin Li

The massive famines that resulted from the Soviet Union's ruthless introduction of collectivization, livestock seizure, and grain requisitions from 1929-1932 were felt most acutely in northern Kazakhstan, whose large nomadic population was especially vulnerable. While the resulting chaos makes it impossible to estimate precise population losses, it is generally accepted that a quarter to half of the population perished.

Download: <https://bit.ly/IPPAWP73>



Mountain Societies Research Institute Annual Report 2021

This Annual Report highlights Mountain Societies Research Institute's accomplishments in 2021, including funded research projects, publications, invited presentations, short courses, and outreach activities.

Download: <https://bit.ly/msriar-21>



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