



American
University
of Armenia

Political Science and International Affairs (PSIA) Program Newsletter

2013-14



Remarks by the Program Chair

Welcome Dear PSIA Alumni, Students, and Friends.

It has been another busy and successful year at AUA and for PSIA. It has been busy because the University has its first entering class of undergraduates. There are three majors being offered: Business, English and Communications, and Computational Sciences. PSIA was selected to offer two General Education courses for these majors (Introduction to Political Science and Introduction to American Government).

Our own graduate program welcomed an additional 31 new first-year enrollees into the PSIA program. We have made the transition to offering two tracks in the second year: one in International Relations (IR) and one in Public Policy (PP). We feel that this allows us the opportunity to provide a greater variety of courses to our students who wish to make a contribution to the development of Armenia in the future.

We welcome back Dr. Donald Fuller who has been involved with AUA for two decades. We managed to lure him back from the Anglo-American University in Prague where he has been for the past eleven years. He is teaching courses in Western Political Thought, Comparative Politics, and International Political Economy in PSIA and is teaching undergraduate courses as well.

Our faculty has been incredibly productive. In addition to being recipients of several competitive grants, the faculty made 19 presentations at professional conferences, produced 11 published articles, chapters, and reviews, and were interviewed numerous times in the media. They have done this while continuing their top-flight teaching in the classroom. Our faculty continues to receive high marks for attention to students, the knowledge they bring in their fields of specialization, and the variety of teaching techniques used to engage students in learning now and for the future.

Finally, I wish to let you all know that the next newsletter will be prepared when the PSIA program is under new leadership, as I will be leaving at the end of the spring term. The past three years of my work with colleagues, students and alumni have been exceptionally rewarding. I will certainly miss the constant interaction with wonderful people. My decision has mostly to do with wishing to spend more time with our family. I wish to thank each and every one of you for your support and encouragement to me and to the program. It has been an honor and pleasure to serve PSIA and the University.

Dr. Douglas H. Shumavon
Professor and Chair

The Launch of a Two-Track System in the PSIA Program

Staying loyal to its aim and objectives and trying to improve the program so as to better fit the academic abilities of the students, beginning from the Fall 2013 term, PSIA is offering two tracks. This allows students to focus on International Relations (IR) or Public Policy (PP). In the second year of study, students have an opportunity to choose the track that most interests them. In the fall term students are to take three IR courses from the IR track and one from the PP track. Alternatively, if a student's focus is PP, he or she will be required to take three courses from the PP track and one from the IR track. The same is true for the second (spring) term. The subjects are arranged in the following way: The IR track includes *Comparative Regional Politics, Globalization, Caucasus in Global Politics, Security Policy, European Integration, European Union and the World, and European Neighborhood Policy*. The PP track includes *Public Finance and Budgeting, Organizational Behavior, Public Policy Analysis, Environmental Policy, and Policy and Program Evaluation*.

The Launch of the Undergraduate Program at AUA

In September 2013 AUA launched its long-awaited first undergraduate program, which offers Bachelor's degrees in Business, English and Communications, and Computational Sciences. The incoming undergraduate class consists of nearly 300 students from all over the world. They are helping AUA to better fulfill its mission by addressing the needs of Armenia and the surrounding region for sustainable development in a setting that values and develops academic excellence, free inquiry, integrity, and scholarship. The start of the undergraduate program is a momentous occasion for AUA, with PSIA also taking part in it as two of



our faculty members, Dr. Yevgenya Paturyan and Dr. Donald Fuller, are lecturing *Introduction to Political Science* and *Introduction to the United States Government* to undergraduate students.

Jean Monnet Chair of European Studies

An inaugural conference with the participation of the Ambassadors of the United Kingdom and France to Armenia, the Charge d'Affaires of the Delegation of the European Union to Armenia, and the head of the European Union Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia was held to honor the nomination of the Jean Monnet Chair at AUA. In her capacity as Jean Monnet Chair, Dr. Syuzanna Vasilyan organized a series of lectures focusing on the European Union (EU)'s policy towards Armenia, delivered by experts from the EU Advisory Group in Armenia on law enforcement, civil society, human rights, migration, justice, and public administration. The lecture series has been a unique opportunity not only for the students of PSIA but also for Armenia's policy-makers and civil society to get a firsthand experience from EU policy experts about different policy domains. A roundtable discussion on Armenia's



foreign policy course on the Eastern Partnership and the potential Eurasian Union featured PSIA faculty Syuzanna Vasilyan, Vahram Ter-Matevosyan (senior lecturer in security policy) and Aleksandr Grigoryan (assistant professor in economics). A Model European Union, a British parliamentary debate, and an academic convention entitled "European Neighborhood Policy" were also organized for PSIA students in order to give them an opportunity to gain and apply into practice the academic knowledge about the European Union, and to develop skills in diplomacy and political debate.

Featured Alumna: Alla Bakunts

We would like to introduce our PSIA featured alumna Alla Bakunts, who works as the Democratic Governance Portfolio Analyst at the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Armenia. Alla Bakunts received her Bachelor of Arts from the Yerevan State University Department of Russian Language and Literature and continued her studies at the Moscow State University Department of Russian Literature of the 19th century. After that Alla received her Master's in Political Science and International Affairs from

the American University of Armenia. Prior to her work at the United Nations, Alla worked at the United States Embassy in Armenia in the Political/Economic section. She has been a UNDP team member since 2005. She was always an alert and creative student with a quick mind and even quicker wit. She brought an inquisitive mind to her studies and took in information from many sources: reading materials assigned in courses and participating actively in classroom exchanges.

“I entered AUA’s PSIA program after a certain number of years of work experience. First of all it is great getting back to school because your mind starts to function in a different, more creative way. AUA gives a great deal of freedom and responsibility and it puts you fully in charge of formulating and pursuing your goals. Also, the environment triggers your inquisitiveness and encourages you to challenge the obvious. And finally, you become a part of AUA family and network, which is a lifelong benefit.” – **Alla Bakunts (PSIA ‘95), Democratic Governance Portfolio Analyst, UNDP Armenia**

Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis (TCPA) News

The Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis continues working toward its objective of providing high quality theoretical and applied research to aid in Armenia’s development. It coordinates research projects from faculty. It also employs both current students and PSIA graduates to learn the art of research and contribute to the Center’s goals. Several TCPA projects are described below.

TCPA has completed the “Access to School Education in Armenia” project funded by the Open Society Institute. The study conducted on-site surveys of conditions of schools throughout Armenia and the ability of students to attend schools. It also conducted extensive interviews and focus groups with students, parents and school administrators. In April - June, TCPA conducted a study entitled “Estimation of Direct and Indirect Costs and Benefits Related to Consolidation of Communities of Armenia,” funded by Counterpart International Armenia. The study introduces the assessment of costs and benefits related to the community consolidation according to two scenarios with parameters classified into quantitative and qualitative subgroups. Both of these reports of the studies can be accessed at <http://tcpa.aua.am/reports-and-publications/>.

In September, AUA and TCPA provided a capacity building training for the staff members of the National Assembly of Armenia in the framework of USAID’s Support to the Armenian National Assembly Program (SANAP) in cooperation with Tetra Tech and OSCE. In October, Academic Swiss Caucasus Net (ASCN) has confirmed the funding for TCPA for the second year of the study on civil society in Armenia. During the first year, the team completed data collection, including an organizational survey and semi-structured interviews with volunteers and NGO leaders.

In November TCPA Assistant Director Dr. Yevgenya Paturyan served as a panel discussant on the launch of the report on Environmental Activism in Armenia by delivering a presentation on TCPA’s study on civil society. For the period of November and December TCPA hosted Mariella Falkenhain, research associate from the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin, Germany, as a guest researcher. Besides examining Armenian civil society, Mariella contributed to PSIA activities by giving a lecture on the German political system for BA students, as well as a work-in-progress talk to graduate students and faculty. TCPA also hosted Professor Christoph Stefes from the University of Colorado - Denver and the Berlin Social Science Center. Professor Stefes gave lectures to PSIA students and engaged several students in discussions around his research.



We are online!



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Sincerely yours,
the PSIA team

Several individuals have asked how they can continue their relation with the PSIA program and TCPA. There are many ways in which we welcome your continued support. The first thing is to take five minutes and email us what you are currently doing (psiainfo@aua.am) so that we can update your activities and lives. Second, you can return and greet us – just to say hello – and we might even have you drop in and discuss things with one of our courses. Third, we are considering starting a scholarship fund and would welcome financial contributions to assist current students in need of tuition assistance. Please let us know if you are interested in helping with this. Fourth, any assistance you can provide in letting prospective students know what we offer and what your experiences were while you were here.



American University of Armenia

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POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS PROGRAM

The two-year PSIA program offers a graduate curriculum that focuses on the examination of international relations, the study of comparative and domestic political and economic systems, processes and policies. Throughout the course programs, students are encouraged to think critically about policy issues and politics from both a local and global perspective as they engage in policy analysis, research and leadership training.

The Mission of the Political Science and International Affairs (PSIA) is to provide graduate students with advanced analytical reasoning, critical thinking and problem solving skills. This is done through the study of international relations, comparative and domestic political and economic institutions, processes and policies.

Graduates from PSIA pursue careers in politics, government, and international relations with the Armenian government or non-governmental and international organizations.



SEARCH

NEWS

- PSIA Lecture Explores European Identity, Training Cultivates Research Skills
- Jean Monnet Guest Lecture: Ever Larger Europe
- Public Lecture Presents New Perspectives on Ukrainian Conflict

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