IU and Other Indiana Universities Assist Kyrgyzstan’s New Progressive University

“The IU-AUK project is the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs’ highest profile education project in Central Asia.”

–Patrick O’Meara
Dean of International Programs

A special relationship is developing between the state of Indiana and the mountainous country of Kyrgyzstan—officially known as the Kyrgyz Republic—in Central Asia. Indiana University and other universities within the Indiana Consortium for International Programs (ICIP) are cooperating under a three-year, $1.9 million grant from the Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (formerly USIA). The grant was awarded to IU’s Center for International Education and Development Assistance (CIEDA) of the Office of International Programs, in association with IU’s Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center (IAUNRC). It provides for faculty development and administrative training programs to help the new American University in Kyrgyzstan (AUK) develop into one of the region’s top higher education institutions.

AUK’s mission is to meet the need in Central Asia for “a new generation equipped with a modern understanding of how economic resources, information, and rights are held and used in a free society.”

AUK had its beginnings in 1993 as the Kyrgyz-American School, funded jointly by the Open Society Institute of the Soros Foundation, the USIA, and the Kyrgyz government. The opening ceremony was attended by Vice President of the United States Albert Gore, who, on an earlier trip to Kyrgyzstan, had indicated U.S. commitment to the region. In November 1997, the school was officially designated as a university in an auspicious ceremony opened by President of the Kyrgyz Republic Askar Akaev and his invited guest, U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton.

IU Bloomington’s partners in this endeavor are Ball State University, DePauw University, IUPUI, IU Southeast, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, and Valparaiso University. Together, they are providing assistance and training in six academic programs at AUK: American studies (history and literature), economics, journalism/communications, political science and international relations, psychology, and sociology. The agreement calls for a series of long- and short-term exchanges of faculty and administrators between the seven Indiana institutions and AUK. It also brings a selection of AUK’s junior faculty and advanced graduate students to IUB, IUPUI, and Ball State for master’s degree training in various social science and humanities fields. The university currently enrolls about 900 students. The great majority of current AUK faculty received their training in institutions of the former Soviet higher education system.

In September, IU’s Dean for International Programs Patrick O’Meara, Associate Dean for International Research and Development and CIEDA Director Charles Reafsnyder, and Assistant Dean for Administration Judith Rice were in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, for an official ceremony to sign a memorandum of understanding between IU and AUK, pledging that both institutions will sustain the partner-

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A Kyrgyz musician performs for the audience at the formal signing ceremony.

real consolidation of the IU-AUK relationship. The auditorium was decorated with a three-foot high banner saying "Welcome Hoosiers!" and the entertainment included Kyrgyz folk and classical musical performances. A dramatic rendition of This Land Is Your Land, with lyrics adapted to the landscapes of Indiana and Kyrgyzstan, closed the event.

The project officially began in June 1999, with Reafnyder and IAUNRC Director William Fierman traveling to Bishkek to lay the initial groundwork. In fall of 1999, Robert Campbell, IUB professor emeritus in economics, became the first faculty member to take up residence at AUK for the academic year. He was joined during the year by Sherry Ricchiardi, from the School Journalism; Matt Crawford, a doctoral candidate in psychology at IUB; Marion McInnes, associate dean of academic affairs at De Pauw University, who taught English literature; Julie Thomas from IUB’s Gender Studies Program; and Emita Hill, former chancellor of IU Kokomo, who consulted with AUK administrators. Hill is now a member of AUK’s Board of Trustees.

On the AUK side, both Provost Sharshekeeva and Vice President of Academic Affairs Martha Merrill visited the Indiana consortium schools in the fall of 1999. They were joined by two AUK librarians who spent a month at DePauw University, where they learned about using the Internet and newer technologies for libraries. In spring of 2000, Jarkin Mambetova came to IUB as a visiting scholar in gender studies. This fall, Sezbek Urmanbetov is working with Robert Becker and Roy Gardner of the Department of Economics to develop an undergraduate economics curriculum and learn about game theory for economists. Faculty members scheduled to come next spring include Galina Bityukova in political science and Nurillya Sharshekeeva in American studies.

IU participants at AUK this fall include Brian Winchester, director of IUB’s Center for the Study of Global Change, who is teaching for the semester in the political science/international relations program; and Chris Foley of IUB’s Office of International Admissions, who was there for four weeks as a consultant on student enrollment and recruitment. Rice, in Kyrgyzstan to attend the signing ceremony, also gave advice on budgetary and fiscal administration. In October, AUK’s registrar, Elmira Musuraliyeva, will spend four weeks at DePauw with her counterpart while Petma Revina, AUK’s financial manager, will divide a month-long visit among several institutions.

The first nine graduate students from AUK have already arrived this semester. The five women among the students and their fields of study are Mehrigiul Ablezova (sociology, Ball State); Asyl Bakanova (economics, IUPUI); Irina Larionova (political science, Ball State); Nazgul Sadykova (psychology, IUB); and Elmira Satybaldieva (journalism, Ball State). The four men and their fields are Emilbek Juraev (political science, IUB); Temirian Moldogazieva (political science, IUB); Samagan Nasypbek (economics,

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International News
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International Centers at IU Bloomington Receive Title VI Federal Funding

Indiana University Bloomington has again received substantial support from the federal government for its internationally recognized area and international studies centers for the 2000–03 grant cycle. These federal funds, authorized under Title VI of the Higher Education Act, support the National Resource Centers Program and the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship Program. Together, they provide grants to strengthen U.S. capacity in area or international studies expertise and training in modern foreign languages, in order to meet national needs.

The five centers on the Bloomington campus that were funded are the African Studies Program, the Center for the Study of Global Change, the Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center, the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center, and the Russian and East European Institute. For the first time in its history, the Latin American center became a national resource center by joining in a consortium with Notre Dame University. IU also has a sixth Title VI center, the Center for International Business Education and Research, which is funded on a different grant cycle.

Indiana University has kept its place among universities with the largest number of such federally supported centers, remaining among the top 10 for the current funding cycle. Given the increasingly competitive environment, Patrick O'Meara, dean for international programs, is pleased at IU's success and attributes this to innovative and well-presented proposals.

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IUB); and Baktygul Aliev (journalism, Ball State).

The IU-ICIP-AUK collaboration is an exciting educational partnership for all. For IU and ICIP–member faculty, the project represents an opportunity to teach abroad and to possibly become interested in a new world area—Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. Meanwhile, AUK's junior faculty and graduate students who are getting U.S. training will return to Kyrgyzstan with new Western perspectives on how to teach the humanities and social sciences. "The IU-AUK project is the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' highest profile education project in Central Asia," says O'Meara.

-On their first day in Bloomington, the Kyrgyz students and scholars pose with Indiana University Office of International Programs (OIP) administrators. Pictured left to right are Emilbek Juraev, Baktygul Aliev, Project Coordinator Kay Ikranagara, Irina Larionova, Temirlan Moldogazieva, CIEA Director Charles Reafsnyder (kneeling), Elmira Satybaldieva, OIP Dean Patrick O'Meara, Asyl Bakanova, AUK Visiting Scholar Sezbek Urmanbetov, Nazgul Sadykova, Samagan Nasypbek, and Mehrigiul Ablezova.