The recent prodemocracy revolution in Kyrgyzstan turned world attention to this small Central Asian nation. One institution is already in place in the capital city of Bishkek that is certain to improve the nation’s chances of making a successful transition to democracy—the American University of Central Asia (AUCA). Indiana University is integrally involved in those efforts.

AUCA, which currently enrolls some 1,100 students, has been closely involved in scholarly exchanges with IU since 1999. IU’s Office of International Programs (OIP) was awarded a $1.9 million linkage grant from the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). The project included IU and member colleges and universities of the Indiana Consortium for International Programs. ECA awarded IU and ICIP a $650,000 follow-on grant in 2003. In 2002, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) approached IU with a request to manage an endowment for AUCA. Having made substantial investments in AUCA over the years, USAID and the Open Society Institute (OSI), founded by philanthropist George Soros, wanted to institutionalize their commitments through an endowment.

In April 2005, the IU–AUCA relationship was strengthened with

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SPEA Establishes Public Administration Minor at AUCA

Indiana University’s School of Public and Environmental Affairs has received a two-year grant funded by the Association Liaison Office (ALO) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The grant will allow SPEA to partner with the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) in Kyrgyzstan and establish a basic undergraduate minor in public administration. The minor will enhance AUCA’s capacity to prepare leaders and administrators for regional and local government service as well as to train future non-governmental (NGO) managers. The grant will produce a long-term, sustainable curriculum of five courses (15 credit hours) adapted to the needs of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. The end product of the two-year partnership will be a public administration curriculum and minor field focused on three tracks: NGO track, public policy track, and the economics/finance track. The eventual goal of AUCA is to develop a graduate program in public policy and public affairs.

This curriculum should help improve managerial efficiency in Kyrgyz public institutions and NGOs while promoting democratic values and new approaches to public administration in the Central Asian

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SPEA emeritus professor Roy Shin (far left) and CIEDA associate director Shawn Reynolds (far right) meet with a delegation of Kyrgyz students at AUCA during fall 2004.

region. Curriculum materials will also be used to provide in-service training programs that strengthen local government and civic organizations. A critical component of the public administration minor is the introduction of service-learning modules into the curriculum.

A range of activities began in the fall of 2004 to launch the program. For 10 days in October, Claire King, director of IU’s Community Outreach and Partnerships in Service-Learning, held a service-learning workshop at AUCA, attended by 26 participants, including faculty and students as well as 5 NGO representatives. In November, SPEA’s dean Astrid Merget and emeritus professor of SPEA Roy Shin paid a planning visit to AUCA. They worked with Temirlan (Tima) Moldogaziev and other AUCA faculty to outline a basic curriculum for the minor, established a timetable for faculty exchanges, and paid visits to local NGOs. They interviewed Aleksey Kolpakov, who was subsequently selected as the candidate to come to SPEA for a Ph.D. Another AUCA member, Elina Karalaeva, was selected to work on a master’s in public administration at SPEA. Both graduate candidates are expected to arrive at IUB in August 2005.

Two other AUCA faculty members, Erkeaim Shambetov and Asel Kyrgyzbaeva will be coming to IU Bloomington in fall 2005 to begin a month-long stay at SPEA observing government budgeting and financial management classes and developing course curricula. In exchange, SPEA professor Beth Gazley, whose specialty is in volunteering and civic engagement, will travel in September to AUCA to work on curriculum development in nonprofit management.

Finally, the grant provides funds for IU to assist AUCA in acquiring a collection of relevant public administration texts and reference works through donations and gifts by IU SPEA faculty and the IU SPEA library.

The grant is being managed by IU’s Center for International Education and Development Assistance. For further information on the program, contact Shawn Reynolds, CIEDA associate director; telephone: (812)-856-5821; e-mail: shreyol@indiana.edu.

—RMN

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Kathleen Claussen’s fellow students at lunch in Puebla.

Puebla, Mexico. She took courses in the School of Administration and completed a research paper on the current state of the still invisible “third sector”—non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations—in Mexican society. TCSEC study abroad scholarships for 2005–2006 are still available for IUB students. The TCSEC program is coordinated by Jorge Chapa, director of the Latino Studies Program. For further information on these grants, contact Elizabeth Jasper; telephone (812) 856-1795; e-mail: ejasper@indiana.edu.

—RMN

For information on TCSEC, see www.studycivilsociety.org