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CIVIC EDUCATION PROJECT

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

Dave Carter Discusses the Higher Education Support for Social Sciences in Macedonia



Dr. Carter is Senior Program Manager for the Teaching and Learning Initiative and Special Projects in Budapest, Hungary. He is also academic coordinator of HESSS.

■ **What is the context of the Higher Education Support for Social Sciences (HESSS) project and why is it important?**

HESSS is a two-year project that supports the implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in social science disciplines across Macedonia. ECTS is one of the key elements of the Bologna process – a Europe-wide reexamination of higher education. This process offers an opportunity to bring universities in Southeastern Europe into the wider European higher education family, to share resources, enjoy student and staff mobility, and eventually, to compete in this larger market.

Education ministers in almost forty European states have signed on to the Bologna Declaration and have agreed to reconvene every two years to examine their progress. HESSS connects Macedonia to the Bologna process by supporting Macedonian academics in the revision of curricula, teaching methods and assessment processes. The ultimate goal is for Macedonian universities to become ECTS-compliant.

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CEP Visiting Faculty Fellow Robyn McNish and Yerevan State University Law Students in Washington, DC for the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition. See story on page 7.

■ **Would you please describe the project?**

The two major goals of this project are: 1) to support the revision of curricula in economics and public administration, with a secondary focus on historical studies, political science, sociology and social work and 2) to raise awareness of the wider higher education context in Macedonia in relation to the Bologna process and ECTS. CEP first created discipline groups by identifying partner departments, institutions and academics. In the first year, CEP introduced the Bologna process, ECTS and teaching methodology issues to faculty members. This upcoming academic year, sessions will focus on course design. The Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking project, the European University Association, the South East European University and representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science have been critical partners. The Discipline Leader, a US-based senior academic, and the Resource Fellow, a mid-level academic from Central or Southeastern Europe, provide disciplinary academic direction to each group.

■ **Why were the five disciplines chosen and how did you recruit discipline leaders?**

We chose from a preliminary shortlist drawn up by CEP and the US Embassy in Skopje. This list was based upon CEP’s expertise and the perceived needs in Macedonia and was finalized after detailed negotiations with the faculties and departments. Put simply – our work can only be effective if institutions are willing to collaborate.

Once we had selected the areas of focus, the Discipline Leader and Resource Fellow recruitment was relatively easy. CEP identified individuals who fit the requested profiles from what we like to call the CEP network, made up of CEP alumni or others we have collaborated with on previous projects. Only one member of the team was new to CEP – but even he was identified through our existing network.

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Mari State University Places Second at Jessup World Championship

The Mari State University Jessup team placed second at the Jessup World Championship held in Washington, DC. After having gone undefeated in the preliminary rounds, Mari State beat the University of Buenos Aires, the University of Vienna and Columbia University to advance into the championship round to face the University of Western Australia. Mari State's remarkable winning streak unfortunately came to an end against the Australian team, which was the second place team at the 2002 World Championship. Congratulations to all those people who dedicated time and energy to making the first two Russian Jessup competitions a success.

CEP/Mari Law Methods Conference—Exciting New Path Already Shows Results

CEP Russia and the Mari State Faculty of Law sponsored a seminar on law teaching methodologies at a lakeside resort outside of Yoshkar-Ola on April 24 and 25, 2003. The seminar followed on the heels of the impressive second place finish by Mari State law students at the International Jessup Moot Court Competition in Washington, DC in early April. The primary theme of the conference was to encourage effectiveness, quality and high standards in the competitive field of legal education.

Representatives of the Legal Studies Council of the Russian Universities' Academic and Methodology Association attended, as well as law faculty from various institutes in Russia, including St. Petersburg State University, Moscow State University, Kazan State University and Saratov State University. The Legal Studies Council sets federal standards for legal education. CEP Local and Visiting Faculty Fellows were presenters and attendees.

The agenda for the conference included recommendations for dramatic change in the manner in which law is taught in Russia. Because of their successful track record in the Jessup Moot Court Competition and other national and international competitions, the faculty at Mari State was uniquely qualified to offer recommendations.

CEP Local Faculty Fellow Dimitri Sandakov, a coach of the Jessup Team, presented on the value of moot court competition. Mr. Sandakov cited a study that shows something moot court coaches have described anecdotally for years: there is a substantial increase in retention of legal fundamentals by moot court participants. Furthermore, high placement in moot court competitions acts as an employment recruitment tool for top law firms. Both faculty from Mari State and Nizhny Novgorod State University, a CEP-coached fourth place finisher in the nineteen-team Russia competition, reported receiving queries from large international law firms seeking employees and interns. Beginning next year, Mari State will make moot court, in either Russian or English, a requirement for graduation.

Oleg Sidorov, vice-dean of the Mari Law Faculty and CEP Board member, co-presented with Dean Anatolii M. Lomonosov on the issue of ensuring that students actually learn. Dean Lomonosov said that because institutes need to supplement restricted budgets, there has been a tendency to permit students to slide through without attaining minimal necessary legal skills. As time goes on, law student

Bernadette Foley, CEP Visiting Faculty Fellow—Sakhalin, Russia

applicants will be asking: "Where will I take my money?" The Dean commented that some law institutes will go bankrupt unless they achieve better quality control. Lomonosov pointed out that after graduation, most students will be engaged in the practice of law rather than teaching or researching. Thus, he argues, students need training in practical skills – something that has been missing from the Russian university law curriculum.

Mari has instituted new procedures for control of student learning. Students will be required to take anonymous written examinations, attend each class, respond regularly to oral questioning and participate in discussion of legal problems. Students must maintain a notebook with completed problem assignments that will be periodically reviewed by the instructor. The faculty at Mari believes that legal institutes do students no service by waiting until the end of the semester to discover if students are learning.

Mari has also pressured faculty to utilize new methodologies. Faculty salaries will be increased based upon evaluations by faculty peers that show instructor compliance with new methodologies. Mari presenters reported that the salary adjustment is similar to a bonus.

CEP alumna Miloslava Burkovskaya discussed student video presentation programs involving defense of a theoretical paper and a client consultation. She showed two examples that demonstrated how videos could be used to enhance performance and alert students to weaknesses in oral skills.

The Mari Legal Clinic portion of the seminar involved a visit to the clinic in action. Every student must work in the clinic. Those with superior academic grades assume more senior roles. Mari students have provided free legal services to thousands of residents of the region. Clinic supervisors negotiated with legal database companies and managed to procure free database materials from several sources. Students at the law library also have access to legal databases. The library is impressive and includes a section of books donated by CEP.

The Mari State Law Institute was founded ten years ago. The average age of instructors at the time was sixty-seven. There were no books, no computers and two rooms. The dedication of the faculty, their collegiality and the commitment of CEP to recognizing the promise of this program have resulted in a top-notch law institute, now a model for others in Russia. Time will tell whether other institutes are smart enough to follow this promising path.

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Higher Education Support for Social Sciences

Continued from page 1

- **Who funds HESSS and why is CEP uniquely positioned to implement this project?**

The US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) funds HESSS. The US Embassy in Skopje has been instrumental in providing us with partners to assist in the implementation, such as the ECA-funded Graduate Center for Public Policy and Management in Macedonia.

CEP's role in implementing this project is a natural consequence of two key elements of CEP's identity. The first is CEP's on-the-ground experience and its many university partnerships. The second is CEP's history of providing training and networking support to academics.

- **What is your role in this project? What are some of the challenges you have encountered and how have you overcome them?**

I am one of the three main players in the process—alongside Divna Sipovik, project manager, and Liana Ghent, project coordinator. Of course, as with all CEP projects, the work is shared among many

staff members. As academic coordinator, I design and direct workshops, which includes delivering some sessions and providing support materials. In this latter context, I am responsible for overseeing the production of the HESSS multilingual website—www.cep.org.hu/hesss.

The single biggest challenge is conveying the scale of ECTS implementation. Like most countries acceding to Bologna, Macedonia feels considerable pressure to implement changes swiftly. However, the Bologna process is too complex for that and requires time. Yet, within some Macedonian higher education institutions, different parts had been "rushed." The result of this is that project participants find themselves redoing things that they thought they had "done." In a sense though, this is something that they have had to overcome more than we have. So, I suppose our role in this has been to be supportive, but also adaptive—to do our best to provide support that matches the actual position they are in, rather than simply presuming a clean slate. The other main challenge has been mastering the Bologna process itself. It has meant a lot of reading and a lot of research. But, I have to

say, as an academic, the process itself is very exciting.

- **Are other departments/disciplines interested in this project? Is there the political will to change higher education?**

Yes! Already individuals and institutions from many disciplines have contacted us about getting involved. At a recent education conference in Skopje, I spoke to a member of the Education Ministry about possibilities for a similar project that focuses on the technical sciences.

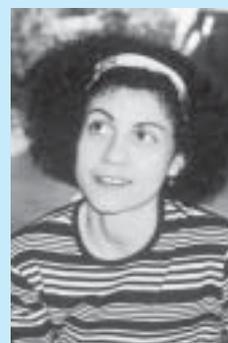
The political will is a much harder thing to define. Certainly the Ministry has already shown interest and support for this project—always a nice thing! However, the harder issue is the will within the institutions. Bologna represents a very real change and change is not always welcome. There are those, as in all countries, who are resistant. But we have accepted this—hence our focus on areas where the will to change does exist. Hopefully, through leading by example, we may persuade those who are currently more reticent that this change is a positive and necessary one.

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Romania and Bulgaria Programs Merge

On July 1, 2003, the Romania and Bulgaria program merged into one administrative and programmatic unit. Like other CEP sub-regional programs, we hope that this move will lead to increased cooperation, new academic networks, work in discipline clusters and professional development activities between the two countries. The first joint event will be the Romania/Bulgaria orientation, which will take place from September 17 to September 22. Liliana Popescu is the program director for the Romania/Bulgaria program and works in collaboration with Tsvetelina Popova, program coordinator for Bulgaria and Lucian Sarbeanu, program coordinator for Romania.

The new joint program has forty-three Fellows for academic year 2003–04, including twenty-one Local Faculty Fellows, seventeen Teaching Development Program Fellows and five Visiting Faculty Fellows. One of the Visiting Faculty Fellows will serve as a Resource Fellow, a senior academic who mentors local scholars from his or her home country and travels to Bulgaria periodically to conduct trainings. Depending on its success, this pilot scheme may be replicated in other programs. Academic exchanges and cooperation will continue, especially with Moldova, which in the future may join the Romania/Bulgaria program.



Tsvetelina Popova



Liliana Popescu

2002 Orientation



Announcements



September 9–13, 2001, Team Development Day

Conflict Resolution: Uzbek Style!

Sureyya Yigit, CEP Visiting Faculty Fellow—Samarkand, Uzbekistan

On a weekend in May, more than twenty students from Samarkand and Tashkent gathered together to participate in a simulation exercise. Acting as ambassadors to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), students met to discuss the thorny issue of Nagorno-Karabakh in the Caucasus. Students were selected on the basis of their international law and international relations knowledge and participation in lectures on negotiation skills, crisis management and the rules by which international organisations work.

The simulation met the wrath of nature on its first day with heavy and incessant rain. Perhaps the gods were shedding tears for the terrible situation in the Caucasus. After excellent speeches by US Ambassador Herbst and OSCE Ambassador Erozan, the simulation proper began. On stage, the students nervously made their opening statements, glimpsing at their notes. They were right to feel a

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with enjoyment—that make
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with our students.

little unnerved, as there was an audience of over 100 students watching their every move and listening to their every syllable. Over lunch, student ambassadors used their time effectively to network and lobby other ambassadors. The afternoon sessions gathered pace as real time events such as resigning governments and erupting violence were reported to the simulation participants. Negotiations grew tense, at times, as students reacted to volatile events. When dinner came around, students were more drained than hungry. At last, the first day was over. Nevertheless, in true diplomatic spirit, unofficial negotiations continued throughout dinner and, in many cases, beyond the night and into early morning.

At breakfast, bloodshot-eyed ambassadors persisted in their attempt to garner support for solutions. Nature itself was winking at them as the day was bathed in beautiful Tashkent sunshine. In a final frantic session on Sunday, May 11, ambassadors collectively wrote a final communiqué with twenty adorning signatures. Although not reflecting reality, ambassadors issued an ultimatum to

the conflicting sides declaring that if violence did not cease in forty-eight hours, the OSCE would militarily intervene. The real fun began in the debriefing session when the original goals and aims of the ambassadors were read aloud and compared with the document that they had all signed. Shocks and surprises were in store for some diplomats. Those, who only a few days ago had strongly stated that they would never accept certain conditions, had put down their names for exactly these things.

The two-day simulation was a great success, if not in real life for the genuine Nagorno-Karabakh crisis, then for the students experiencing what diplomats actually face. They all had the opportunity to practice public speaking and, more importantly, think and decide under pressure. Unknowingly, they were wrapped up in the whirlwind blowing through the conference hall, which enabled them to understand what group dynamics are all about. Students increased their knowledge about the foreign country that they had represented and found out just how difficult it is to reconcile twenty different points of view. It was a pleasure to watch Samarkand and Tashkent students making friends with each other, both inside and outside the conference hall. It is events like these—a combination of learning with enjoyment—that make CEP activities so popular with our students. I have already begun to research the possible crisis themes for next year's simulation. Suggestions are most welcome!

Higher Education Support for Social Sciences

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- How will this project affect higher education and students' lives, in particular, in Macedonia? Do you envision students from universities in the region or other EU member countries choosing to study in Macedonia?

Dramatically, but not that dramatically. It is a myth that ECTS will lead to students from the UK, France or Germany lining up to earn degrees in Macedonia. However, what this process will mean is that students within Macedonia will pursue degrees that are coherently structured and conform to the standards of the wider EU. It is important to note that this process is structural, meaning that not all European degrees will be uniform. Rather, degrees will be comparable and recognizable, making it easier for Macedonian students and faculty to study abroad and return to Macedonia with qualifications that are both suited to the needs of the labor market and recognized across Europe. In short, the Bologna process is about employability, comparability and the creation of knowledge-based societies. To me, this is a very dramatic change. Of course, this is not to say that other changes won't occur. I can see a future where students from any country in Europe might want to study in Macedonia and when faculty members will seek periods of tenure in Macedonian universities. It is just that this is perhaps a few years away at the moment.

- Does CEP intend to scale up or replicate this project, how and where?

Yes, at least I hope so—in two obvious directions. I've already mentioned the potential for replication across other disciplines in Macedonia—a real target for us. But also, part of this process has been to develop this implementation model. We are looking toward the rest of Southeastern Europe, Central Europe and even the former Soviet region. Countries such as Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan have already expressed interest in the Bologna process. The potential for this project is huge!

The Eighth Annual Student Balkan Debate Forum

Stuart Graham, CEP Visiting Faculty Fellow—Belgrade, Serbia & Montenegro

The magnificently beautiful Montenegrin coastal town of Budva played host to this year's Eighth Annual Student Balkan Debate Forum (BDF), which took place from April 30 to May 5, 2003. The usual peace and quite of pre-holiday-season Budva was broken when forty-two students of CEP Fellows and alumni in Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Turkey descended upon the town. In addition to this, eleven high school students attended the event, sponsored by the United States Embassies in Belgrade, Bucharest and Skopje.

Like the previous seven BDFs, the purpose of the event was largely twofold. A longer-term goal is to contribute toward an easing of ethnic tensions by creating personal relationships and mutual respect among students from various Southeast European countries. A shorter-term goal is to encourage dialogue about controversial matters in the Balkans and learn that there are various ways to see an issue. This latter objective is achieved by encouraging critical thinking, tolerance and debating techniques.

This Eighth BDF achieved these aims through a lot of hard work and, of course, an equal dose of fun. The ideal location of the Grand Hotel Avala with its nearby beaches set the perfect tone for the fun part. The schedule for the BDF included numerous workshops and a cross-cultural simulation game. These were led by both Local and Visiting Faculty Fellows from across the region.

This year, the organisers placed a greater emphasis on debate training. Thus, included in the schedule was a complete day of debating workshops, organised and led by Annette Freyberg-Inan (CEP Fellow, Bucharest) and Rozi Bako (Trainer and Consultant at the Civil Society Development Foundation in Romania). These took place in smaller groups, culminating in a highly controversial and deeply passionate debate with the title, "Cats Make Better Pets Than Dogs".

One pleasing aspect of the BDF was that everybody was prepared to become involved. This was most clearly seen in the fact that two of the sponsors' representatives (Stephen Gethins of Saferworld, UK and Chrissie Hirst of South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms

and Light Weapons) had little time to enjoy the surroundings of Budva. Both were involved in presenting a film evening and discussion on instability and small arms, after which students sat for hours in deep discussion. In addition, Stephen led workshops on presentation skills and Chrissie acted as a coach for the debating teams on the theme, "Insecurity and Gun Culture Undermine Peace and Stability in South Eastern Europe," a debate topic sponsored by their organisations.

CEP Fellows worked as coaches for the other debate topics, which addressed areas of gender, democratisation, nationalism, European Union accession, self-determination and Iraq, all issues relevant to the Balkans. These Fellows spent the bulk of their time in Budva working closely with the debating groups, assisting them in developing their arguments and putting forward possible counterarguments that each team was likely to face. Once again, in the spirit of hard work and fun, participants were seen studying in numerous locations not normally associated with academic debating preparation: in street cafes, near the pool and on the beach, surrounded by readers, pens and piles of notes.

The seven debates took place over three days and were of a quality, which suggested

that the emphasis upon training had paid off. Moreover, the friendly atmosphere, which had developed from day one of the BDF prevailed throughout debates on what were often controversial topics. The students conducted themselves in a mature and intellectually challenging manner, often presenting arguments with which they personally disagreed. The fears that debates could decline into confrontation and stereotyping, something which unfortunately all too often happens in this part of the world, were not at all realised.

All in all, the Eighth BDF in Budva was a resounding success. On the morning of departure, participants emerged bleary-eyed from a final night of fun, sad that the event was over. Numerous friendships were formed over the course of the previous few days, something that the participants are keen to keep alive. Some of them immediately set up an internet group, which can be found at <http://groups.msn.com/balkandebate>.

There are many reasons for the success of the event. Budva, naturally, played its part. But we should also not forget the hard work of the organisers, the CEP Fellows and the willingness and enthusiasm of the guests to become completely involved. Whoever would have thought that debating could be so much fun?



In cooperation with CEP, Vytautas Magnus University's Department of Sociology organized an international seminar called, "Community Oriented Learning: Strategies and Methods of Implementation," in February 2003. CEP Fellows, alumni, local faculty members, students and NGO leaders from the region gathered to discuss two significant questions—how to foster the role of universities in the development of local communities and how to strengthen partnerships between universities and the third sector.

A burning issue in the region is how to reform courses that incorporate civil society development and meet the requirements of a dynamic labor market. This seminar, organized by sociologists, marks the beginning of *service learning*, a strategy in which students learn both in and outside of the classroom. Through interning with NGOs and participating in community service activities, students gain "real world" experience, while adding value to their communities.

CEP alumnus Arthur Pitz at Community Oriented Learning Conference in Kaunas, Lithuania, 2003



Community Building

The Role of Universities in Community and NGO Building

Arnas Zdanevicius, CEP alumnus—Kaunas, Lithuania

A number of professors, especially young scholars in Eastern and Central Europe, already include a component of service learning in the teaching process. The idea of a practicum is not new, as this was a part of the Soviet educational system and was common in fields such as social work and psychology. What is new is the idea of serving the needs of the community through disciplines such as political science, economics and public administration. The integration of community service learning modules into university curricula requires a clear understanding of the subject from university administrators, faculty members, students and NGO leaders. One of the main challenges will be to increase awareness of the benefits of community oriented learning in academia and the non-profit sector.

Some questions raised were: 1) Is service learning effective in our universities? 2) What are the benefits for students, universities and communities? 3) Will we compromise academic rigor by sending students outside the university? The consensus was that service learning is currently disorganized and exists at the grassroots level. To a certain extent, it depends on the goodwill and initiative of faculty members and, in many respects, on civil society organization's willingness to cooperate. Arthur and Suzanne Pitz, both CEP Resource Fellows, pointed out that now is the time to begin institutionalizing service learning practices.

Since the overall aim of the seminar was to encourage university scholars, primarily the younger generation, to develop courses that include service learning components, seminar participants were introduced to both the positive and negative aspects of service learning as a teaching and learning strategy. Furthermore, participants of the seminar received background information and practical hints on how to implement these courses. Especially useful were success stories of cooperation between universities and the non-profit sector brought by Irmina Matonyte (CEP alumna, Kaunas University of Technology), Renata Martuszkiewicz (CEP program coordinator, University of Gdansk), Zholt Pethe and Hayo de Vries (Democratic Youth Foundation, Budapest) and Jolanta Reingardiene (Vytautas Magnus University).

Finally, one of the objectives of the seminar was to raise public awareness. Therefore, the seminar not only gave rise to debates about learning strategies among academics, the third sector and the general public, but also about institutional change—how to bring about an official recognition and inclusion of service learning courses into the undergraduate programs of the sociology department.

Workshop materials are available on CEP's website. If you have any questions or ideas for possible cooperation, please email: A.Zdanevicius@smf.vdu.lt

Students Plan Projects to Benefit Community

Piers von Berg, CEP Visiting Faculty Fellow—Baku, Azerbaijan

Visiting Faculty Fellow Piers von Berg organized two youth forums this year in Azerbaijan. The first was held in Baku and the second in Ganja, Azerbaijan's second largest city. A number of CEP Fellows attended, including Corey Patterson and Evangelia Papoutsaki, both Visiting Faculty Fellows from Georgia. Costing under \$2,500, this project was supported by foreign embassies, oil companies and the Open Society Institute.

The purpose of the forums was for students to research and plan community projects to solve problems affecting their lives. For example, one student interviewed her Rector and the female students at her university to investigate why there were no women's sports teams. She discovered that women were keen on playing sports, but thought that the administration would not permit it. The

administration, on the other hand, was willing to allow women's sports but did not think there was enough interest. The youth forum gave this student the opportunity to design a project to create a women's sports club at her university. With the support of the Rector, the women's club will have access to the same equipment and trainers presently provided to the men's teams. Khazar University's women's sports club will begin next semester.

This research and its resulting project is one example of many. The two youth forums produced twenty-one projects. Examples include: anti-smoking and drug campaigns, providing information on corruption, mobilizing neighborhoods for environmental action and organizing summer schools for refugee and homeless children. Six of these projects require only paper and access to a photocopier.

CEP Changes Attitudes

*Ruzanna Konjorian, Fourth Year Student of Anush Shahverdyan,
CEP Local Faculty Fellow/SCOUT
Gladzor University—Yerevan, Armenia*

My life before CEP was full of unanswered questions. Answers were either difficult to find or people responded with, “Oh, this is politics, mind your own business.” The first light came with the appearance of a CEP Fellow. I remember quite clearly how impressed our class was with our new lecturer and how we waited with anticipation for the next lesson. Thanks to Anush Shahverdyan, we became acquainted with CEP and its splendid projects.

During training as a debate forum alternate, I realized the extent to which CEP’s program really aims to contribute to the development of future generations. Selected to participate in the CEP Caucasus Fifth Regional Student Conference in Tbilisi, I was surprised to find that the Armenian and Azeri students

were very friendly toward one another. I realized there that CEP was responsible for this change in attitude. CEP provides a forum for us to meet and establish good relationships with our counterparts, despite our regional conflicts. Thanks to CEP, we realized that we are a common humanity with similar problems and issues and must find new solutions to our problems. CEP also helps students understand that the future is in our hands and that we should care about our country and strive to make changes.

Since the conference, we have kept warm relations with the students that CEP brought together. I was excited to see some familiar faces at the Area Studies Annual Conference held later on in Yerevan, as well as meet students and Fellows from Georgia and other countries. Unfortunately, we did not see Azeri students or Fellows at this conference in Yerevan. I hope that one day we will be free from conflict and will visit each other in our countries, not just in a neutral area, like Georgia. Then we will be able to state that CEP has fulfilled its mission.

For projects requiring more resources, students fundraise with local and international donors. When this article was written, students had been fundraising for one week and had received support totaling over \$700.

The youth forum was not only about projects and raising money. In fact, most of it, according to our student feedback, was about learning skills. All of the thirty-eight participants are studying sociology and social psychology with CEP Fellows. These courses include research projects on the attitudes of youth toward social differences and the needs of vulnerable social minorities in Azerbaijan. There is also a section on academic skills (note taking, report writing, presentations) and professional skills (problem solving, teamwork, negotiation). The conference provides a means to practice the skills and ideas studied in a CEP course. Students and teachers alike enjoyed the youth forum and we hope that many of the projects will continue over the summer holidays.

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CEP Caucasus Fifth Regional Student Conference in Tbilisi, 2003

Student Voices

The Hope

Abel Manukyan, Law Student, Yerevan State University—Armenia

The corridor of the Law Faculty of Yerevan State University (YSU) was more active than usual. Having forgotten their daily routine, the law students gathered in front of an audience hall to wait for the evening results. What was going on? Both the alumni and the lecturers knew the answer. There was a competition among the students and they were eagerly awaiting the voting results. Hope was shining in their eyes, hope that they would succeed in representing Armenia in the international competition. Though they would still have to win one more competition to represent Armenia, this was not on their minds. Their only objective, at this point, was to win this competition.

I admire the willingness and devotion of someone who leaves home and crosses the Atlantic to share his or her experience with a small country.

Among the jury sat Ms. Robyn McNish, a young lawyer whom most of the last year students, including myself, had the honor of meeting. Ms. McNish came to Armenia as a CEP Visiting Faculty Fellow to teach courses in law. She went above and beyond her job requirements by volunteering to train the Armenian team for the Phillip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition. Acting with honor and a high degree of responsibility, Robyn was successful in engaging her students in the art of legal writing. I admire the willingness and devotion of someone who leaves home and crosses the Atlantic to share his or her experience with a small country.

Suddenly, the oak tree doors opened and we were invited in. The jury thanked everyone and then announced five names. Deep sighs followed and participants congratulated the winners and left the hall. Only those five happy students and the devoted Robyn McNish remained. It was at this moment that we realized the seriousness of our task. Our first aim was to proceed to the national round. We created a schedule, divided tasks among the members of the team and started to train. The International Law Students Association (ILSA) had created a case study describing conflicts and civil wars in three virtual states. Eighty-five countries from around the world introduced their position virtually to the ICJ both as applicants and respondents. During the training, Robyn helped us recognize our capacity and potential challenges. As time went by, Robyn gained more respect and appreciation of our team.

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Given that Armenia has only been subject to international law for the last ten years, Robyn did her best to teach us in a clear manner. Day by day, our evening classes became hours of not only learning, but of dynamic communication and sincere friendship. Soon we understood the many things we had in common.

Three months later, the date for the national round of the Phillip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition was announced. In spite of our calm appearances, each of us was worried about the competition. Robyn calmed our fears and gave us new instructions and further encouragement.

The national round began the following day at 9AM. We competed against four teams and won each time. The judges' questions became quicker and sharper with every round. After the final round, the judges went behind closed doors to discuss the performances. The hall was full of people and everybody was anxious to hear the outcome. The results were impressive: the best team—YSU, the best memorial—YSU, the best orator—a member of YSU. This was victory in the true sense of the word. With gratitude and happiness, we looked at our coach, as our achievements were due to her kind assistance. We hugged each other and, for a moment, our surroundings grew silent—we heard only the heartbeats of our team members. Taking the form of tears, happiness trickled from our eyes. This was an unforgettable moment. The months of training, hunger and personal sacrifice slipped our mind—all because our coach had decided that we would be winners. Victory is sweet.

That evening, there was a party at Robyn's place. We went with our achievements, having been awarded the significant honor of

representing our country in Washington, DC. After several days of rest, we were prepared for an even more intensive training schedule. Robyn instructed us in law techniques, such as how to introduce ourselves to judges, how to argue on a certain issue, how to answer, how to speak and finally how to live as a lawyer, practices unknown to us before. Robyn also invited qualified specialists to evaluate our presentations. Devoting herself to the preparation of our team, Robyn provided us with a great deal of information: international treaties, agreements, cases and literature on legal ethics.

We arrived safely in Washington, DC due to the kind support of the American Bar Association's Central and East European Law

Initiative and the United States Agency for International Development. The competition included teams from eighty-five countries and was hosted at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. Of all of these countries, we placed fiftieth, a twenty-three-place

improvement from the previous year. Our time in Washington was very nice and our memories will never fade. We also had the opportunity to meet the CEP Washington staff. Upon completion of the competition, it was very difficult to say goodbye to Washington, to our new friends and particularly to our dear Robyn. With this article, I would like to express my deep gratitude to CEP for providing us the lucky chance to get to know such a person as Robyn.

After returning to our motherland and accepting the faculty dean's and lecturers' greetings and congratulations, we started with our daily studies. There happened to be another competition at the law faculty. Having decided to take part in it, I walked in. When I saw the crowd gathered in the noisy corridor, instinctively I remembered the day when this nice story had begun and the hope that I'd felt.

The Hope

Teach in Central/Eastern Europe or Eurasia in 2004-05

Be a Part of the Reform and Development of Higher Education through CEP Programs

The Visiting Faculty Fellowship (VFF) Program offers the opportunity for academics from outside the post-communist region holding an advanced degree in a social science, law, or journalism to teach and mentor for a year in a university in Southeastern Europe, the NIS or Mongolia. From graduate students to retired professors, Fellows offer a wide range of experience and diversity to students and faculty. What they have in common is academic excellence, commitment to education, a sense of adventure and a deep respect for the values of liberal democracy.

The Local Faculty Fellowship (LFF) Program provides financial support and an opportunity for professional development and networking to academics from the region who have received an advanced degree at a Western-accredited university and wish to return to their home countries to teach. CEP provides assistance to academics by helping them obtain teaching materials, providing opportunities to learn about teaching methodologies and creating academic networks for collaboration and professional development.

The Support for Community Outreach and University Teaching (SCOUT) Program provides follow-on support to alumni of the Edmund S. Muskie/Freedom Support Act Graduate Fellowship Program. Full- and part-time Fellowships and Special Projects grants are available for alumni who qualify in the Baltics and Newly Independent States (NIS). Programs offer financial, methodological, institutional and informational support to Muskie/FSA alumni who are interested in teaching in institutions of higher education.

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