



Trip Report: Fresno, CA

Dates: May 27-28, 2015

Authors: Angela M. Neilan

Institution(s): Virginia Tech OIRED

Purpose: Connect with California State University, Fresno faculty and meet with newly appointed Honorary Armenian Consul and consular officers located in this city

Sites Visited: Cal State Fresno and downtown Fresno Consular offices

Description of Activities: While visiting relatives on my own budget, I met with faculty in the Agricultural Business Department of the Commerce School to discuss possible assistance with the fund raising needed to help ICARE/ATC become financially independent. These folks had sponsored projects, research and student/faculty exchanges over a 10 year period with USDA MAP funding from 1993-2003, prior to TAMU sponsorship of ATC. Cal State Fresno is the only primarily agricultural university which is not a land grant. They provide research and assistance to the many major growers in the Fresno Valley.

Also met with the Department Head to discuss dual degree for ATC. Both Dr. Bill Erysian and Dr. Barlow der Murgdechian hosted me and agreed to assist Vardan when he comes to the West Coast to do private sector and foundation fund raising among the Armenian Diaspora in Southern and Central California. There are many Armenian food based businesses in the Fresno Valley who might provide research opportunities, internships and scholarships for ATC students. They may also be willing to contribute to the ICARE Endowment fund.

This Fresno community raised \$800,000 in a very short time to erect a memorial to the Armenian Genocide on the main lawn of their campus. It is a replica of the original located in Yerevan. The eternal flame and the cascading water draw attention to the memorial and imported Armenian tuff benches give students a chance to sit and contemplate.

Department Head Dr. Annett-Levi agreed to consider the possibility of working with InnovATE Armenia project to offer dual degree for ATC students.

After a day of meetings at the University, I was able to stay over and visit with the new Armenian Consul. His office is located in Fulton Mall, the very first urban walking mall ever built in the USA. I met with the new Consul, Dr. Berj Apkarian and his consular staff Ms. Lusine Davtyan-Tanossian. Dr. Bill Eryisian and Dr. Apkarian have worked together on many projects and we reviewed the ATC promo video and new promo glossies in a very nice folder package designed by the new ATC Development Office. Dr. Apkarian promised to assist Vardan (Dr. Urutyan, Director of ICARE Foundation and Department Head of ATC, which is part of the Agrarian National University of Armenia). This new Consular office could be very helpful in raising funds in the Fresno Valley during Vardan’s visit next fall.

Suggestions and Recommendations: Follow up with these faculty, department head and consul for contact info on potential Diaspora funding sources. Also involve the Consul in ANAU and ATC anniversary celebrations in October, 2015. Dr. Apkarian is taking a group of community health professionals to Yerevan from October 1-12 and has offered to give a guest lecture at ATC related to healthy life styles and the economics of negative health behaviors such as smoking.

List of Contacts Made:

Name	Title/Organization	Contact Info
Dr. William Eryisian	Faculty of Agricultural Business in School of Commerce, University of California Fresno	307 Peters Building bille@csufresno.edu 559-278-5115 5241 N Maple Ave, Fresno, CA 93740 www.fresnostate.edu
Dr. Barlow der Murgdechian,	Director of Armenian Studies Program (established 1977), UC Fresno	Peters Building 5241 N Maple Ave, Fresno, CA 93740 barlowd@csufresno.edu 559-278-2669 www.fresnostate.edu/artshum/armenianstudies/
Dr. Burj Apkarian and Ms. Lusine Davtyan-Tanossian	Honorary Armenian Consul and staff	1060 Fulton Mall, suite 802, Fresno, CA 93721 www.facebook.com/TheHonoraryConsulateofArmeniainFresno http://www.armenianchurchwd.com/news/berj-apkarian-named-honorary-consul-of-the-republic-of-armenia-in-fresno/ Fresno@armeniaconsulatela.org