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# DEAN OF STUDENT AFFAIRS AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA



American  
University  
of Armenia



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## A WARM WELCOME FROM DR ARMEN DER KIUREGHIAN, THE PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

The American University of Armenia is the first US-accredited independent university in the CIS countries. It was established in 1991 through the joint collaboration of the Armenian General Benevolent Union based in New York, the University of California (UC), and the Government of Armenia. It maintains a close affiliation with the UC, with one third of its Board of Trustees, including the Chair of the Board, being high-level academics or administrators of the UC system. AUA is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission located in Alameda, CA. All instruction at AUA is in English.

The AUA offers 9 Master's-level and 4 Bachelor-level degree programs; more degree programs are planned. The student population now stands at 2,000, but is expected to grow in coming years. The AUA has a reputation as the best university in Armenia due to its promotion of American values, institutional ethics and modalities of instruction. It has a world-class and diverse faculty and draws students from more than 25 countries. Nine centers, including the Entrepreneurship & Product Innovation Center that functions as an incubator, offer opportunities for research, development and innovation to faculty and students. The rapidly growing alumni ranks of the University include highly successful academics, business and technology leaders, and high-ranking government officials.

A unique characteristic of the AUA is the commitment and dedication that the faculty, staff and even students have to the institution. They all feel as participants in building a world-class educational institution that makes a significant contribution to advancing the quality of life in a small, newly independent republic. We anticipate that the same excitement and commitment will inspire all of our new incoming faculty and staff to provide superlative educational experiences for Armenia's youth and contribute to the nation, region and world through research, scholarship and innovation.

Consider choosing Armenia as your next place of residence. Armenia is a safe country with a long history and rich culture. The countryside is like an open-air museum with beautiful sceneries dotted with centuries old monasteries, monuments and archaeological sites. The opera, the philharmonic and the folk and jazz music scenes are world class. Even though it is a small country, its chess team has twice been ranked first in the world in just the past decade. There is plenty to experience regardless of your cultural interests.

Hope you will consider joining our AUA community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Armen Der Kiureghian'.

**Dr Armen Der Kiureghian**  
President  
American University of Armenia





# THE ORGANISATION

## THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

The American University of Armenia (AUA) opened September 21, 1991, the day Armenia declared independence from the Soviet Union. The American University of Armenia was founded by a group of world-renowned educators and community leaders. Joined and supported by the University of California, these visionaries established what would quickly become the leading institution in the region. As a partner in this national (re)birth, AUA's mission is to bring American-style education to Armenia, with the goal of preparing Armenian citizens and those of the region to address the needs of sustainable development in an environment that values and develops academic excellence, free inquiry, integrity, scholarship, leadership, and service to society. In fall 2017, 365 new undergraduates and 236 graduate students joined AUA, bringing the total number of undergraduate students to over 1400 and the total AUA student population to over 1900.

The AUA offers master's degrees in nine fields of study: Business Administration, Economics, Strategic Management, Industrial Engineering and Systems Management, Computer and Information Science, Political Science and International Affairs, Public Health, Law, and Teaching English as a Foreign Language. These programs are designed to develop critical thinking and knowledge through advanced coursework, independent study, and research. The AUA also offers bachelor's degrees in English and Communications, Computer Science, Engineering Sciences, and Business. Through its undergraduate courses, students acquire disciplinary depth, preparing graduates for careers and/or further graduate studies, as well as providing a foundation in general knowledge and skills for lifelong learning.



Now in its third decade, the AUA has achieved significant success in fulfilling its mission and has acquired an excellent reputation, attracting top students across Armenia. The AUA has graduated over 3400 students, with strong retention and graduation rates at the graduate level: First-year retention rates average around 90% and three-year retention rates range from 90% to 94%. The AUA's graduate students, alumni and employers report high rates of satisfaction with the AUA and the preparation of its graduates for employment upon graduation. Graduate alumni are overwhelmingly satisfied with their education and have established themselves in impressive fields and careers. Other stakeholders have recognized AUA's graduates as a top choice for Armenian employers in terms of job recruitment. No doubt, this has had a positive impact on the career success and loyalty of alumni, more than 70% of whom remain in Armenia after graduation.

The AUA's success in delivering its mission has been recognized by stakeholders who highlighted AUA's unique importance in the higher education landscape of Armenia and the region. Government officials have described the AUA as a model for higher education, providing for the free exchange of ideas and, as such, an important agent of change in Armenia's continuing economic, social, and political development.

The implementation of AUA's mission is guided by two boards: the Board of Trustees associated with the California-based American University of Armenia Corporation (AUAC) and the Board of Directors of the Armenia-based American University of Armenia Foundation (AUAF). The AUAF was established after the AUAC as required by a change to Armenian law in the early 2000's. Although separate decision-making entities, significant overlap in membership between the two boards facilitates communication and coordinated oversight of the AUA, while continued incorporation in the U.S. facilitates tax-exempt support of AUA by American philanthropists.

The AUA also benefits from a formal affiliation with the University of California, which has greatly influenced its academic development and provides legal and investment-related support. Both the AUAC Board of Trustees in California and the AUAF Board of Directors are very committed to the mission and success of AUA and exercise that commitment through appropriate oversight of institutional operations.





## AUA STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2021

### Mission statement

The American University of Armenia aims to have an impact on students and the community as a center of academic excellence, innovation, inquiry and diversity that contributes to the further development and advancement of Armenia, the region and the world through teaching and scholarship, fostering creativity, integrity and community service.

### Vision Statement

Through its world-class academic programs, research centers, student services and community outreach, the American University of Armenia will have a transformative impact on people's social, economic, political and intellectual capacities to meet the challenges of a globalized world. Our faculty and staff will inspire students to advance knowledge and become responsible citizens and leaders in innovation and entrepreneurship.

### Institutional goals

- To offer breadth and diversity of internationally competitive and quality academic programs whose student-learning outcomes are aligned to global and Armenian market needs.
- To develop and recognize a community of scholars dedicated to a research agenda that reflects AUA's four sectors: Scholarship of Discovery, Scholarship of Integration, Scholarship of Application and Scholarship of Teaching.
- To recruit, enroll and retain highly-qualified and diverse students who have the potential to succeed at AUA.
- To strengthen the foundational core faculty reflecting academic excellence, diversity, democratic values and the mission of the University.
- To recruit and retain qualified staff dedicated to the University's mission.
- To foster a collegiate environment that offers services and programming promoting student engagement and success.
- To ensure state-of-the-art facilities and innovative technologies for fostering the student learning experience.
- To achieve fiscal sustainability by securing sufficient financial resources to assure current and projected operations while upholding the principle of equal access to all qualified students.
- To effectively promote the University's accomplishments and impact.
- To provide educational and developmental programs in the community, broadening the impact of the University.
- To maintain and develop effective alumni relations to ensure their active engagement with the University and broader society.
- To ensure that AUA's administrative structure and policies facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement and support the University's organization and governance.



## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Globally recognized faculty

The AUA's faculty has garnered global recognition and awards for their work. Increasingly, the faculty members are being recognized as experts in their fields and appointed by Armenia's government as managerial experts and advisors on key issues, including shaping health and environmental policy and the engineering of new highways.

The AUA's research centers are active in organizing international conferences, drawing a global audience of scholars and experts to present on topics ranging from environmental issues, public health, and the empowerment of girls and women to data science and international affairs.

### WASC Accreditation

The AUA received accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges' Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), one of six accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for the accreditation of institutions of higher education. WSCUC accreditation provides quality control to the academic programs. Additionally, it ensures that credits earned at the AUA may be transferred to other accredited universities in the U.S.

### Impact on Armenia and the World

The impact of an AUA education is felt locally and internationally. The over 70% of the University's alumni who have remained in Armenia have left an indelible mark on industry and the public sphere. Those who pursued opportunities abroad have created an international alumni network with representatives in the world's top educational institutions, private companies, and multinational organizations. The alumni have joined to support the University, including the establishment of an Alumni Scholarship Endowment Fund.

### Full-Need and Need-Blind Admissions to AUA

The AUA has had a long-standing policy for citizens of Armenia that *no qualified student will be denied an AUA education due to their financial need, making the AUA a "need-blind institution."* If any admitted Armenian citizen requires financial assistance, the AUA provides up to the full amount - "full-need" - to ensure that all qualified individuals seeking an AUA education are able to matriculate and complete their degrees.

To maintain its full-need and need-blind policies, AUA's tuition for Armenian students (citizens and Armenian nationals with long-term residency) is heavily subsidized by the University's general funds. While the University's costs have been increasing, the AUA continues to charge Armenian students only about \$3,500 in tuition annually (the real cost of educating each student is approximately \$7,500 annually). In addition to this subsidy, the AUA returns over 26% of tuition revenues received to its students through need-based tuition assistance and academic achievement scholarships. The difference between tuition costs to the student and his or her family and the full cost of educating that student has been possible only with generous philanthropic support.

### Addressing Major Environmental Issues

The AUA has received international acclaim for addressing sensitive issues regarding the environment. The AUA Acopian Center for the Environment (ACE) and the Center for Responsible Mining (CRM) are at the forefront of monitoring toxic waste cleanup sites, developing policies on responsible mining, and educating current and future AUA students on domestic and international environmental matters and best practices.



# THE POSITION

## POSITION PURPOSE

The American University of Armenia is seeking an inaugural Dean of Student Affairs with experience in building a new office, center and service structure to deliver new, and grow current, student success services and programs.

Reporting directly to the Provost, the Dean will foster an inclusive, student-centered campus culture that values community, civility, mutual respect and collective engagement. S/he will work collaboratively with Student Affairs staff, the faculty and other divisions of the institution to achieve AUA's goals for academic achievement and student engagement.

The Dean will oversee Student Activities (including student government, student clubs, leadership and major campus events including orientation and parents' programs), Counseling Services, Military Support, Career Development, Academic Support Services, First-Year Experience, Residential Life and International Study/Student Center. Driven by data-based research and analysis, the Dean will write and execute a divisional strategic plan for the Office.



## MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

- To support (or represent) the Provost at a University, local or international level, as required
- Oversee all areas within Student Affairs, ensuring that AUA offers programming, services and resources that enhance academic performance, raise the level of campus and community engagement and foster a sense of belonging to the university community
- Develop and manage the budget for Student Affairs and partner with the Provost on long-range resource planning, ensuring strategic cost-effective and results-driven use of resources
- Be accountable for the development and delivery of strategic plans for programs within the Office of Student Affairs to ensure successful implementation and review
- Develop and implement assessment mechanisms based on best practices
- Design and manage AUA's residence life program
- Lead institutional response in student crisis situations, working with appropriate departments and staff members as needed
- Through effective leadership, recruit, train and develop Student Affairs staff, ensuring high levels of operational efficiency, effectiveness and accountability, including periodic evaluations
- Work closely and productively with other key areas at AUA, including Admissions, Financial Aid and other units
- Increase visibility and student awareness of all available resources, helping students to take proactive responsibility for their own educational objectives
- Promote and enforce the Student Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics
- Oversee the Center for Student Success currently providing Academic Support and Counseling Services
- Set up and run an office of international studies addressing the needs of incoming study-abroad and summer program students as well as the needs of AUA students wishing to study abroad
- Perform other duties, responsibilities or special projects as assigned by the Provost





## THE PERSON

### KNOWLEDGE AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Doctorate or Master's degree with extensive professional experience, preferably in the disciplinary areas of educational administration/leadership, student personnel, student affairs, psychology, counseling or a related field.

### EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS

- Demonstrated working knowledge of student life or other comparable experience in an educational environment, with international experience being highly desirable.
- Demonstrated strong working knowledge and understanding of professional codes of ethics and best practices for Student Affairs professionals.
- At least five years of progressive professional and leadership experience in Student Affairs/Student Life in a student-focused academic administrative, advisory or management capacity.
- Experience and understanding of current issues and developments in student retention, housing and disability services.
- Proven organizational, leadership and supervisory skills.
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills (English proficiency; Armenian language a plus).
- Experience in strategic planning, policy development and assessment.
- Prior academic experience in an international setting and knowledge of or interest in Armenia, CIS countries and/or the Middle East

### PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND VALUES

- Demonstrated commitment to the values of access, inclusion and diversity in education.
- A commitment to excellence and innovation
- High level communication skills in order to engage with students, faculty, staff, alumni and leaders in the private and public sectors
- A positive attitude and approach



# THE LOCATION

## ARMENIA AS A PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK

Armenia has a reputation for greeting its visitors with warmth and hospitality. Nowhere is this truer than in Yerevan, one of the most ancient cities in the world. The capital of Armenia has all the advantages of a modern capital city and boasts numerous historical attractions together with a friendly atmosphere, which makes visitors feel at home. Armenia is one of the safest countries to travel to, boasting one of the lowest crime rates worldwide, and ranking eighth on this year's Gallup Poll on how safe people feel.

Armenia is often referred to as an open-air museum. Tourists find over 4,000 historical monuments throughout Armenia, covering various periods of the country's history from prehistoric to Hellenistic times, and from the early to medieval Christian era. Within Yerevan alone there are more than 40 fine arts museums and galleries. A number of high-profile sites can be visited on day trips from Yerevan. Garni and Geghard are east of the city and can easily be combined in one itinerary; the same applies to Zvartnots Cathedral, the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin and Sardarapat to the west of the city.



Most of Armenia has a dry, high-altitude climate, and it experiences the true range of the four seasons. While spring temperatures are mild and autumn has long, warm days with stable weather conditions, summer temperatures can reach up to 40°C in Yerevan and in winter temperatures fall below freezing.

Armenian cuisine is noted for its pleasing aroma, as a result of the variety of spices used. Many Armenian specialties are barbecued, with traditional shish-kebab being available almost everywhere. The traditional bread of the country, called lavash, is served at practically all meals. It is only about the thickness of one or two sheets of newspaper, Armenians like to eat lavash with local cheese or shish-kebab and fresh uncooked greens. European cuisine is also readily available. Delicious fresh fruits, vegetables, and greens are readily available in Yerevan, locally-sourced from the country's many agricultural regions. Restaurants, ranging from the high-end to home-style, cater to all tastes.

Visitors from the US and from EU countries can visit Armenia for up to 180 days without a visa; citizens from most other countries can obtain an Armenian visa when entering the country.





## HOW TO APPLY

Initial contact should be made with Witt/Kieffer Ccentric, the executive search firm exclusively engaged to assist with the appointment. The relevant Witt/Kieffer Ccentric contact is as follows:

**Mary Comer**

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