

HYE SHARZHOOM

Armenian Action

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38th Year

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Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian

ASP Celebrates 40th Anniversary



Left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Dr. Sergio La Porta, and Dr. Dickran Kouymjian at the ASP reception honoring Fresno State's Centennial in 2011.

MARINE VARDANYAN
STAFF WRITER

Armenian courses have a long history of being taught on the Fresno State campus. Armenian classes were first offered in the early 1960s through an extension course taught by Dr. Richard Hovannisian, and Armenian history courses were later taught by Dr. Louise Nalbandian of the Fresno State History Department. “What started as a small offering of courses has grown to be the golden standard by which the success of every other program is

measured,” said Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities.

The Armenian Studies Program (ASP) has been affiliated with various departments and colleges over the years, but today is part of the College of Arts & Humanities, the largest College on campus.

Today, the university has a well-grounded and extensive Armenian Studies Program that is looked upon as a significant source of knowledge for all things Armenian, both on campus and in the greater community.

This year, the Armenian

SEE [ASP PAGE 7](#)

Mouradian-13th Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies



Dr. Khatchig Mouradian

Photo: ASP Archive

TADEH ISSAKHANIAN
STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Studies Program is both honored and excited to welcome Dr. Khatchig Mouradian as the 13th Kazan Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State for the Fall

2016 Semester. Dr. Mouradian is teaching a three-unit course entitled “The Armenian Genocide and its Aftermath,” in addition to giving three public lectures under the general heading of “Genocide and Resilience.”

Dr. Mouradian’s course is focused on the organization and

SEE [MOURADIAN PAGE 5](#)

Member of Turkish Parliament Garo Paylan Brings Message of Equality for Minorities in Turkey

MICHAEL RETTIG
EDITOR

For the past century, Turkey has pursued a policy of repression and homogenization towards its various ethnic minorities. The current Republic of Turkey has an egregious track record of human rights violations, with slogans such as “one nation, one flag, one state” drowning out those who would call for a more democratic Turkey. In spite of this, the voice of Garo Paylan has reinvigorated the opposition with his message of equality and liberty for minorities. Paylan, an Armenian MP in the Turkish Parliament and member of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP), made recent headlines for reading the names of Armenian MPs executed in the Genocide in the Turkish Parliament. Paylan and fellow HDP members were also



Garo Paylan, center, with Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, left, and Dr. Sergio La Porta, right.

targeted and physically attacked during Parliamentary talks over constitutional amendments.

On Tuesday, September 27, Paylan visited Fresno as a part

of his nationwide tour to meet with Diasporan communities and leaders. He visited the Ararat Armenian Cemetery before

SEE [PAYLAN PAGE 8](#)

Armenian Series Publishes New Book by Beledian

STAFF REPORT

Armenian Studies Program Director Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian announced that Krikor Beledian’s *Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France* has been published by the Armenian Series of The Press, at California State University, Fresno.

Translated from the original French into English by Christopher Atamian, *Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France* is a groundbreaking study of the Armenian literary scene in the important Armenian Diaspora community of France.

“This volume will provide a

wealth of material useful to both scholars and to the reading public,” said Armenian Series General Editor Prof. Der Mugrdechian.

Fifty Year of Armenian Literature in France examines Armenian literature as it emerged in France between 1922 and the beginning of the 1970’s. It retraces the literary history of the period starting with Armenian immigration until the passing away of the movement’s main representatives. It also examines the most significant works published in that period, studying the issues raised by a literature of

SEE [FIFTY YEARS PAGE 3](#)

Der Mugrdechian on “Armenians of Lebanon”

ARAMAYIS ORKUSYAN
STAFF WRITER

During the summer of 2016, Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian, director of the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, had the opportunity to travel to Lebanon—one of the most important Armenian diasporan centers—for the first time. Der Mugrdechian was invited by the Tekeyan Cultural Association to give a talk in Beirut, where he spoke on June 7 about the Armenian community of Fresno: its establishment, organization, and important landmarks. While in Lebanon, Professor Der Mugrdechian also visited many of the important Armenian educational, religious,



Left to right: Erik Abrahamyan, Aramayis Orkusyan, Michael Rettig, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Elena Sarmazian, Tadeh Issakhanian, and Molly Gostanian.

and cultural institutions and met with community leaders.

Der Mugrdechian discussed his trip in the first lecture of

the Armenian Studies Program Fall Lecture Series titled “The Armenian Diaspora: Lebanon.”

SEE [LEBANON PAGE 6](#)

Armenian Studies Program
Book/Video/CD Archival Gifts

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Prof. Sergio La Porta, and the Armenian Studies Program would like to thank the donors, authors, and publishers for the following books, periodicals, videos, and archival gifts, either offered personally, or to the Program.

Hagop James Antranigian, for a copy of the book *From Hell to Heaven: Memoirs of the Armenian Genocide and the Armenian Volunteer Corps*, (2015), 252pp., in English. This is the story of Armenag Bedigian-Antranigian, who suffered from the effects of the Armenian Genocide for almost two years in the Keghi region of Erzerum.

Dr. Antranik Dakessian, Haigazian University, Beirut, Lebanon, for his book *Լիբանանի Հայօճախը. Գիրք Ա., Համարկումին խաչուղիները* (1920-2005), (Beirut: Haigazian University Press, 2015), 173pp., in Armenian. This is a fascinating history of the Armenian community in Lebanon from the period of the Armenian Genocide until today.

Greg Devejian, Albuquerque, New Mexico, for a small collection of Armenian themed books.

Hrant Dink Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey, for the following books: the series *The Sounds of Silence: Turkey’s Armenian Speak*, Volume 1 (2012) (176pp., in English); *Volume II-Diyarbakir’s Armenians Speak* (2013) (231pp., in English); *Volume III-Ankara’s Armenians Speak* (2015) (165pp., in English); *Volume IV-Izmit’s Armenians Speak* (2016) (143pp., in English) all prepared by Ferda Balancar. Also for the book *2012 Declaration: The Seized Properties of Armenian Foundations in Istanbul* (2012) (478pp., in Turkish and English), a comprehensive and important work, which documents the seizure of Armenian properties (foundations) by the Turkish government from 1915 forward. Each foundation property is mapped and its history thoroughly discussed.

Adrine Harutyunyan, Fresno, for a copy of the book *Երեք ընկեր (Three Comrades)* by Erich Maria Remarque, translated from Russian into Armenian by the donor (Yerevan, 2015), 631pp., in English. *Three Comrades* is a novel about the horrors of war, especially World War I, told through the eyes of the main character, Robert Lohkamp. Dedicated to the translator’s family, some of who survived the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

Dr. Gregory Ketabgian, La Canada-Flintridge, California for a copy of *Leaving Kayseri: A Journey of One Hundred Years* (2015), 249pp., in English. Leaving Kayseri is the story of Dr. Ketabagian’s father experiences at the onset of the Armenian Genocide, taking the reader through the route of deportation, and their survival in the Syrian desert. They settled in Aleppo, Syria before ultimately immigrating to the United States.

Boghos Armenak Lakissian, Glendale, CA, for a copy of his book *Պատարագ Արմին-Հայերի Նախնիներին* (Glendale, CA), 382 pp., in Armenian.

Dr. Zaven M. Messerlian, Beirut, Lebanon, for five of his books: *Foreign Policy of the United States of America and the Armenian Question (1900-2010)* (Beirut, 2015), 157pp., in English; *Before and After the Armenian Genocide* (Beirut, 2015), 301pp., in English; *Three Treaties: Alexandropol, Moscow, and Kars Treaties (1920-1921)* (Beirut, 2015), 190pp., in English; *The Evolution of the Armenian Question (1939-2010)* (Beirut, 2015), 362pp., in English; and *Մկրտիչ Մսրրլեանի Ազգային-քաղաքական գործունեությունը* (Beirut, 2016), 440pp., in English, dedicated to the life and works of the author’s father Mgrdich Messerlian.

Philadelphia Armenian Genocide Project 100 and Carole Long Karabashian, Philadelphia, PA, for a copy of *From Horror to Hope: Stories of Surviving the Armenian Genocide* (Philadelphia Armenian Genocide Project 100, Philadelphia, PA), 102pp., in English, which chronicles the story of 60 survivors of the Armenian Genocide, who settled in the greater Philadelphia area. The stories in the book are told from a variety of perspectives, including excerpts from survivors themselves, and others told by their children and grandchildren.

Dr. Aram Yengoyan, Davis, California, for a large collection of books relating to Armenian history, language, and literature.

Dr. Lilit Yernjakyan, Bakersfield, CA, for a copy of her new book *Ալան Հովհաննեսի Երաժշտությունը (The Music of Alan Hovhannes: At East West Crossroads)* (Yerevan: “Gitutyun” Publishing, 2015), 139pp., in Armenian, with Russian and English summaries. A study on the musical style and influences of the composer Alan Hovhaness.

California State University, Fresno

Armenian Studies Program

Spring 2017 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
General Education-Breadth, Humanities, Area C2				
• Arm 1B-Elementary Armenian (Class #32215)	4	10:00A-11:50A	MW	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Arts, Area C1				
• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia (Class #33425)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Area D3				
• ArmS 10-Intro Arm Studies (Class #33533)	3	9:00A-09:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
General Education-Integration, Area IC				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #33571)	3	2:00P-3:15P	TuTh	H. Ohanessian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #33561)	3	2:00P-3:15P	MW	S. La Porta
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #33010)	3	3:30P-4:45P	TuTh	H. Ohanessian
Upper Division Armenian Studies Course				
• ArmS 108B-Arm History II (Class #32214)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian

For more information call the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669.

Get a Minor in Armenian Studies.

Check on requirements for the Minor in Armenian Studies in the current catalog.

<http://www.fresnostate.edu/catalog/subjects/armenian-studies/armenia-mn.html>

HYE SHARZHOOM

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Give Your Way

to the Armenian Studies Program

There are many ways to support the Armenian Studies Program.

1) A gift today could come through the donation of cash, stock, or goods.
2) The Armenian Studies Program can also be supported in the future in estate plans.

Regardless of how a donation is made, each gift impacts the lives of students and faculty at Fresno State.

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Dr. Shemmassian Reflects on Musa Dagh Roots



Photo: Hourig Attarian

Dr. Vahram Shemmassian, seated center, with members of the Fresno Musa Dagh Compatriotic Union.

KARA STATLER
STAFF WRITER

Dr. Vahram Shemmassian, director of the Armenian Studies Program at California State University, Northridge, was a guest speaker for the Armenian Studies Program’s Fall Lecture Series on Friday, September 30. His talk, “On the Trail of My Musa Dagh Ancestry,” documented Dr. Shemmassian’s journey of self-discovery and what became a life-long passion to conduct research on the people of Musa Dagh. The culmination of his research was published in a book *The Musa Dagh Armenians: a Socioeconomic and Cultural History 1919-1939* (Haigazian University Press, 2015).

Dr. Shemmassian was a sociology student in 1976 at the American University of Beirut (AUB), when as a result of the Lebanese Civil War his family moved to Anjar in the Bekaa Valley. AUB was shut, roads were closed, and Dr. Shemmassian was pondering his future when he had the idea to explore the network of relationships among the people of Musa Dagh.

He began his journey by interviewing the elderly of Musa Dagh, and the first person he

interviewed was a restaurant owner who gave him a thin piece of falafel wrapping paper to write upon. Dr. Shemmassian has kept that fragile piece of paper until today.

Dr. Shemmassian has traveled all over the world looking for and interviewing Armenians who came from Musa Dagh. When he arrived in the United States to study, he found people who were ready to share their stories about life in Musa Dagh. He sent questionnaires to clergy, teachers and leaders of the community, and met with people who had family documents from Musa Dagh.

In the 1980’s his research focused on Musa Dagh Armenians who lived in Hollywood. They had emigrated there from Soviet Armenia and he encouraged those he met to write their memoirs. Most of those he interviewed were elderly and have since passed away, but their memoirs have now been preserved.

Dr. Shemmassian did not think of asking for photographs until he met a woman who had come to the United States before 1915. She brought out a family album with rare photos of life in Musa Dagh before World War I.

After that Dr. Shemmassian became an avid collector of

photographs, which became an integral part of his research. Today he has a rich collection of nearly 1,200 photographs of Musa Dagh.

During his travels to libraries in many countries, Dr. Shemmassian met the world-renowned Armenian astrophysicist Viktor Hambartsumian at the Armenian Catholic Mekhitarist Library in Vienna. Hambartsumian asked about his work and said some words of encouragement. “I regret to this day not asking for his autograph,” said Dr. Shemmassian.

In the League of Nations collection of documents in Geneva, Dr. Shemmassian found a list of all males in Musa Dagh over the age of twenty who were eligible to vote in 1938. Those lists noted the birthdate, provenance, and denomination of each voter on the list. In these archives he discovered information about his great-grandfathers. The information is indispensable, considering that many such documents were destroyed during the Genocide. He collected a great deal of such information for his dissertation, “The Armenian Villagers of Musa Dagh, A Historical and Epigraphical Study from the 1840’s until 1915,” completed at UCLA.

In the second part of his presentation Dr. Shemmassian showed historic documents from Musa Dagh, such as report cards, passports, books, and even newspaper articles.

One newspaper article was from the *Asbarez* newspaper, established in Fresno in 1908. The article was published in 1909 and described fundraising done in Fresno to help the people of Musa Dagh after the 1909 Adana massacre.

The final section of the lecture chronicled the life of Musa Dagh Armenians after they had been relocated to Anjar in Lebanon.

FIFTY YEARS, FROM PAGE 1 exile, one born after an event that was experienced and interpreted as a “national catastrophe.”

This work is a major addition to the study of Armenian literature with its in-depth analysis of the various figures and periods in Armenian literature in France. Among those figures are Arshag Chobanian, Minas Cheraz, Shavarsh Missakian, Mguerdtich Barsamian, Shavarsh Nartuni, Hratch Zartarian, and Vazken Shushanian, to name only a few.

Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France is a work that provides a context for Armenian literature of the Diaspora, while at the same time focusing on the works of authors living in France.

“The work is a valuable addition

to the growing number of critical studies of Armenian literature produced in the Diaspora,” said Prof. Der Mgrdechian. “It provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the intellectual, emotional, and existential challenges faced by Armenian authors in France.”

Author and literary critic Krikor Beledian has lived in Paris since 1967, and has become intimately aware of the Armenian literary scene in France. He is an accomplished writer in his own right as well as prolific critic.

Beledian has produced a comprehensive and fascinating view of the Armenian literary landscape in France, one that will be of lasting significance to the study of Armenian literature.

Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France is available for \$20 through The Press at California State University, Fresno, by calling 559-278-3056 or by ordering at their website <http://www.thepressatcsufresno.org/>.

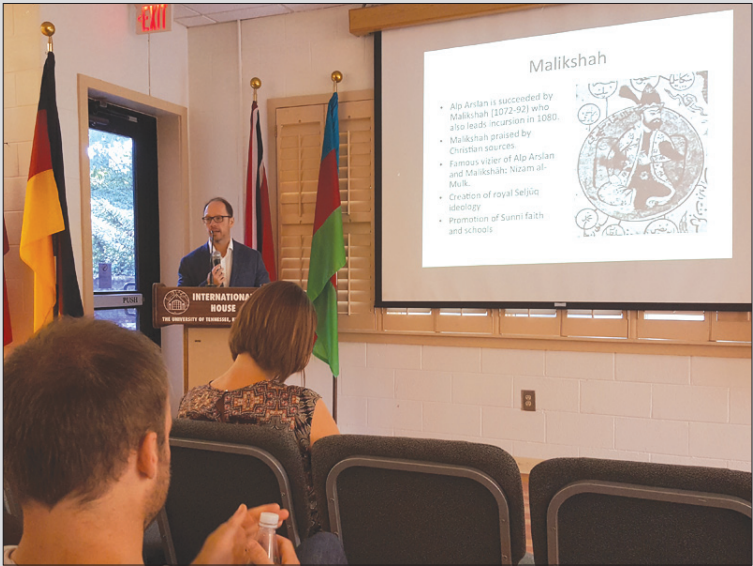
General inquiries may also be directed to the Armenian Studies Program, at 559-278-2669.

Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France by Krikor Beledian; translated by Christopher Atamian; edited by Barlow Der Mgrdechian (6” x 9”, 640 pp. \$20.00 paper, ISBN 13: 978-0-912201-51-1), volume 6 in the Armenian Series, by The Press at California State University, Fresno.

Hye Oozh - Saturdays 9:00 AM - Noon
90.7 FM-KFSR

Hye Oozh is 90.7 KFSR’s weekly program dedicated to contemporary and traditional Armenian music and culture.
Current Hye Oozh DJs:
Tatevik Ekejian • Vartush Mesropyan • Marine Vardanyan

La Porta Invited as Distinguished Visiting Scholar at Univ. of Tennessee



Dr. La Porta at the University of Tennessee.

Photo: ASP Archive

STAFF REPORT

Dr. Sergio La Porta was invited to be a Lindsay Young Distinguished Visiting Senior Scholar in the Marco Institute for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in Fall of 2016. Dr. La Porta visited the University from September 11-17.

While there, he gave a class for undergraduates in the Religious Studies program; led a guided reading for graduate students in the Department of History; and presented a public lecture.

In the undergraduate class, Dr. La Porta introduced students to the narrative of Agathangelos and its presentation on the conversion of the Arsacids in Armenia.

In his guided reading, he shared an essay that he just completed on the relationship between history and prophecy in two Armenian historiographical sources, the *History* of Aristakes Lastivertts’i and the *Chronicle* of Matthew of Edessa.

Dr. La Porta’s public lecture was devoted to religious conflict and competition in 12th-13th

century Anatolia and looked at several Armenian sources that shed light on interactions between different ethno-religious communities in eastern Anatolia.

Dr. La Porta was incredibly honored to have received the fellowship and thoroughly enjoyed his stay in Knoxville.

He was particularly excited that he had an opportunity to meet every day with graduate students in the History Department, whom he found engaging and working on interesting topics.

Dr. La Porta also worked with Professor Tom Burman, the current director of the Marco Institute, and Dr. Alison Vacca, a specialist in the history of the Middle East at UT Knoxville, on a research proposal for a collaborative project.

Dr. La Porta was very impressed with the collegial and interdisciplinary atmosphere of the Marco Institute and the variety of research its faculty was engaged in.

Dr. La Porta added that he also enjoyed some very good meals and a beautiful hike through the Smoky Mountains.

Ghazarian Family Donates Book Collection to the Armenian Studies Program

STAFF REPORT

Dr. Vatche Ghazarian of Pacific Grove, California, has donated 300 books to the Armenian Studies Program in memory of his father Mgrdich Ghazarian, who was the only male member of his family to survive the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

The collection is composed of books from both the late Mgrdich Ghazarian’s library and also from Dr. Ghazarian’s collection, accumulated over the past forty years.

Mgrdich Ghazarian was born in the New Village neighborhood of Palu, circa 1906. In 1926 he moved to Aleppo, Syria, accompanied by his mother, to stay with his aunt Pailoon, with the purpose of moving to America. In 1928, Ghazarian became one of the founders of the Palu Compatriotic Union, and was one of the enthusiastic leaders of the group.

He joined the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party in 1932, and became an active member and often his tailor shop would be a meeting place for the party. In 1933 he joined the Armenian Relief Committee. In 1949 he joined the AGBU and later became a founding member of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of Aleppo.

In 1952 he married Ashkhen Ustaian, who was a teacher in Aleppo’s Cilicia school. They later moved to Antelias and remained there until his death on July 1, 1986,

Mr. Ghazarian did not have the opportunity to continue his schooling but his Armenian roots were strong and he constantly read and taught himself Armenian, enriching his language by reading Armenian newspapers.

He was a modest man, a fighter against injustice, and did not forgive anyone who tried to exploit national interests.

Armenian Students Organization Begins New Year with Plans to Expand Student Involvement



ASO members at the first general meeting of the year.

DIANA GASPARYAN
STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Students Organization welcomed a new executive body at the start of the school year; Tadeh Issakhanian-President, Elena Sarmazian-Vice President, Diana Gasparyan-Secretary, Molly Gostanian-Treasurer, and Arthur Khatchatrian-Public Relations.

They will bring new and creative ideas, activities, and volunteer opportunities for the members.

Since its inception in 1974, the club has been dedicated to promoting awareness of the Armenian culture on campus.

“ASO is important because the future leaders of our Armenian community will come from this organization. The members learn how to become leaders and how to organize events,” said President Issakhanian.

The semester began with members volunteering for the Grandparents’ Day Banquet at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church on Sunday, September 11.

Volunteers sold raffle tickets

and helped children fill out family trees for their grandparents. “I enjoyed working with the children as they explored their family histories,” said Michael Rettig. “It is important that the youth understand who they are and where they come from.”

The first social of the year took place on September 16 at Holy Trinity Armenian Church’s game room, the “Hyed-Out.”

A large turnout of members played foosball, air hockey, pool, and board games with their friends.

“I enjoyed the activities and the socializing. They are important because they allow us to share our culture and heritage together while having a good time,” said senior Raffi Apkarian.

On September 21, ASO had



Students display the Armenian flag tattoos applied during Armenia’s Independence Day celebration held on September 21 in the Free Speech area of Fresno State.



ASO members enjoyed socializing at “Game Night.”

ASO Spotlight-Incoming Freshmen Officers

TADEH ISSAKHANIAN
STAFF WRITER

It has long been said by many wise men, in many different iterations, that the youth is our future.

This is especially true when talking about a youth organization like the Armenian Students Organization (ASO), which constantly relies on incoming students to participate and take leadership roles.

The organization’s future is looking brighter than ever with the election of two freshmen, Molly Gostanian and Arthur Khatchatrian, into the ASO executive team.

Both Gostanian and Khatchatrian take on positions normally held by upper classmen and graduate students.

Gostanian, a freshman from Golden West High School in



Molly Gostanian

the Visalia area, is majoring in Business and serves as the ASO Secretary for the 2016-2017 school year.

She is no stranger to taking leadership roles and helping the Armenian community, both here in the Valley, as well as in Armenia where she recently spent a summer building houses with members of her family and other volunteers. Gostanian’s goal for the club this year is to get more

students, especially freshmen, involved with ASO.

When asked to share three things about herself Gostanian answered “I played three sports in high school, I was in my school musical, and I love the show ‘Friends.’”

While at Fresno State Gostanian’s goals are to “further my education and find something that I love doing.”

Arthur Khatchatrian comes to Fresno State from the Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART) in Fresno, and will continue his technology-based studies as a computer science major.

Khatchatrian serves as the ASO Public Relations Officer, with a goal of increasing the club’s social media presence in order to attract more students.

In addition to being an ASO executive member, he is also on

ASO Executives Take Office



Left to right: Arthur Khatchatrian, Tadeh Issakhanian, Diana Gasparyan, Molly Gostanian, and Elena Sarmazian.

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

ALINA ARAKELIAN
STAFF WRITER

Tadeh Issakhanian
President
Graduate Student
Major: Executive Masters of Business Administration

What will you bring to ASO this year?

I hope to increase the number of students who become involved. I want to combine several different ideas in order to increase involvement at Fresno State as well as open a channel of communication and involvement between our ASO and other college Armenian groups across the state.

What makes ASO unique?

We are unique in that most if not all of our members are pursuing an Armenian Studies minor or are enrolled in one or more Armenian Studies classes. ASO has been around since the 1970’s, which also sets us apart.

Elena Sarmazian
Vice-President
Senior
Major: Psychology

What will you bring to ASO this year?

This year I plan on bringing a lot of fun socials to ASO in order to get our members more involved with the community and build friendships with each other.

What makes ASO unique?

Fresno’s Armenian youth is different because we are a small community with big hearts to initiate change for our culture and we are very proud and dedicated to our efforts to do that.

Diana Gasparyan
Secretary
Junior
Major: Communicative Disorders-Language Pathology

What made you choose to be a part of ASO?

In high school, I wasn’t able to socialize with other Armenian students my age because there were so few Armenians. I chose to be a part of the ASO because it provides fun opportunities to socialize, volunteer, and work with fellow Armenians. I also really enjoy being able to give back to the Armenian community.

Molly Gostanian-Treasurer
Freshman
Major: Business

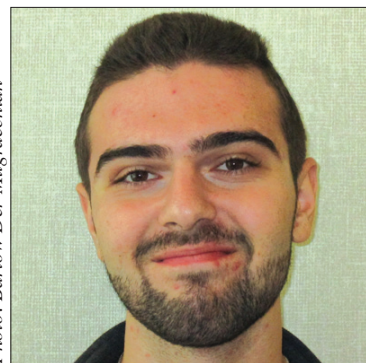
What makes ASO unique?

I decided to join ASO because I am a freshman and wanted to get involved. I saw the ASO booth on Club Day and I was excited to meet more Armenians and to make a difference in any way possible.

Arthur Khatchatrian
Public Relations
Freshman
Major: Computer Science

What made you choose to be a part of ASO?

I chose to join ASO because I’m 100% Armenian and I think it’s important for Armenians to unite and come together. When Armenians come together they form their own Armenia, and every Armenian in our community should be part of our Fresno-Armenia. It’s especially important for our generation to protect and preserve our culture and language.



Arthur Khatchatrian

the executive board of the ACYO Seniors at St. Paul Armenian Church.

Khatchatrian is proud to state “I am *Gyumretsi* and will usually

speak in that dialect.” Armenian was his first language and Armenian food his first love.

His favorite foods in the world are “Pasuts Dolma” and “Gata.” Khatchatrian’s goals include promoting the positive side of technology, while being an active Armenian community member and volunteer.

Both students have bright futures ahead and have shown the willingness and commitment to being leaders.

The next four years will afford them the opportunity to grow as students, as individuals, as well as Armenian youth leaders.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian Travels Overseas for Projects



Mer Hooys end of the year celebration in Yerevan.

ARAMAYIS ORKUSYAN
STAFF WRITER

Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian, director of the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, is not only active in the Armenian community of Fresno, but also abroad. This past summer, Professor Der Mugrdechian was invited to Beirut by the Tekeyan Cultural Association to give a talk to the Armenian community of Lebanon. In addition to visiting Lebanon, Professor Der Mugrdechian also traveled to Armenia and Turkey, where he is working on several collaborative projects.

In Armenia, Professor Der Mugrdechian visited the Mesrop Mashtots Matenadaran, a research center and repository of ancient manuscripts located in Yerevan. “We are exploring different ways of assisting each other, including the exchange of scholarly works, publications, and other material,” said Der Mugrdechian. The Matenadaran and the Armenian Studies Program recently formally agreed to cooperate with

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

each other in a variety of fields. Furthermore, Professor Der Mugrdechian is collaborating with the Matenadaran on a conservation project aimed at restoring the Armenian Gospel of Tsughrut, executed in 974 AD and located in Tsughrut, Georgia. The Gospel was brought to Tsughrut from Erzerum in 1829 by refugees who fled the Russo-Turkish War.

While in Armenia, Professor Der Mugrdechian also attended the graduation ceremony of Mer Hooys-Our Hope, a structured program that provides girls from disadvantaged lifestyles in Armenia with a safe home, educational mentorship, psychological and spiritual support, health education, life skills, and job skills training. Mer Hooys began as a non-profit organization formed by a group of Armenians in California including Professor Der Mugrdechian, who is one of the Vice Presidents of the organization. His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, provided a newly renovated two-story building,

called the “Nakashian Children’s Support Center,” to house the Mer Hooys program. After three years of hard work, Mer Hooys opened its doors to disadvantaged girls in 2012. This year, Mer Hooys celebrated the graduation of its first group of six girls from the program.

In Turkey, Professor Der Mugrdechian visited the Ottoman Turkish Archives with former Kazan Visiting Scholar Dr. Ümit Kurt. In addition, Professor Der Mugrdechian visited the headquarters of the Hrant Dink Foundation and the *Agos* newspaper. There, Der Mugrdechian gained insight on the status of the Armenian community of Turkey.

Agos published an extensive interview with Der Mugrdechian about his work at the Armenian Studies Program and about the Armenian community of Fresno.

Der Mugrdechian met with Delal Dink, director of the Dink Foundation, and daughter of the late Hrant Dink and discussed the various projects of the Foundation. The Foundation has been active in promoting conferences addressing issues facing the Armenian community and they are documenting the voices of Armenians in Turkey through a series of publications.

The Hrant Dink Foundation is currently working on establishing the first Armenian Studies Center in Turkey. “We are working together discussing how they can structure an Armenian Studies center in Turkey. This will be the first time that there is a higher education institution that is Armenian in Turkey,” said Der Mugrdechian. The Armenian Studies Center will bring new researchers and new focus on Armenian Studies to Turkey.

MOURADIAN, FROM PAGE 1

implementation of the Armenian Genocide, the humanitarian and armed resistance to it, and the long shadow of the crime in Turkey and among Armenians.

The course also focuses on comparative aspects of genocide that are not exclusive to the Armenians, including resistance to genocide and the agency of victims of genocide.

Dr. Mouradian wants students to develop a better understanding of power dynamics, how resistance works, and how these dynamics play out in everyday life.

When asked what makes this course unique, Dr. Mouradian said that this is the first class he has taught where the majority of students are of Armenian heritage.

“I want the students to understand their own connection with the past and the challenges the Armenian communities face to this day,” said Dr. Mouradian. “It is important for them to see their role and their place in this continuum and how they choose to define it in light of everything they know and learn through the course.”

Dr. Mouradian is working towards several goals, one of which is turning his dissertation into a book. Another of his goals



Dr. Khatchig Mouradian, seated center, with students from his Armenian Genocide class.

is documenting what remains of Armenian churches, monuments, and cultural heritage.

He has visited historic Armenia twenty-four times since 2010, and has interviewed Turks and Kurds who have rediscovered their Armenian roots. He would eventually like to write a book about this topic.

Prior to his arrival in Fresno, Dr. Mouradian was the Program Coordinator of the Armenian Genocide Program at the Center for the Study of Genocide, Conflict Resolution and Human Rights at Rutgers University, where he also taught courses in the History

and Sociology departments. In 2016 he completed his dissertation, entitled “Genocide and Humanitarian Resistance in Ottoman Syria, 1915-1917,” through the Strassler Family Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies at Clark University.

Dr. Mouradian became the first Ph.D. recipient under Dr. Taner Akçam, who is widely considered one of the leading international authorities on the Armenian Genocide.

Dr. Mouradian has been studying, writing, and lecturing on Armenian history since 2000. He was a junior editor of

Dr. Mouradian Presents New Research on Armenian Genocide



Left to right: Prof. Hagop Ohanessian, Aramayis Orkusyan, Melanie Kojaartinian, Diana Gasparyan, Tatevik Hovhannisyan, Tadeh Issakhanian, Dr. Khatchig Mouradian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Elena Sarmazian, Raffi Apkarian, Michael Rettig.

Photo: Hourig Attarian

DIANA GASPARYAN
STAFF WRITER

Dr. Khatchig Mouradian, Kazan Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State, spoke on the topic of, “Genocide and Humanitarian Resistance in Ottoman Syria, 1915-1917,” as the first of his three-part public lectures series on “Genocide and Resilience.” The lecture, which took place on Tuesday, September 20, offered new insight into the Armenian Genocide and attracted many who were curious to learn more about the resistance pursued by the Armenian deportees in Ottoman Syria during World War I.

Early in his study of the Armenian Genocide, Dr. Mouradian realized the important roles of concentration camps in the perpetration of the Genocide. The Syrian desert region of Der Zor, for example was considered to be the “Armenian Auschwitz.” Dr. Mouradian was especially intrigued by the fact that this was the largest massacre site during the Genocide, yet there had been few scholarly studies of the region. Because of this, he began to focus more on Syria, narrowing his research to the period from when deportees arrived in Syria to the concluding massacres in Der Zor in 1916.

Researching this topic posed a few challenges and Dr. Mouradian explained how the usual sources, such as missionary accounts, consular accounts, and diplomatic material were typically nonexistent in the middle of a desert.

This was especially true in the case of Der Zor, since the Ottoman Turkish state had banned any reporting from the area. In addition, many documents in the Ottoman archives have not been easily accessible.

“I used material from both Armenian and Ottoman archives, missionary accounts, and

the Lebanese-Armenian daily newspaper *Aztag* from 2000 to 2007. He moved from Lebanon to Boston in 2007 and took on the role of editor for the *Armenian Weekly*, until 2014.

In the same year, Dr. Mouradian received a Gulbenkian Foundation Armenian Studies

diplomatic records to reconstruct that history,” said Dr. Mouradian.

One previously untapped primary source that Dr. Mouradian utilized in his research was the archives of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Aleppo. He discussed how the Church organized relief committees to help the arriving Armenians, who were in terrible condition. The minutes from those committee meetings contain valuable information pertaining to the help given to the deportees, such as purchases made, dates, and lists of the deportees they assisted. These lists also include the region each person came from, giving Mouradian an idea of where most Armenians were deported from. “It’s like having a camera in Aleppo when the deportees were arriving,” said Dr. Mouradian.

The Armenian Genocide is more known for what the oppressors were doing to the victims, but Dr. Mouradian introduced the idea of how the victims fought back in their own ways against the oppressors. He discussed how hiding, running, and trying to escape were all forms of resistance, and how the Armenian people did not go down without a fight.

“People always say the last thing that leaves a person is hope. I would say that the last thing to leave a person is the will to resist.”

Dr. Mouradian also stated that most people continue resisting even when they have lost all hope, which is a universal trend in history.

Dr. Mouradian’s research highlights this “will to resist,” which changes the way historians have traditionally viewed the Armenian Genocide by giving the victims more agency.

“I hope to help us think about the Armenian Genocide, not as the history of people being only oppressed, killed, and massacred, but as people who tried to resist.”

Research Fellowship to study the Armenian community in China, which began to develop in the late 19th century. Dr. Mouradian has lectured and participated in conferences all over the world, including Armenia, Lebanon, China, Syria, and Turkey.

Armenian Studies Library Houses Photograph Archive



Photo: ASP Archive

Dry-goods store, interior, Shapazian Collection, ASP Archives.

CLAIRE KASAIAN
STAFF WRITER

Over the years the Armenian Studies Program has received a generous amount of donations, such as manuscripts, books, newspaper clippings, and videos. These materials include Genocide survivor memoirs, newsletters from the Diaspora, and theological and literary works.

Malina Zakian, the Armenian Studies Program librarian and

archivist, has been cataloging the numerous donations. Zakian and a graduate student are working on digitizing the historic photographs that the Program has received from the Armenian community.

These photographs will help preserve the rich history of the Armenian culture in Fresno and will educate the current generation on the history of the Fresno Armenian community.

Zakian has begun to evaluate

the materials, assessing how they serve the research interests of the Program and how they reflect the history of the Fresno Armenian community. The materials are then included on the online catalog of the Armenian Studies Program, found on the ASP website at fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies.

Prior to working in Fresno, Zakian did similar work for the Gulbenkian Library of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

She noted that in both of the communities she has worked in, the vast collections that each institution accumulated was in large part donated generously by the community. According to Zakian, “the collections tell a different kind of history than you might find written in books. They speak to the predilections, tastes, and interests of their communities, accumulated over time.”

These materials tell the story of a culture that Zakian is helping protect and conserve.

Triple X Los Angeles Chapter Scholarship

STAFF REPORT

The Triple X Fraternity-Los Angeles Chapter has established a scholarship at Fresno State for 2016 announced Armenian Studies Program Director Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

The Triple X-Los Angeles Chapter has donated \$2,000 to establish the scholarship, which will be awarded to deserving Armenian students studying at Fresno State.

The Triple X Fraternity is approaching its centennial in 2018, and has prided itself as a fraternal organization open to men of Armenian descent located



in the states of California and Nevada.

Almost 75 years ago, a charter was granted to a handful of young men in Southern California, thereby establishing the Los Angeles Chapter of the Triple X Fraternity of California.

Because of the firm fraternal foundations that were set, the activities of the Los Angeles Chapter were a notable success.

The excellence of social activities, as well as charitable endeavors, were recognized and

appreciated by the Southern California community.

Throughout its history, the individual chapters have established several fundraising activities to provide support to meaningful programs serving both their Armenian heritage and the local communities in which the members live.

The Armenian Studies Program appreciates the establishment of the new Scholarship that will benefit Armenian students at Fresno State.

LEBANON, FROM PAGE 1

Der Mugrdechian’s talk on Friday, September 9 not only detailed his trip, but also discussed the significance of the Armenian community of Lebanon focusing on three basic aspects of the community: the role of the church, the role of education, and the role of cultural organizations.

Following the Armenian Genocide, Lebanon became the center of the Armenian diasporan community in the Middle East reaching a peak population of approximately 225,000–250,000 Armenians in 1975, on the eve of the Lebanese Civil War.

“All of the traditional institutions, which today we see even in our community here in Fresno, already established their headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon by 1975,” stated Prof. Der Mugrdechian. Lebanon became the headquarters of the three traditional Armenian political parties, the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the Armenian Catholic Church, and the Armenian Evangelical Church.

In Lebanon, much like in Fresno, churches have been central in the effort to maintain a strong Armenian community. “The role of the church in the Armenian community, wherever



Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

The Armenian Genocide Museum at The Birds’ Nest Orphanage in Lebanon, opened in 2015. The Museum was established in the home of missionary Maria Jacobsen.

it is in the world, is the same. It is a promoter of Armenian identity, a place for community interaction, and a center of social life,” said Der Mugrdechian. The importance of churches is perhaps more visible in Lebanon than in any other diasporan community as Lebanon is home to 14 Apostolic Armenian churches, 10 Armenian Catholic churches, and 8 Armenian Evangelical churches.

Professor Der Mugrdechian visited the Armenian Catholic Monastery in Bzommar, which has become the headquarters of

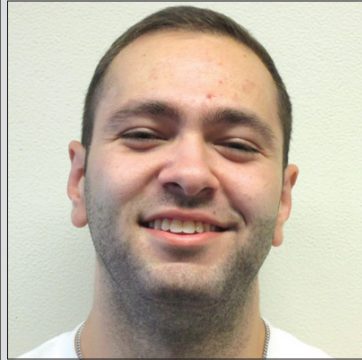
the Armenian Catholic Church worldwide and also houses one of the largest collections of Armenian manuscripts in the world. There, Der Mugrdechian had the opportunity to meet with Very Rev. Father Antranig Granian, editor of the *Haigazian Armenological Review* and one of the important scholars in the field of Armenian Studies, and with Monsignor Gabriel Muradian, head of the monastery.

Additionally, Der Mugrdechian traveled to Antelias, headquarters of the Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, and

Eench Ga Chga

ALINA ARAKELIAN • STAFF WRITER

As an Armenian, what annual events do you look forward to and why?



Raffi Apkarian
Senior, Chemistry

Prpoor, which is the traditional preparation of grape molasses to celebrate the harvest. It is a great event that brings Armenians together in all aspects. The celebration is a way to share our culture by singing traditional songs and reciting poems. I love how everyone lets loose, eats, drinks, and is purely happy to be together.

As an Armenian I look forward to the anniversary of the Genocide because it is a time when Armenians come together and we are able to celebrate our triumphs and mourn our losses. We all come together to remember our history and what our people and families have gone through to get where we are today. The remembrance of the Genocide has made the Armenian culture more widely known in today’s society.



Arlen Pilavian
Junior, Plant Health-Crop Production Management emphasis

As an Armenian I look forward to the Armenian Genocide memorial events that we organize. They really show our true colors, where Armenians have come from, and how strong we still are in today’s society.



Claire Kasaian
Freshman, Business-marketing

Photos: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

Hye Sharzhoom

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Bikfaya, the summer residence of the Catholicos. In Bikfaya, Prof. Der Mugrdechian was privileged to be granted an audience with the Catholicos, His Holiness Aram I, with whom he discussed the current state of the Armenian community in Fresno and learned of the challenges facing the Armenian community in Lebanon. His Holiness presented Der Mugrdechian with the gift of one of the Catholicosate’s recent significant publications, *The Catholicosate of Cilicia—History, Mission, Treasures* (Antelias, 2015).

Equally important to maintaining an Armenian identity in diasporan communities is the education system. “One of the most important aspects of rebuilding communities was building schools,” said Prof. Der Mugrdechian. “After the Genocide, Armenians placed a priority on education. They built schools and Lebanon is the best example of that because so many schools were built there,” continued Der Mugrdechian. At its peak, Lebanon had 56 Armenian schools with approximately 21,000 students. “Beirut became the intellectual hub of the diaspora, with the publication

of books and newspapers in the Armenian language,” said Der Mugrdechian.

Today, there are many challenges facing both the higher and lower education systems in Lebanon. Prof. Der Mugrdechian visited Haigazian University, where he met with President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian and discussed some of these challenges. Two of the big challenges facing education today are that there are too many spaces and not enough students, and that tuition is expensive relative to the income of the people in Lebanon.

“Against all odds, however, Armenian education is still being pursued in Lebanon. Considering the turmoil, the civil war, all the economic disturbances, and political instability, we might think otherwise. However, maintenance of Armenian schools is a really important priority for Armenians in Lebanon,” said Prof. Der Mugrdechian.

Professor Der Mugrdechian’s talk highlighted the continued vitality of the Armenian community in Lebanon, despite the adversities faced. Much like in Fresno, the Armenians of Lebanon strive to maintain their identity and communal life.

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ASP, FROM PAGE 1

Studies Program is celebrating its 40th anniversary, culminating with a Banquet on Sunday, March 19, 2017.

The ASP was officially established in 1977 when Dr. Dickran Kouymjian was recruited as director. “The foundations of the Program were set by Dr. Kouymjian,” said current Director Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

Reflecting on his own impact on the Program, Dr. Kouymjian said “I have been proud of my role in making Fresno’s Armenian Studies Program the most active in the U.S., perhaps even the entire diaspora in terms of students graduating with an emphasis, that is a minor, in the discipline.” Throughout the years, the Armenian Studies Program has set high goals and reached them, achieving great success in all of its projects and undertakings.

Some of the Program’s most notable achievements are:

- The Program has 131 alumni who have completed their minors in Armenian Studies and more than 12,000 students who have taken one or more course offered by the Program. “Through strong community support, we now offer highly popular courses in General Education, and our student body—regardless of their ethnic background—learns about the heritage, culture, and history of Armenians,” said Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval.

- Many significant Armenian community figures have visited the campus and given presentations. Among those are His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians; His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Holy See of Cilicia; John Kirakossian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Armenian SSR; Peter Balakian, Pulitzer Prize-Winning author; Bako Sahakyan, President of the



Left to right: Former Fresno State President Dr. John Welty with His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians. His Holiness received the President’s Medal of Distinction on a June 2005 visit to Fresno State. Many distinguished guests have visited the Armenian Studies Program over the last forty years.

Photo: Randy Vaughn-Dotta, ASP Archive

Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh; John Evans, former Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia; Garo Paylan, Member of the Turkish Parliament; and many other scholars and political leaders.

- *Hye Sharzhoom*, established in 1979, is the oldest regularly published Armenian student newspaper anywhere in the world. Staffed by students, with Prof. Der Mugrdechian as advisor, *Hye Sharzhoom* has a worldwide readership of more than 5,000 people.

- The Program has organized numerous exhibits, such as the International Exhibition of Armenian Architecture, an exhibit on the 500th Anniversary of Armenian Printing, a Centennial exhibit on the Armenian Genocide, and more.

- Every year an internationally recognized scholar in Armenian Studies is invited to teach for one semester at Fresno State, through the Henry S. Khanzadian Kazan Visiting Professorship. This year the Program hosts its 13th Kazan Visiting Professor.

- Two of the ASP faculty are members of the Executive

Council for the Society of Armenian Studies (SAS). Prof. Der Mugrdechian serves as the President of SAS, while Dr. La Porta serves as the Editor of the *Journal of the Society of Armenian Studies*.

- The Armenian Studies Program hosts conferences, lectures, and symposia. Over the past forty years, the Program has hosted an average ten events per semester, which are open to students and the public. “We have established a link between the community and the university, thereby enriching the community through our outreach and lecture series,” said Prof. Der Mugrdechian. Thousands of community members and students have attended and benefitted from the events.

- The Armenian Studies Program manages more than twenty scholarship funds, established by Armenian donors, which are available to Fresno State students. An estimated \$70,000 is awarded annually in scholarships and grants to more than 50 students studying in the Program.

Der Mugrdechian Interviewed on
“The Central Valley Ledger”



Left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian and host Sevag Tateosian.

Photo: ASP Archive

STAFF REPORT

Fresh off of his trip to Armenia, Lebanon, and Turkey, Armenian Studies Program Director Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian was invited to appear on July 7 on “The Central Valley Ledger,” a Fresno and Clovis area public affairs program airing on KFSR 90.7 FM, CMAC-Comcast 93, and AT&T 99. The program is recorded with a volunteer crew from Fresno State’s Mass Communication and Journalism Department and the local Community Media Access Collaborative in Fresno and Clovis.

The host and producer of the long-standing program, Sevag Tateosian, is no stranger to the Armenian Studies Program. Tateosian is a Fresno State graduate and received his minor in Armenian Studies in 2004.

Professor Der Mugrdechian discussed the reason for his trip and spoke about his experiences in the Middle East. He also talked about the Pope’s visit to Armenia.

“Many people heard that the

Pope visited Armenia, but the professor was able to elaborate on the significance and reason for the visit,” said Tateosian. “Our audience has always enjoyed Prof. Der Mugrdechian’s insight on topics.”

It wasn’t the first time Professor Der Mugrdechian appeared on the program. He has appeared three times previously and covered various topics including: the Armenian Genocide, Christianity and the Armenians, as well as the Armenian-American community of Fresno.

“I enjoy having the opportunity to present a look at the Armenian communities of the Diaspora, especially those of Lebanon and Turkey. My trip to Beirut was an opportunity to learn about this important Armenian center and about what is happening in the community,” said Der Mugrdechian.

Past guests on the program also have included Dr. Dickran Kouymjian and Dr. Sergio La Porta of the Armenian Studies Program.

- The Armenian Series at The Press at Fresno State has successfully published 6 titles including the latest work, *Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France*, and earlier works such as *Armenian Poetry of Our Time*, *David of Sassoun: Critical Studies on the Armenian Epic*, and *Vahan Tekeyan: Selected Poem*.

With passionate and accomplished scholars spearheading the department and immense support from the Fresno community, it is no wonder that the Program includes so many unique components and features. “Our Program is one of the most prestigious and active Programs in the world, and this success is based on two fundamental factors: we have renowned professors who have dedicated their lives to the success and vibrancy of the Program, and we have an amazing community that values the memory of history and the vision this provides to the individual,” said Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval.

It is clear that since its inception, the Armenian Studies Program has continued to expand its roles and responsibilities to share knowledge about Armenian

history, culture, and language through various modes. The Program makes a significant contribution to academia, to the Armenian community, and to the lives of every student who pursues Armenian studies.

With all the progress that has been made within these 40 years, it will be interesting to see what new projects and initiatives the Program will pursue next. “Today, together with my colleagues Dr. La Porta, and Prof. Ohanessian, I feel that we are continuing to make great strides,” said Prof. Der Mugrdechian. As for the first director, Dr. Kouymjian takes pride in observing the successes of ASP from Paris. “It is encouraging to just sit back and observe how the program gets better and better,” said Dr. Kouymjian.

The Armenian Studies Program will celebrate its 40th Anniversary at their Annual Banquet on Sunday, March 19, 2017.

You can visit their website at <http://fresnostate.edu/artshum/armenianstudies/> and connect through Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ArmenianStudiesFresnoState/> and Twitter at @armstudiesfs.



Photo: Hourig Attarian

Garó Paylan, center, visited the Armenian Genocide Monument at Fresno State after his presentation.

PAYLAN, FROM PAGE 1

arriving at Fresno State as a guest of the Armenian Studies Program to share his unique perspective on current events in Turkey. The program was organized as a dialogue between Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Prof. Sergio La Porta, Paylan, and the audience.

Paylan began his presentation by describing his childhood as an Armenian growing up in Turkey and the road that led him to become an advocate for democratic principles. Paylan remembered that his first awareness of the Genocide came when he asked his grandmother if she ever had siblings. He would ask her several times, but she would always grow silent. Finally, an uncle hinted to Paylan that “something bad had happened.” Paylan realized this “something bad” still affected the present when he was called *giaour*, or infidel, in the streets. “I realized there was something bad about my identity, and I grew angry about what happened to my ancestors.” Streets with names such as “Talaat” and “Enver Pasha” were constant reminders about what happened to his people, and further fueled his frustration.

Paylan described the fear that Armenians in Turkey felt when it came to discussing their past. “We had to be silent. Whenever we raised our voices about this terrible wound in our hearts, something bad would happen.” His meeting with Hrant Dink would alter the course of his life. “Dink had the courage to tell the

people that something bad had happened in this land, without needing to call it genocide, and because of that crime, all of us are suffering. Then they took him from us as well.”

Dink’s assassination in 2007 deepened Paylan’s frustration, and he became more entrenched in his Armenian identity. It was in this pain that he noticed Turks and Kurds were also angered by Dink’s death and desired justice. “When I noticed that I was suffering because of Dink, I realized that a lot of people were suffering alongside me. I wanted to take care of all of the minorities who suffered. So I went into politics and we started a party that believes in equality.”

Paylan helped to form the Peoples’ Democratic Party with liberals of all backgrounds. It was this solidarity among Kurds, Turks, and Armenians who believed in democratic ideals that tempered his anger and lead him to activism. Paylan’s party actively advocates for the rights of minorities and is the only party in Turkey that has formally acknowledged the Armenian Genocide.

Paylan stressed that the only way for Turkey to recognize the Armenian Genocide is if the nation becomes a true democracy. It is through Parliament that Paylan hopes to bring about change. He drew parallels between his goals and those of Armenians in Parliament before the Genocide; “they only asked for their rights; for local democracy.”

On April 24, Paylan referenced the Armenians in Parliament who had been killed in 1915. His fellow MPs, who considered him to be the first Armenian in Parliament, were astonished that there had been Armenians in such positions a century earlier. Paylan touched on the reason for this ignorance in his recollection of his high school history class. His instructor told the class that Armenians were traitors and had to leave the country because of it. However, Paylan does not blame the Turkish people. “They are not guilty. The system educated them with this lie for three generations. Turkey was established on this lie, which is leading to new crimes.”

Paylan touched on these more recent crimes in discussing Erdogan’s oppressive campaign against the Kurds. According to Paylan, Erdogan is taking advantage of the attempted coup to persecute those who oppose him. Paylan stated that Erdogan replaced a number of democratically elected mayors in the eastern provinces with governors.

According to Paylan, Erdogan’s harsh treatment of the Kurds only exacerbates the problem and results in more Kurds taking up arms for their rights. “It is a vicious cycle of Turks persecuting Kurds and Kurds going to the mountains to fight. Parliament is the place to solve the problems. I have buried too many people.”

In response to a question about what the Diaspora could do to support his efforts, Paylan reminded the audience that he is also part of the Diaspora. “I am from Malatia. You are my relatives, so we are living in the diaspora as well. Our responsibility is the same; we have to do this together.”

Paylan’s visit to the U.S. has been instrumental in bridging the divide between Armenians in Turkey and the Diaspora. He noted that Diasporan Armenians are often ashamed of those who remained in Turkey for not being vocal enough about their heritage. “Sometimes we had to be silent. It’s so hard to be an Armenian in that fascist land where we suffer.”

Paylan and the HDP are

Armenian Studies Program
November Events



The Fresno premiere screening of
“If Only Everyone”

Friday, November 4, 2016
5:30PM

in conjunction with CineCulture
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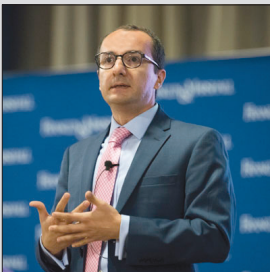
“Armenian Educational Life
in Lebanon:
Haigazian University”

Dr. Paul Haidostian
President, Haigazian University



Monday, November 14, 2016 • 7:30PM

University Business Center, Room 191
Free admission. Free parking with parking code.



“The Tale of Two Midwives:
The Notebooks
of Siphora and Nuritza
Shnorhokian of Aintab,
1890-1930”

Dr. Khatchig Mouradian
Kazan Visiting Professor

Wednesday, November 30, 2016 • 7:30PM

University Business Center, Room 191
Free admission. Free parking with parking code.

courageously fighting for the face to this struggle and rallied rights of Armenians, Kurds, and Armenians around the world in every other oppressed people support of his dream for a free in Turkey. His visit gave a and democratic Turkey.

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David Sarkis Barsamian	Pasadena
Tarjian Bedoian	Sanger
in memory of Harriet Bedoian	
Dr. Marlene Breu	Kalamazoo, MI
Karl DeKlotz	Fresno
Mary Hokokian	Fresno
Paul Jamushian	Arlington, VA
Paulette Janian-Melkonian	Fresno
in memory Genocide survivor Haigouhie Kojababian aka Alice Janian	
Mary Kachadoorian	Clovis
Rev. Vartan & Danna Kasparian	Visalia
in memory of Rose Megerian	
Haigaz Kinoian	Fresno
Alice Koligian	Fresno
Ron Krikorian	Fowler
Gladys Peters	Fresno
Leo & Marlene Pilibosian	Fresno
John & Cindy Rettig	Clovis
Gladys, George, and Rose Samuelian	Fresno
in memory of Nevart Antaramian	
Garbis & Seta Sariyan	Albuquerque, NM
Charles & Mary Tateosian	Walnut Creek
Mrs. Alice Vartanian, Philip, Steven, Gail, Brian, Justin, and Holly Vartanian	Fresno
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