

HYE SHARZHOOM

Armenian Action

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40th Year

May 2019

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Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian

Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval Chosen as New Fresno State Provost



Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval
UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS
FRESNO STATE

Photo: ASP Archive

During his 19 years of service at the University, he has served as professor of Spanish and Portuguese, coordinator of the Spanish master of arts, chair of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures, interim associate dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, and dean of the College of Arts and Humanities.

A multilingual scholar, he recently helped launch the new Portuguese Beyond Borders Institute, in collaboration with fellow deans of other Fresno State colleges. As a scholar, Jiménez-Sandoval studies poetic discourses, critical theory, Spanish American literature and Lusophone cultural productions. Among his academic honors are two nominations for the Carnegie U.S. Professor of the Year Award.

“Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval is a dynamic scholar and administrator with an unwavering passion

Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, a veteran academic administrator with extensive ties to the Central Valley, is Fresno State’s new provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, effective July 22, 2019.

President Joseph I. Castro announced the appointment on April 5. The provost is the University’s chief academic officer and serves as its leader when the president is away from campus.

Jiménez-Sandoval joined the Fresno State faculty in 2000.

SEE [PROVOST PAGE 7](#)

Prof. Der Mugrdechian Named “Man of the Year” and Stefani Booroojian “Woman of the Year” by Knights and Daughters of Vartan at March 30 Banquet



Seated: “Woman of the Year” Stefani Booroojian and “Man of the Year” Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian with the Knights and Daughters of Vartan. The banquet took place on Saturday, March 30, 2019 at Fort Washington Country Club in Fresno.

ANDREW HAGOPIAN
STAFF WRITER

On Saturday, March 30, the Knights of Vartan, Yeprad Lodge and the Daughters of Vartan, Alidz Chapter, held their “Man and Woman of the Year Banquet”

honoring Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Berberian Coordinator of the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State and KSEE 24 News Anchor Stefani Booroojian. More than

SEE [MAN OF THE YEAR PAGE 7](#)

Armenian Studies Program 31st Annual Banquet Features Consul General of Armenia Dr. Baibourtian



The Armenian Studies Program 31st Annual Banquet was held March 17. Sixty students were awarded Armenian Studies scholarships.

Photo: Andrew Hagopian

DUSTIN VARTANIAN
STAFF WRITER

“The Armenian Studies Program is not only an educational center but it is a very strong center that generates Armenian culture, that drives Armenian culture, and that keeps the Armenian community Armenian, here in the San Joaquin Valley and much beyond,” said H.E. Dr. Armen Baibourtian, Consul General of the Republic of Armenia.

Dr. Baibourtian was the keynote speaker and honored guest at the Armenian Studies Program 31st

Annual Banquet held on Sunday, March 17 at Fort Washington Country Club. This academic year the Armenian Studies Program awarded more than sixty scholarships to Fresno State students enrolled in Armenian Studies courses and scholarship recipients were recognized for their accomplishments at the Banquet. Students at the Banquet were joined by their friends, family, and community members who enjoyed an evening of celebration.

Following the invocation by Rev. Fr. Yeghia Hairabedian,

Pastor of St. Gregory Armenian Church in Fowler, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian introduced special guests who were present. Fresno State President Dr. Joseph Castro and Mrs. Castro, Provost and Vice President Dr. Robert Harper, Vice-President for Administration Debbie Adishian-Astone, Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval and his wife Dr. Mariana Anagnostopoulos, Associate Dean Dr. Honora Chapman, and Honorary Consul Berj Apkarian and

SEE [ASP BANQUET PAGE 8](#)

104th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide Commemorated at April 24 Event at Fresno State

STAFF REPORT

The Armenian Students Organization Fresno State held an Armenian Genocide Commemorative Event at noon on Wednesday, April 24, at the Fresno State Armenian Genocide Monument.

ASO President Claire Kasaian opened the event with welcoming remarks followed by the singing of the U.S. and Armenian National Anthems by the St. Paul Armenian Church Saturday Schools students.

Fresno State student Dustin Vartanian recited Barour Sevag’s “We Are Few.” The Fresno

SEE [APRIL 24 PAGE 8](#)



The Armenian Students Organization at Fresno State held an April 24 Armenian Genocide Day Commemorative event at the Armenian Genocide Monument on campus.

Calouste Gulbenkian Subject of Lecture by Dr. Jonathan Conlin



Left to right: Matthew Mugrdechian, David Safrazian, Cole Egoian, Dr. Sergio La Porta, Dr. Jonathan Conlin, Kara Statler, Hovsep Harutyunyan, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Claire Kasaian, Annie Rubio, and Dr. Hagop Ohanessian.

DAVID SAFRAZIAN
STAFF WRITER

Calouste Gulbenkian, “Mr. Five Per Cent” or “The Honest Broker,” became the world’s wealthiest man by negotiating a five percent share of the Turkish Petroleum Company (later the Iraq Petroleum Company). Following the drawing of the famous “Red Line” in 1928, delineating the areas of oil exploration in the Middle East, Gulbenkian became a partner to the great oil companies of the day, BP, ExxonMobil, Total, and Royal Dutch-Shell.

On Thursday, April 2, Dr. Jonathan Conlin was the guest speaker in the Armenian Studies Program Spring Lecture Series. Dr. Conlin presented his newly published biography on Gulbenkian titled, *Mr. Five Per Cent: The Many Lives of Calouste Gulbenkian, The World’s Richest Man*. Dr. Conlin, who was born in New York, studied history at Oxford University and since 2006 has taught modern British history at the University of Southampton, in the United Kingdom.

Dr. Conlin’s presentation brought great insight into the life of Gulbenkian, also exploring the extent to which Gulbenkian interacted with and was a part of the Armenian community.

According to Dr. Conlin, Gulbenkian made his fortune more as a skilled negotiator and financial architect, rather than as an oil man who knew the technical aspects of oil production. Gulbenkian was born in Istanbul in 1869, to a wealthy (*amira*) Armenian family, who later played an important role in the Armenian community and became a “leader of the diaspora.” The Gulbenkians were originally from the town of Talas, in central Turkey, and were major benefactors of the town.

The late 19th century was a period of turmoil in the Ottoman Empire, with wealthy Armenian families threatened not only by government officials, but by Armenian revolutionaries. Gulbenkian, who had been educated in London, faced a difficult choice, with conflicting ideas of identity: loyal Ottoman subject and/or loyal Armenian citizen.

Gulbenkian was not an oil man by profession, and only visited an oil field once in his life when he was in Baku. It wasn’t until the 1930’s when Caloustian was given the title “Mr. Five Per Cent,” as this was when the income from his oil shares started coming in. Gulbenkian helped shape the oil industry that we know today.

According to Dr. Conlin, estimating Gulbenkian’s total wealth is difficult because of the variety of his investments, but by 1955 it is estimated that Gulbenkian was worth more than \$5 billion dollars.

In 1956, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation was established in Lisbon, Portugal and today is the 36th wealthiest foundation in the world. The Foundation houses a large collection of art that Gulbenkian gathered over the years. Gulbenkian’s one passion outside of accumulating wealth was his interest in expanding his art collection. Beginning in the early 1900’s, and especially in the 1920’s, he acquired a vast and eclectic art collection. Gulbenkian purchased the Paris *hôtel* (palace) of Rodolphe Kann to house the vast collection.

Gulbenkian wore many hats throughout his life, as diplomat, businessman, art collector, and philanthropist. He worked hard to maintain his five percent share of the TPC, which kept his reputation as “King of Oil” around the world. During his lifetime Gulbenkian was also a supporter of Armenian schools, orphanages, and relief societies, later becoming the President of the AGBU from 1930-1932.

Dr. Conlin discussed the “Basturma Problem,” a reference to the issue of Armenian identity that Gubenkian’s daughter Rita used as a metaphor of how she faced difficulty with her father growing up. The “Problem” was also the question of how to situate oneself as a family which showed little interest either in being “good Armenians” or in assimilation.

To conclude his fascinating presentation, Dr. Conlin reminded the audience that although Gulbenkian was a wealthy person, “money does not always bring you happiness.”

California State University, Fresno
Armenian Studies Program
Fall 2019 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
General Education-Breadth, Humanities, Area C2				
• Arm 1A-Elementary Armenian (Class #72226)	4	10:00A-11:50A	MW	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Arts, Area C1				
• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia (Class #72829)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Area D3				
• ArmS 10-Intro Arm Studies (Class #73205)	3	09:00A-09:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
General Education-Integration, Area IC				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #73297)	3	2:00P-3:15P	MW	H. Ohanessian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #73206)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
Upper Division Armenian Studies Course				
• ArmS 108A-Arm History I (Class #72227)	3	2:00P-3:15P	TuTh	S. La Porta
• ArmS 120T-Arm Church (Class #76830)	1	5:00P-8:50P 9:00A-4:50P	Fri Sat	B. Der Mugrdechian

Class meets Friday, September 13 and Saturday, September 14, 2019
Get a Minor in Armenian Studies.
For more information call the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669.
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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HYE SHARZHOOM

MR FIVE PER CENT
THE MANY LIVES OF CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN
THE WORLD'S RICHEST MAN

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Dr. Tachjian and “How We Lived: The Houshamadyan Project”



Houshamadyan Project director Dr. Vahe Tachjian, sixth from left, with students and faculty after the lecture.

ANNIE RUBIO
EDITOR

Photo: Christine Pambukyian

“Who is going to write our history?” This was the existential question that faced the first generation of the Armenian Diaspora, who were forced out of their homes and villages during the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Unable to return home, they relied on their memories to draw maps, write music, and record their memoirs. Today, these efforts are continued through the Berlin-based website Houshamadyan Project, founded in 2010, which compiles such memories and knowledge into an online archive.

The Armenian Studies Program invited Dr. Vahe Tachjian, director of the Houshamadyan Project, to present a talk on Monday, March 11, titled “How We Lived: The Houshamadyan Project,” as part of the ASP Spring Lecture Series.

Dr. Tachjian explained the goals of the website and then demonstrated how to navigate the different sections. With their teams of translators around the world, the Houshamadyan Project is able to bring back to life the cities, towns, and villages in which Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire. There is a delicate balance between the need for a collective history and the subjectivity and sentimentality of the artifacts. While trying to recreate these memories, Tachjian said they must also consider, “How would the first generation Armenians want their history to be presented?”

The website itself is full of historical artifacts and resources for those wanting to learn more about the Armenian villages and cities in the Ottoman Empire. There are a variety of areas that can be accessed including information on schools, education and sport, religion, festivals and folk medicine.

There are maps of various regions, which can be narrowed down to the individual districts. Each region has a series of articles, with topics such as economy, religion, culture, and even food.

There is even a music area, with recordings of songs from different regions. Houshamadyan has taken these songs and created visual podcasts, where viewers can listen while watching animated photos from the region.

Dr. Tachjian played a podcast from the Ourfa province, leaving the audience enamored with the moving images.

Houshamadyan has also incorporated the “Open Digital Archive,” which contains collections of artifacts from individual families. It was originally designed as a way to organize the incoming collections from various families around the world. There are many collections from the United States, Canada, Argentina, Brazil and other places throughout the world.

As an example, Dr. Tachjian discussed the collection of Edwin Sadoian, who was in the audience. A new addition to the Houshamadyan website is “Voices,” an area for unique individual memoirs and larger bodies of text. Due to the rarity and lengthy translations required, there is only one item available so far in the section. To view the collections, or for more information regarding submissions of artifacts, please visit www.houshamadyan.org.

The Houshamadyan Project is always open for feedback on their entries, as it helps to verify the integrity and accuracy of the information. They verify information across several sources before posting articles, but as Dr. Tachjian said, “It is our job as sociologists to question sources.” Much of the website’s traffic has been from Turkey, especially the interior provinces that are described in these same articles. With this valuable feedback, Houshamadyan is able to create a collaborative space for individuals to contribute to this collective history.

Dr. Tachjian earned his Ph.D. in History and Civilisation at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris. He has been a frequent visitor to Fresno State. His main publications are: *La France en Cilicie et en Haute-Méso-potamie*. Paris, 2004; *Les Arméniens, 1917-1939: La quête d’un refuge*, Paris, 2007 (co-editor); and *Daily life in the Abyss: Genocide Diaries, 1915-1918*, New York/Oxford, 2017.

The Project has recently expanded and created the Houshamadyan Educational Foundation, a 501(c)(3) branch in Michigan.

Karanian Celebrates Armenian Life and Culture in Newly Released Book on “The Armenian Highland”

ARSHAK ABELYAN
STAFF WRITER

The borders and barriers imposed by empires have created names which have divided the Armenian homeland for centuries. The designation “Armenian Highland” was purged from maps beginning in the 1940’s, and earlier the Armenian Genocide had attempted to completely eliminate the Armenian people. Matthew Karanian wanted to celebrate the history and culture of the Armenians and preserve the Armenian Highland in his new book, *The Armenian Highland: Western Armenia and the First Republic of Armenia, 1918*.

Karanian was a guest speaker for the Armenian Studies Program Spring Lecture Series on Thursday, April 11, when he gave a presentation about his work and about his new book *The Armenian Highland* before an enthusiastic audience at the University Business Center, at Fresno State.

Karanian began his journey to write *The Armenian Highland* in order to discover the history of surviving members of his family following the Armenian Genocide. Karanian’s grandfather, Hovhannes Karanian, was from Aykestan, Van, and after arriving in New Britain, Connecticut, had placed an ad in the *Hairenik* newspaper seeking information about his family.

“What my grandfather was doing a century ago, was reaching out to anybody who knew his family, anybody with information about his hometown, anyone with information about his homeland,” said Karanian. “I think it is entirely fitting that 100 years later, I am doing the same thing.”

Karanian’s grandmother Agnes on the other hand, was deported in the summer of 1915 from Zara, Sepastia, without the chance to say goodbye to her home. She ultimately survived the Genocide and settled in Rhode Island. She constantly expressed her desire to once again see her home.

“The history of my grandparents intrigued me,” said Karanian in the book’s introduction. “It led me to ask further questions about their lives first as Armenians, and then as refugees, and finally as Americans. The research for this book was part of my search for the answers.”

Karanian wanted to bring some closure for his grandparents



Photo: Andrew Hagopian

Left to right: Annie Rubio, Dustin Vartanian, Marina Chardukian, Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian, Arshak Abelyan, guest speaker Matthew Karanian, Hovsep Harutyunyan, David Safrastian, Matthew Mugrdchian, Suzanna Ekmekchyan, Claire Kasaian, Emily Sirabian, Kara Statler, and Mitchel Statler after the lecture.

and to be able to say goodbye for his grandmother through the book.

Karanian felt compelled to share and publicize the documents and photos of the Armenian Highland, which he started to compile in 1995. He emphasized his own mission in his documentation and journey by saying that, “we should document what we still have, show that we still have interest in the land, and persuade the local people that there is a benefit in preserving the land instead of destroying it.”

On his trips to the Armenian Highland, Karanian was accompanied by a Turkish-speaking member in the group, who was able to communicate and find Armenians in the regions they visited. Karanian is often asked, if Western Armenia would become part of Armenia, what would we do with it? Would any Armenians go back? “Armenians are already there, and they can help us preserve the cultural artifacts of these sites,” responds Karanian.

On another trip in 2017, Karanian was inspired by a school teacher named Laura Gaboudian, whose goal was to find her great grandfather’s house in Havav. Skeptical and very doubtful about her idea at first, he ended up going with her on a one-day trip. She used a hand-drawn map from a genocide survivor from Havav to find the location of her family home.

However, it was one month too late, as the original house was destroyed by a Turkish man, Sharif Sherifoglu and his brother Mehmet, who lived with their families in a new modern

house that had taken its place. Sherifoglu claimed to have an Armenian grandmother who lived in the same house. DNA tests were taken and surprisingly it turned out that Gaboudian and Sherifoglu did have a common ancestor.

It may seem like most Armenian architectural structures have been already been destroyed and ruined by the Turkish state and treasure seekers, but there still are some preserved churches and *khatchkars* left on the Armenian Highland. There are also Kurds and Turks with some Armenian blood. Karanian believes that building bridges with locals in those sites will help preserve the Armenian culture and art in the Armenian Highland. With his book, *The Armenian Highland*, Karanian attempted to show “what we had, what we still have, and to encourage each of us to take ownership of our homeland.”

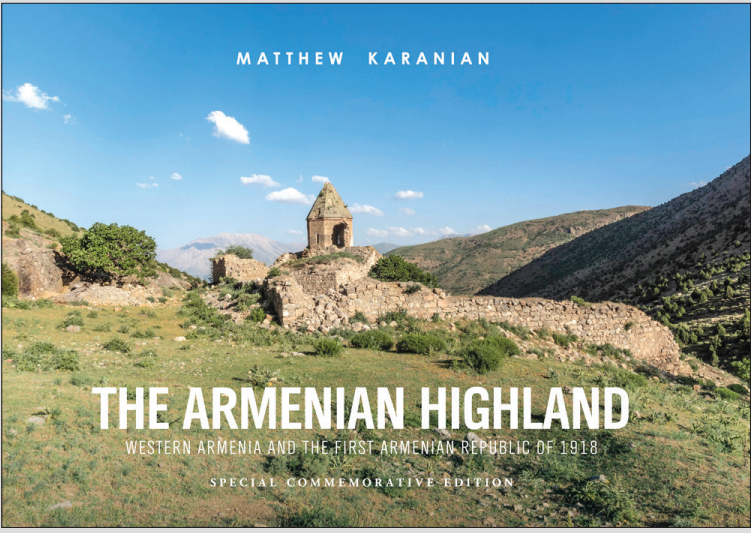
Karanian’s journey has led him to a greater understanding of the Armenian nation, which he said was his reward. There are many people who are documenting historic Armenia, but “... I created this book in order to share this reward with others—to show that the Armenian homeland still exists and that this homeland and grandparents deserve to be remembered. Even after more than 100 years.”

Matthew Karanian is a lawyer and author of many books, including *The Stone Garden Guide: Armenia and Karabagh* (2004) and *Edge of Time: Traveling in Armenia and Karabagh* (2002).

In 2016, he was a recipient of the Arshile Gorky Medal from the Republic of Armenia for his service to homeland and for his role in helping to serve as a bridge between the homeland and the worldwide diaspora of Armenians.

Armenian Highland (Stone Garden Press, 2019), 312 pages, with color photographs, has seven chapters: The First Republic; Ani; Kars; Van; Diyarbakir; Bitlis and Erzerum; and Kharpert and Sebastia.

The book is available through Amazon or at historicarmeniabook.com.



Congratulations Armenian Studies Minors and Graduating Seniors for 2018-2019



ARLEN PILAVIAN
Plant Science
Minor in Armenian Studies

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

The rich background and history of the Armenian people. I owed it to my ancestors to complete my cycle of Armenian studies courses after graduating from the Armenian Community School of Fresno.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

My favorite Armenian Studies course had to be Armenian History 108B, which taught us the history which led to the Genocide, and up until the modern day Republic of Armenia. It was most interesting to me because understanding the history of the Armenians in the last 120 years shows how strong we really are. The Armenians have overcome hardship, leading to the success we have today.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

The aspect that I most valued was the energy and drive I had through every course because I am from an Armenian background. Learning about the history of three to four generations before my time in a way humbled and strengthened me as a young Armenian.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan on pursuing a career in the Agricultural field. What I have learned inside and out of college has prepared me to conquer the field of Agriculture and spread the word of the Armenian culture and history.

ABRAHAM TANOUSIAN
Chemistry

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

As a proud Armenian-American I was very happy to find out that Fresno State offered Armenian courses. I was encouraged to enroll in these courses so that I could expand my knowledge of both the Armenian language and culture.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

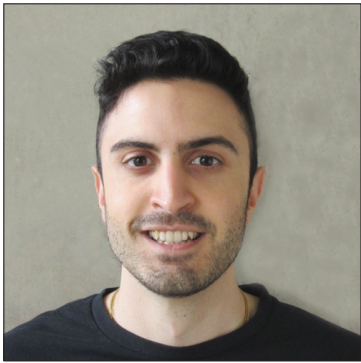
My favorite Armenian Studies class was Armenian 1B; a course which covered the language. Although the class was fairly simple to me considering the fact that I attended an Armenian private school, the fact that I could communicate and refresh my skills was extremely worthwhile.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

I valued seeing the strong Armenian community which for years has supported the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State. It was fascinating to be involved in such a tight-knit group which has been active throughout the school and the community. I valued the fellow students I met and the excellent instructors: Professor Der Mugerdechian and Professor Ohanessian, who made the entire process much more fulfilling.

What are your plans after graduation?

My academic goals are to continue an additional four-years of education at a medical school. I plan on applying to several esteemed institutions throughout this summer.



ANNIE RUBIO
Business Administration

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

I've always been curious about my Armenian roots and wanted to learn about the culture and history of my ancestors. The Armenian Studies courses provided the perfect opportunity to do just that.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

My favorite experience in the Armenian Studies Program was the Summer Study Abroad trip to Armenia in 2017. We went on many wonderful adventures throughout the country, seeing the history and culture come to life. It gave new life to the knowledge we had from other ASP courses. It was an amazing experience, especially for my first time in Armenia.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

I value the strong Armenian community that has been built up and empowered by the Armenian Studies Program. It is also amazing to see the supportive relationship between the university and the greater Armenian community. This has made my experience with the Armenian Studies Program very special.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan to pursue a career in marketing here in the Central Valley. I want to be able to give back to the community that has given me so much.

EMILY SIRABIAN
English

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

The idea of being able to learn about the history of my culture encouraged me to take courses.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

My favorite Armenian Studies class was the "Armenians in Fresno" class, because it was really interactive and more personal.



What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

What I value most is the friendships I have made through the Program because I know this will be what lasts beyond my college years.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan on moving to Southern California and beginning a career.



CARLO MAKARDIAN
Business Administration
Minor in Armenian Studies

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

I wanted to expand my knowledge of the history and culture of our people.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

My favorite Armenian Studies courses were in conversational and written Armenian. I had

forgotten how to read and write in Armenian at a very young age. Because of these courses, I am now able to read and write in my native language.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

The most valuable aspect of the Program is the friendships I made with classmates that share the same passion for Armenian heritage.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan on attending graduate school to pursue a M.B.A.

VARTY HAMAMJIAN
Chemistry

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

As an Armenian student, I was born and raised in an Armenian community which allowed me to develop a strong bond with my society and culture. I really wanted to refresh my knowledge about Armenian history so I decided to take an Armenian Studies course. Learning about our culture and history is important because we can then educate the upcoming generations to help them understand their identity.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

"Introduction to Armenian Studies"-Armenian Studies 10-was my favorite class! It covers the most essential aspects of what being an Armenian means. My favorite assignment was writing about my identity and family background. This assignment is very meaningful because it allows everyone to communicate with their families to gather detailed information about the family tree.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

I valued the Program's commitment and dedication to teach successfully about Armenian history to students from diverse backgrounds. Most importantly, I appreciate my Armenian and non-Armenian classmates' passion and curiosity.

What are your plans after graduation?

I will start preparing myself for admission to medical school. First, I will be taking the Medical College Admission Test because my future career goal is to become a physician and more specifically a pediatrician.



ANNA SISLIAN
Mathematics
Minor in Armenian Studies

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

Being born and raised in Armenia, it sparked a very high interest within me to experience the teachings of Armenian history, culture, and to experience the perspective of Armenia within the United States.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

I enjoyed all of the courses offered within the Program. However, if I had to choose something specific, it would be the history lessons. Armenia is so rich in history and there is so much to learn.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

There were many things that I valued, especially the wonderful professors that make this Program possible and their dedication to the Armenian Studies Program. I also value all the new friends that I gained and the many people that I connected with.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan to become a Math teacher, with the hope of also teaching my future Math students some of what I learned in the Armenian Studies Program.

A full listing of all graduates is available after graduation on Saturday, May 18.

Photos: Barlow Der Mugerdechian

“The Missing Pages” Topic of Talk by Dr. Heghnar Watenpaugh



Dr. Heghnar Watenpaugh, fourth from left, presented a fascinating lecture on the “Zeytun Gospel” by Toros Roslin.

STAFF REPORT

Photo: Andrew Hagopian

A story of spiritual power, a work of unmatched artistic expression, intertwined with the Armenian Genocide, combined in an intriguing story related by Dr. Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh. The journey of the “Zeytun Gospel,” from its creation by the great Armenian artist and miniature painter Toros Roslin, in the 13th century, to its place of honor in the town of Zeytun for centuries, and then its final harrowing tale of survival were recounted in a lecture “The Missing Pages: The Modern Life of a Medieval Gospel, from Genocide to Justice,” given by Dr. Watenpaugh on Thursday, April 4, at Fresno State.

Missing Pages is also the title of a new book authored in 2018 by Dr. Watenpaugh, an art historian at the University of California Davis. The “Missing Pages” are eight folios of the original 13th century “Zeytun Gospel” that are now in the Getty Museum collection in Los Angeles. The mother manuscript of the “Zeytun Gospel” is found in the collection of the Matenadaran in Yerevan.

How the eight folios became a part of the Getty collection is the question that puzzled Dr. Watenpaugh, who began to explore the history and the travels of the “Zeytun Gospel.” Her journey took her from the monastery of Hromkla where the manuscript was created, to high in the mountains of Zeytun where the manuscript was kept for hundreds of years as a powerful spiritual talisman, to its ultimate resting place in the Matenadaran and the Getty Museum.

Dr. Watenpaugh was drawn to the story when she heard about a lawsuit in 2010 between the Armenian Church, which claimed ownership of the manuscript, and the Getty Museum. The Armenian Church wanted the “Missing Pages” to be returned to the Church. Dr. Watenpaugh wrote an Op-Ed piece expressing her view that a solution could be found that would satisfy both sides.

In her investigation into how the folios had been removed, Dr. Watenpaugh became inspired to

write the story of the “Zeytun Gospel.”

“During and after the Genocide,” said Dr. Watenpaugh, “the Zeytun Gospels intersected with the lives of individuals who venerated it, coveted it, treasured it, saved it, lost it, feared it, entrusted it to others, remembered it, and wrote about it.”

The Manuscript was created in the year 1256 by Toros Roslin, considered by most art historians as the greatest Armenian painter. The Gospel then found its way to Zeytun, where it was kept for centuries until the Armenian Genocide of 1915. It was kept as a “revered relic and liturgical object” in the Armenian Church of Zeytun and was only displayed on special occasions.

When the Genocide began, the Armenians of Zeytun were also subject to the deportations, but Asadur, of the noble house of Surenians, one of the leading families in Zeytun, was allowed by the government to move to Marash for the duration of the war, instead of being sent on the marches. Asadur took the “Zeytun Gospel” to Marash, where the Gospel was entrusted to Dr. Artin Der Ghazarian, a surgeon and amateur historian, who convinced the family that it would be best to give the manuscript to him for safety.

Although the Ottoman Turks lost World War I, at the end of 1918, the Nationalist Turks of Mustafa Kemal attacked Cilicia in 1919-1920. In the chaos of the Armenian retreat from Marash, following the French abandonment of Cilicia, the manuscript was lost in the midst of a snow-storm. Later it was miraculously recovered and came into the hand of the Atamian family, who later settled in the East Coast. The secret of “The Missing Pages” is revealed in the new book.

Dr. Watenpaugh’s gripping retelling of “The Missing Pages” kept all in the audience at the edge of their seats.

The *Missing Pages* (Stanford University Press, 2019) is available through Amazon or your favorite bookstore.

Dr. Taner Akçam Presents New Research on the Denial of the Armenian Genocide by Turkey

CHRISTINE PAMBUKYAN
STAFF WRITER

“The denial of the Armenian Genocide began not in the wake of the event but was an intrinsic part of the plan itself,” stated Dr. Taner Akçam, holder of the Kalousdian/Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University.

Since the Armenian Genocide took place one hundred and four years ago, in 1915, the Turkish government has continued to deny the historical veracity of the Genocide. According to Dr. Akçam, the main argument of those who deny that the Genocide ever occurred is the claim that “there was no central decision to exterminate the Armenians.” In addition, denialists claim there is no documentation that shows the genocidal intent of the Ottoman authorities.

On Friday, March 15, 2019, Dr. Akçam brought attention to the documents including the killing orders and demonstrated their authenticity through his lecture, “The Denial of the Armenian Genocide and the Killing Order of Talat Pasha.” The lecture was based on the research that he conducted for his book *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha’s Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide*. Dr. Akçam was introduced by Armenian Studies Program Director Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, who emphasized the significance of the research that Dr. Akçam had conducted.

“Denialism martials its own facts and it has its own truth,” said Dr. Akçam. According to University of Chicago Professor Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s book, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, people in power silence, or delete, history in four stages. The first stage is “fact creation.” In this stage, the denier creates their own sources of evidence or documentation. The second stage is “fact assembly,” where the denier creates their own archives. The third stage is



Photo: Andrew Hagopian

Left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Dr. Sergio La Porta, Marina Chardukian, Dustin Vartanian, guest speaker Dr. Taner Akçam, Kara Statler, Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, Suzanna Ekmekchyan, and Jonathan Chardukian.

“fact retrieval” where denialists create narratives for their forged documentation. Once narratives are created, the denialist reaches stage four, the moment of “retrospective significance,” where their narratives and documents become well-known history.

For the case of denialism against the Armenian Genocide, Dr. Akçam added a fifth stage to Professor Trouillot’s theory. In this additional stage, denialists destroy documents and/or try to prove the falsity of critical documents. The Turkish government destroyed and hid facts and documents to justify their claim that the Ottoman Empire had no responsibility for the Armenian Genocide. The Turkish government made their own documentation and facts to support their claim. However, the Turkish government could not destroy the entirety of evidence because some of it was kept safe by non-denialists. Because of this flaw in the Turkish system of denialism, Dr. Akçam was able to prove the authenticity of telegrams and documents containing the killing orders of the Ottoman Empire, especially those containing the signature of Talat Pasha.

Dr. Akçam used the example of the Naim-Andonian documents, based on a book that Aram Andonian (1875-1952) published called *The Great Crime*. Andonian had obtained the main material for his book from an Ottoman bureaucrat by the name of Naim Efendi. In 1983, the Turkish Historical Society claimed that the documents were fake.

Dr. Akçam meticulously analyzed the documents, many of which had been coded, to demonstrate that they could not have been false. Dr. Akçam also revealed that there is documentation in the Ottoman archives which corroborates the events and individuals mentioned in *The Great Crime*.

Dr. Akçam is a historian, sociologist, and one of the first Turkish intellectuals to acknowledge and openly discuss the existence of the Armenian Genocide.

The audience enjoyed Dr. Akçam’s lecture. With the help of his book asserting the validity of the Armenian Genocide and bringing light to the denialist history of Turkey, Armenians have more evidence to support the Armenian Genocide case when denialists say, “Show me the originals.”

ASO Continues its Active Semester with Events



Photo: ASP Archive

The ASO visited Magic Mountain during Spring Break.

DUSTIN VARTANIAN
STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Studies Organization has had a busy Spring Semester, full of lectures and events. The ASO gathers monthly and organizes social

activities to create stronger relationships with its fellow members. The socials are a big part of what the club does.

“The ASO socials are important because they promote involvement with members in the club and encourage others to

join us,” said ASO Treasurer Kara Statler. These events are a good opportunity for new members to understand what ASO is all about. It is also a great way for the new members to meet those already in the club and to become closer friends with each other. Each of the socials are meant to be a “blast” and each event this semester has lived up to that billing.

On Saturday, March 9, ASO members joined the “Red Wave” in the Save Mart Center to watch a Fresno State Men’s Basketball game. Fresno State took on the San Jose State Spartans in their last regular season game. The Bulldogs defeated the Spartans by the astonishing score of 121-81. The 121 points was the highest score ever achieved in the Save Mart Center’s history. The ASO had a blast joining in on the

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“Genocide Awareness Week” Held April 15-19 in Scottsdale



Left to right: Prof. John Liffiton, Fr. Zacharia Saribekyan, Dr. Taner Akçam, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian at the Armenian Genocide Memorial on the campus of Scottsdale Community College. Scottsdale Community College hosted the 7th Annual “Genocide Awareness Week: Not on Our Watch,” April 15-19.

Photo: ASP Archive

STAFF REPORT

Armenian Studies Program Coordinator Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian participated in the 7th Annual “Genocide Awareness Week: Not on Our Watch,” organized by Scottsdale Community College, in Scottsdale, Arizona. Der Mugrdechian spoke on the topic of “The Genocide in the 21st Century: Turkey and Armenia,” on Monday, April 15, to students, faculty, and community members.

Dr. Taner Akçam, Kalousdian and Mugar Professor of Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University joined Der Mugrdechian as a speaker at the conference with his presentation on “The Killing Orders of Talat Pasha.”

In 2018, Ambassador John Evans was the keynote speaker at the “Genocide Awareness Week,” which has grown to become the largest such week devoted to the topic of genocide in the United States.

Der Mugrdechian’s lecture examined the current and historical relations between Turkey and Armenia, in the context of the Armenian Genocide. His talk was divided into three sections: Turkey and the Armenian Genocide; Armenia and the Armenian Genocide; Genocide as a continuing issue in the international arena.

The consequences of the Genocide and its denial by modern Turkey have become factors today in both the internal and external policies of both Turkey and Armenia.

Although Armenia was established as a new country on September 21, 1991, Turkey has refused to officially have any diplomatic ties to Armenia. The Genocide recognition campaign is a big factor in this decision by Turkey.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian gave examples of relations between Turkey and Italy as an example of how the Genocide issue still is a factor. In Armenia, it is more domestic policies that are affected by the Genocide issue. Armenia’s leaders have been criticized for relegating Genocide recognition to a secondary role, and thus the issue has affected the perceptions of how the people view Armenia’s leaders.

Dr. Akçam’s presentation focused on the question of denial, and how denial was an intrinsic part of the fabric of the new Republic of Turkey in 1923. He gave examples of how the Turkish government is still attempting to stifle Genocide recognition by manipulating documents and information. They do this in order to build the argument for denialism.

Dr. Akçam explained how official Ottoman Turkish telegrams were coded and by doing so he again directly addressed the question of authenticity of documentation. Dr. Akçam explained how he was able to read the coded documents and to use this information to combat the denialism.

Organized by Prof. John Liffiton, Scottsdale Community College’s “Genocide Awareness Week” featured speakers on American Indians, on the Holocaust, on the Assyrian Genocide (Seyfo), and on the topic of comparative Genocide.

The St. Apkar Armenian Church of Scottsdale has been a generous supporter of the “Genocide Awareness Week” activities and annually sponsors speakers on the Armenian Genocide.

Fr. Zacharia Saribekyan, pastor of St. Apkar, has played a key role in the continuing inclusion of the Armenian Genocide in the “Genocide Awareness Week.”

Dr. Ara Sanjian Discusses Armenia’s 2018 “Velvet Revolution” in Armenian Studies Lecture Series

CLAIRE KASAIAN
STAFF WRITER

On Thursday, March 7, students, professors, and members of the community attended a lecture at Fresno State by Dr. Ara Sanjian, who spoke on the topic of “Armenia’s Road To and Since the ‘Velvet Revolution.’”

The “Velvet Revolution” refers to the political events that occurred in Armenia in April of 2018, which led to the resignation of newly-elected Prime Minister Serge Sargsyan. He was replaced by Nikol Pashinyan, who had been the leader of the opposition movement.

Dr. Sanjian, who is director of the Armenian Research Center based at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, studied for his master’s degree in history at Yerevan State University, Armenia (then, part of the USSR) from 1986 to 1991. Since then he has traveled often to Armenia and has maintained close ties with students and faculty.

Dr. Sanjian began his presentation by observing that since 1988, something significant has occurred in Armenia in every year ending in the number 8. In 1988, there was the Karabagh Movement; in 1998, President Levon Ter-Petrossian was forced to resign; and in 2008 Serge Sargsyan was elected as President of Armenia. These elections ended with violence as ten people were killed in mass protests on the streets of Yerevan on March 1, 2008.

Dr. Sanjian discussed the choices that President Sargsyan had at the end of his second term as President. Either he could retire from politics, or put his hat in the ring for Prime Minister.



Photo: Christine Pambukyan

Left to Right: Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian and guest speaker Dr. Ara Sanjian.

Armenia’s Constitution had been modified in 2015, from providing for a strong-President type of government, to one in which the Prime Minister would be the most important political figure in the country.

Sargsyan decided to be a candidate for Prime Minister in the April 17, 2018 elections and was easily elected. There were wide-scale protests by the population, and according to Dr. Sanjian people disliked Sargsyan for “rigging of the elections and the constitutional referendum, supporting a corrupt oligarchic system of running politics and the economy, a politicized and corrupt judiciary, and economic inefficiency leading to widespread poverty and mass emigration.” The street protests in Armenia drew worldwide attention from media outlets.

Opposition to Sargsyan coalesced around the person of Nikol Pashinyan, a former journalist, editor of *Haykakan Zhamanak* newspaper, and political activist.

On March 31, 2018 Pashinyan began a protest march from Gyumri to Yerevan. He gathered support along the way and by the time he arrived in Yerevan’s Republican Square, the movement had grown into the thousands. Under intense political pressure, Sargsyan agreed to meet Pashinyan on April 22, in a public place in front of news cameras. Hours later Pashinyan was detained by police but was later released under popular pressure. Sargsyan unexpectedly resigned as Prime Minister on April 23, and Pashinyan was elected as Armenia’s new Prime Minister by the Parliament on May 8.

Dr. Sanjian discussed in detail the major figures in the new Pashinyan administration, noting that most of them were relatively young. In fact, the Armenian Parliament underwent a complete transformation, with 75% of those elected in December of 2018, having never served in the Parliament. Pashinyan now completely controls the Parliament and also the cabinet. He has replaced fifteen of the cabinet members with new faces, who were born between the years of 1979-1989.

Dr. Sanjian concluded the formal part of his presentation by broadly discussing areas that the Pashinyan administration will need to address.

The new government has undertaken initiatives to reform the economic and educational systems. Dr. Sanjian described the economic policy as “neo-liberal,” with calls for more foreign investment and the establishment of a flat income tax.

Dr. Sanjian also outlined the foreign policy challenges of the new Pashinyan administration: Artsakh and relations with Azerbaijan; relations with Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union; relations with the European Union; relations with Turkey; and relations with the Armenian Diaspora.

As far as internal policies, according to Dr. Sanjian, the new government is seeking election law reform, reforms in the judiciary, constitutional reform, reform in the organization of the government, and a campaign against corruption.

Dr. Sanjian’s presentation was followed by a question and answer period with the audience.



The ASO prepared T-Shirts for the April 24 commemoration. The motto for this year was “We Are Still Here.”

ASO, FROM PAGE 5

electric atmosphere. Some were even lucky enough to win a t-shirt during the t-shirt toss. The ASO will definitely be in attendance for next year’s basketball season.

On Sunday, March 31, the ASO held a “Movie Night” which featured “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.” The movie is a comedy with a humorous style that Armenians can relate to. The Greek and Armenian cultures have many similarities, so it was an ideal choice for the ASO “Movie Night.” There was plenty of food and desserts for everyone to enjoy. It was a great night to relax and get away from all of the stress of a hectic student schedule. The night was full of laughter and

was just what everyone needed before starting a busy school week the next day.

On Monday, April 15, ASO members took an adventurous road trip to Six Flags Magic Mountain. A large turnout of fifteen club members joined in on the fun of the annual Easter Break trip. After an eventful car ride, the students climbed aboard thriller rides such as “Super Man: The Escape,” “Goliath,” and “X2.” It was a perfect day for the start of Easter break. The day was full of warm sunshine, laughter, and great memories.

Each year the ASO takes a trip during the Easter Break, and they will continue their tradition next year.

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Left to right: David Safrazian, Claire Kasaian, Kara Statler, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, Andrew Hagopian, and Suzanna Ekmekchyan at the “Man of the Year” banquet.

MAN OF THE YEAR, FROM PAGE 1
200 community guests, including Fresno State President Dr. Joseph Castro, local clergy, and leaders of community organizations attended the banquet held at the Fort Washington Country Club.

The evening commenced with the singing of the American National Anthem and the Armenian National Anthem, performed by vocalist Misak Israelyan and violinist Aris Howsepian. Very Rev. Fr. Dajad Ashegian, Pastor of Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church gave the invocation followed by welcoming remarks from Master of Ceremonies Dr. Dennis Shamlian.

After enjoying a social hour and dinner, the formal part of the program began. The “Man of the Year” presentation was made by Steven Adams, Commander of the Knights of Vartan, who congratulated Der Mugrdechian for his accomplishments within the Armenian community. Adams expressed his appreciation stating, “Professor Der Mugrdechian has been the backbone of the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State for over 30 years. His work in educating Armenian and non-Armenian students has greatly enhanced the education program at Fresno State. Professor Der Mugrdechian has been greatly influential in uplifting the Armenian culture and heritage.”

“I would like to thank the Knights and Daughters of Vartan for bestowing this special honor upon me,” said Prof. Der Mugrdechian. “It is an exceptional distinction and a humbling experience to be able to stand before you, my colleagues from Fresno State, students, family and friends, and community members to accept the ‘Man of the Year’ award. It is also an honor that I am being recognized at the same time as the ‘Woman of the Year’ Stefani Booroojian, who has in so many ways made such a significant impact on our community.”

Der Mugrdechian became the Berberian Coordinator of

the Armenian Studies Program in August of 2008 and has been teaching Armenian Studies Program courses in Armenian language, history, and culture since 1985.

Musical selections performed by vocalist Misak Israelyan, accompanied by Aris Howsepian and Dr. Christopher Shamlian followed the presentation. The Fresno Armenian Academy Dance Group also performed a set of Armenian dances.

Daughters of Vartan Matron Dr. Tamara Shamlian then presented Stefani Booroojian with the “Woman of the Year” award, commending her on her exemplary career in broadcast journalism and thanking Booroojian for her efforts to educate the public in the Central Valley about the Armenian cause, culture, and heritage.

News Anchor Stefani Booroojian, one of the most recognizable names on the local news scene, has been at KSEE24 for 27 years and at the anchor desk since 1984. She has been instrumental in bringing KSEE’s BuddyCheck 24 program to the Central Valley, saving lives through early detection methods and research in the fight against breast cancer. Booroojian has also reached more than 45,000 women with her news stories and serves as a role model for young people through community speaking engagements. In October of 2018, Booroojian accompanied a 30-member Fresno Medical Mission to Armenia, reporting on the humanitarian effort to help the medically underserved in Armenia.

Honorary Consul of the Republic of Armenia in Fresno, Berj Apkarian, presented both Der Mugrdechian and Booroojian with beautifully framed proclamations on behalf of the Consulate.

The evening concluded with dancing to the music of Hye Vibe DJs Shant and Armen Postoyan.

Past recipients of the “Man of the Year” award have included Richard Hagopian, Dr. Sergio La Porta, and Dr. Joseph Castro.

CineCulture and Armenian Studies Screen “Yeva”

CHRISTINE PAMBUKYAN
STAFF WRITER

From 1989 to 1994, there was a war between Karabagh and Azerbaijan over the status of the region of Karabagh, also known as Artsakh, located east of the Republic of Armenia and southwest of Azerbaijan. During this war, more than thirty thousand people died. However, despite the war ending with a ceasefire in 1994, the loss of lives and tension within the region did not subside. Many people continue to die from mines placed by Azerbaijani soldiers, who deliberately positioned them without documenting their location on maps, in order to further harm Armenians after the war.

Today, despite 25 years having passed since the cease-fire in 1994, tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan are still high over the land of Artsakh.

On Friday, March 29, 2019, at 5:30PM, CineCulture and the Armenian Studies Program screened the film “Yeva,” in the Leon and Pete Peters Educational Center at Fresno State. “Yeva” is the impassioned story of a woman suspected of murdering her abusive husband. She then flees to Karabagh with her young daughter while she waits for her passport in order to escape to France.

“Yeva,” an award-winning 2017 film written and directed by Anahid Abad, was banned in Turkey because Karabagh is portrayed as Armenian land.

With a beautiful soundtrack filled with Armenian folk songs and touching piano and string music and the use of both Modern



Left to right: Suzanna Ekmekchyan, Kara Statler, Dr. Mary Husain, Claire Kasaian, David Safrazian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, and Dr. Hagop Ohanessian at the Fresno premiere of “Yeva.”

Armenian and the Karabagh dialect, the film walks us through the real-life experiences of Armenians who have seen both the war in Karabagh and its aftermath as we unfold the secrets of Yeva and her past. From the hospitality of the locals, to a wedding ceremony and later a funeral, the film perfectly encompasses the life of those who live in a war-zone, especially those in Karabagh.

Overall, the film was personal, sincere, and soul-stirring. Anyone planning to see the film should be advised to bring a box of tissues and prepare for a cliff-hanger ending typical of Iranian films.

Abad, born in an Armenian family in Tehran, Iran in 1969, was inspired to write and direct “Yeva” because of her own feeling of living as a minority in Iran and being seen as an outsider. Abad wrote, directed, and co-produced the movie and even traveled to Karabakh to film this authentically Armenian movie

with an Iranian twist.

As a member of the Central Board of Assistant Directors and Program Planners Institute of Iran Cinema since 2006, and later head since 2010, Abad is working on a few more projects with Iranian Armenians.

CineCulture is a film series provider, campus club, and class with the goal of creating bridges in culture through film and dialogue. Every semester, for the past twelve years, CineCulture and the Armenian Studies Program have worked together to bring Armenian-themed movies to Fresno State and the community at large.

Dr. Mary Husain, CineCulture’s club adviser and instructor was actually a student in one of Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian’s classes. From that first encounter the CineCulture-Armenian Studies relationship has grown to bring high quality Armenian films, at no charge, to the community.

PROVOST, FROM PAGE 1

for our University’s mission to boldly educate and empower students for success,” said Castro. “I am excited to work with him to guide Fresno State to even greater heights of academic distinction, which will help to elevate the entire Central Valley.”

Under Jiménez-Sandoval’s leadership as dean, the College of Arts and Humanities moved to a new level of excellence by introducing innovative fields, enhancing the quality of programs, increasing the number of tenure-track professors, increasing student enrollment, increasing timely graduation rates, and leading highly successful fundraising initiatives.

As he passionately believes that students thrive in multidisciplinary environments, Jiménez-Sandoval has built collaborative programs between the College of Arts and Humanities and other academic units, including a prison art project with the Dept. of Criminology, an exploration of communicative and philosophical perspectives on science with the College of Science and Mathematics, a Correctional Recreational Certificate with the Department of Recreation Administration, and Ethnic Studies projects with the College of Social Sciences.

Jiménez-Sandoval said: “I’m humbled and honored by the trust President Castro and the search committee have placed in me, and reinvigorated by the support of campus and community members.”

“I love this fertile land – one that nurtures our community in celebration of its vibrant diversity – and I love Fresno State, for its concrete potential to transform countless lives of students who become world-renowned artists, scientists, teachers, engineers, medical professionals and social servants. I’m excited to get to work on promoting student excellence, empowering faculty to inspire the next generation of leaders, and advancing strategic academic, artistic and economic innovations that will positively impact the quality of life in our Valley.”

Jiménez-Sandoval serves in a leadership role on a number of councils that nurture cultural ties, collaboration and fundraising opportunities, including: President’s Commission for the Future of Arts and Humanities; President’s Jewish Leadership Council; President’s Latino Leadership Community Group; President’s Portuguese Leadership Council; President’s Armenian Leadership Council; SE Asian Community Task Force;

and University High School Board.

“As chair of the Academic Senate, I am thrilled at the prospect of working closely with Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval, our new provost,” said Thomas Holyoke, professor of political science. “Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval has a long history of working in close consultation with faculty in the College of Arts and Humanities.” Jiménez-Sandoval moved to the Fresno region as a child and tended the family farm while growing up in a bilingual, bicultural environment.

An honors student at Fowler High, he went on to the University of California, Irvine, where he earned a double bachelor of arts (cum laude) in Spanish and history, and a Ph.D. in Spanish and Portuguese literatures.

In addition, he has professional certificates in critical theory from Cornell University, in Spanish art history from Escuela de Arte y Antigüedades de Madrid (Spain), and in Portuguese language and culture from Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Portugal).

Jiménez-Sandoval is married to Dr. Mariana Anagnostopoulos, a professor in the Department of Philosophy; they are proud parents of two boys, Arion and Leo.

ASP 31st Annual Banquet Recognizes Students

ASP BANQUET, FROM PAGE 1

Mrs. Arpi Apkarian were among the distinguished guests present at the Banquet.

Dr. Sergio La Porta, Haig & Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies, made introductory remarks. “A country’s greatest resource is its citizenry. As a parent our greatest resource is our children,” affirmed Dr. La Porta. “For the university, its greatest resources are the students.... The legacy of the university rests with the achievements of its students. Those achievements have raised the level of the university year after year.”

Prof. Der Mugrdechian introduced Interim Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Robert Harper. “This Program is enjoying national and international recognition for its undergraduate program,” said Dr. Harper. “We are proud of the more than 25 students who are now pursuing a Minor in Armenian Studies.”

Prof. La Porta introduced Fresno State President Dr. Joseph Castro, who thanked those in the audience for their support of the University. “I am so honored to be here with my wife Mary and son Jess to welcome you to the Banquet,” stated Dr. Castro. ... “Our students will be our future leaders, and more than 80% of Fresno State graduates stay in the region. The future of our region is bright.... Armenian Studies has been such an exceptional model for our new programs.”

Prof. Der Mugrdechian then introduced the special guest for the evening, General Consul of the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles, H. E. Ambassador Dr. Armen Baibourtian.

“It is a real honor for me to attend this Banquet,” said Dr. Baibourtian. “I express my profound gratitude to Prof. Der Mugrdechian for your invitation to attend this Banquet. This has been a life changing experience. I feel the positive energy of the Fresno community and my wife Yvette and son David have fallen in love with Fresno.”

Dr. Baibourtian discussed the many positive changes



Left to right: Interim Provost Dr. Robert Harper, Arlen Pilavian, Carlo Makardian, Anna Sislian, H.E. Dr. Armen Baibourtian, Fresno State President Dr. Joseph Castro, Dr. Sergio La Porta, Dean of the College of Arts & Humanities Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, Associate Dean Dr. Honora Chapman, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian at the ASP Banquet.

that Armenia is undergoing, and expressed the feeling that Armenians can not only be proud of their past, but of their present as well. Although Armenia faces many challenges, “we can overcome those challenges together.”

Dr. Baibourtian concluded his remarks by commending the students being honored for making the right decision to attend Fresno State, where they enjoy the support of Dr. Castro and the university. He also commended the role of the Armenian community for their support of the Armenian Studies Program and the students.

Graduating seniors Arlen Pilavian and Anna Sislian, who Minored in Armenian Studies, spoke about their experiences in the Armenian Studies Program.

“Participating in the Armenian Studies Program ignited a new flame in me that I felt was lost when I left Armenia. Ever since the first day, attending the Armenian Studies Program courses made me feel like I am back home,” said Sislian. “By enrolling in the Armenian Studies courses I learned many new things about Armenia. I would go home and share this knowledge with my family.”

Arlen Pilavian, graduating in Spring 2019, explained how people would question him about his choice to Minor in Armenian Studies. “Why is a plant science

major minoring in Armenian studies? Then they would ask what is an Armenian anyway,” said Pilavian. “That is the reason why I chose to Minor in Armenian Studies. Not only for my personal knowledge but to help educate people that do not know about Armenians. The Fresno State Armenian Studies Program is a prime opportunity for many to learn and express these values in our everyday lives.”

ASI Senator Hunter Sansom



The ASO Executive members at the April 24 commemoration. More April 24 photos at hyesharzhoom.com.

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, on behalf of the Armenian Studies Program, awarded both Pilavian, Sislian, and Carlo Makardian with a stole recognizing their successful completion of the Minor in Armenian Studies. At the end of the evening students were invited to be recognized and to receive scholarship certificates from the office of State Senator Andreas Borgeas and City Councilman Paul Caprioglio.

The night was a celebration of the Armenian Studies Program and the students involved in the Program enjoyed themselves by being present at one of the largest Banquets in ASP history. Every year the Banquet continues to attract more attendees.

“The Banquet was great. It was the best turnout in the history of the Program,” said Cole Egoian, a recipient of an ASP scholarship. “The Consul General



H. E. Dr. Armen Baibourtian

attended, which was an honor for our community.”

Another scholarship recipient, Michaela Walkup, was also amazed at the growth of the Armenian Studies Annual Banquet.

“I didn’t think it was going to be so big. I was very surprised at how many scholarships the Program awarded,” stated Walkup. “In the 1980’s the Program had only two scholarships funds and it has proliferated to more than twenty-five now. It’s fantastic.”

“It was nice to see everyone who was participating in the Armenian Studies classes at the Banquet,” said Mitch Statler.

The Annual Armenian Studies Banquet is a reminder of how much the Armenian Studies Program has grown since its inception. The Banquet also highlights the role of the Program and one can see the success it has brought to its students.

Throughout the years, the Program has educated thousands of students about Armenian Studies and has handed out hundreds of scholarships to aid well-deserving students.

The Annual Banquet will continue to grow alongside with the Armenian Studies Program in the years to come.



Photos right: 1) Andrew Hagopian performing musical selections 2) ASO April 23 Vigil 3) The Armenian Genocide Monument at Fresno State

also addressed those attending. The ceremony concluded with the laying of flowers.

Photos right: 1) Andrew Hagopian performing musical selections 2) ASO April 23 Vigil 3) The Armenian Genocide Monument at Fresno State

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Mr. & Mrs. Leo Pilibosian	Fresno
John & Linda Shahbazian	Parlier
Joyce Terzian	Sanger
Kirk & Kathy Yergat	Fresno

In memory of Alice Bulbulian

William Baxter and Catherine Celebrezze	Joshua Tree
Dennis F. Boos	Palm Springs
Jenifer Gigliotti	Fresno
Mark & Linda Hurst	Del Rey
Joan Otomo-Corgel	Manhattan Beach
Alberta Steitz	Fresno