

6/9/94

**An End of Year Report on the AUA English Department's  
Extracurricular and Community Outreach Activities:**

This year has brought a number of students in contact with different educational experiences through English Department activities:

1. In the Fall, we had a talk given by Ruth Larimer, of the Monterey Institute of Modern Languages, on the use of Natural Materials (videos, conversations, etc.) in the Language Classroom.

Subsequently, she has invited one of our teachers, Gayane Zargarian, to work at the Institute on a project developing a new course in Eastern Armenian for the State Department. We are very proud of Gayane's selection and we are also proud that AUA's reputation for excellent personnel will be spread throughout California.

2. Also in the Fall, there was a presentation given by Ralph Setian and Jos Weitenberg, of Leiden University, on the state of Armenology in Europe and the United States.

3. Patricia Boyle has long represented us within the local English teaching community at the secondary and university levels. She has been an important instigator in the movement for a professional English language teachers organization and for the inclusion of such an organization in international bodies such as TESOL.

She has also involved our local staff, especially Nelly Harutunian and Karine Mouradian, in the development of local English language newspapers at the secondary school level.

Now she has organized the first All-Armenia English Language Teachers' Conference, which will be held at AUA on June 18th. There will be several speakers, including Ralph Setian, and there will many workshops (often led by our local AUA instructors) on various issues in language teaching.

4. The English Department has given two extension courses: making available to the community what is normally exclusively provided for AUA students and faculty.

a. In the Fall we gave a English/Film course on the topic of American History through Popular Culture. The funding for this came through USIS and the preliminary series of 10 films covered Black Americans. We hope that this work can continue, and we have already prepared a film series looking at the History of Legal Institutions in America. (The films in this series are being shown over the summer for our local Political Science student body so that we might measure the interest in a full-blown course.)

b. We have given English instruction to the Armenian Parliament and its staff. This was both interesting and stimulating for all involved.

c. We are giving ongoing instruction to the local staff at AUA.

All of this activity allows us to hone new teaching curricula that are far more flexible and wide ranging than those aimed at the preparation of our new applicants.

5. The weekly film showings that were inaugurated two years ago had increased to two showings per week although recently they have been forced to fall back to one showing. We hope that they may yet return to their previous level despite recent difficulties with space because of the university's phenomenal growth.

Each term's fare has been thematically chosen and we have initiated discussion groups around questions raised by the films. Our showings have been popular with local teachers and have been advertised in many institutions throughout the city. They represent a very positive force in the increased awareness in American matters of local educators.

6. We have been involved in various local textbook and computer learning projects:

a. Patricia Boyle had some influence on a new text based on Aesop's Fables, which was recently published at the Mechitar of Sebast private school. There will be a workshop on the development of local textbooks at the coming conference.

b. Virgil Strohmeyer has been the advisor on a new textbook development project at the Engineering University: the project has been aided by funds from the American Embassy and from American contributors through Dr. Agbabian of AUA.

c. He has also been an advisor on Aragast B's project to develop educational software in the language learning area.

All of these projects bring attention to AUA's resources that are available to the community at large.

7. The Academy of Sciences and the Linguistic Institute have sought out the services of AUA personnel.

a. Virgil Strohmeier is the editor of English summaries of the local Journal of Oriental Studies.

b. He is also now associate editor and contributor to 'Acta Kurdica,' the only international journal on Kurdological topics. The journal will come out in August through Curzon Press in London and the part that AUA had in its conception and development will be prominently noted.

The journal is the child of a cooperative effort between the Iranistics Department at the University of Copenhagen and the Armenian Academy of Science's Oriental Institute. This connection with AUA will bring the possibility of academic conferences of international scope being held here in the near future. AUA will also receive notice in the local and London inaugurative celebrations for the journal.

c. AUA will receive some recognition in the proceedings of last year's Conference on Medieval Armenian held in Leiden. Virgil Strohmeier will be the only American at the conference hailing from Yerevan and AUA will be listed as one of the contributing institutions.

8. Recently our ever busy translator and teacher, Aram Ohanian, wrote Michael Arlen, the New Yorker's media correspondent about the possibility of coming to AUA for a lecture or even a course. Aram has translated 'A Passage to Ararat,' and has received a favorable response.

We look forward to future possibilities.

9. This year also, Mhaer Alahydroian, one of our instructors and a lawyer as well, made overtures to the local legal societies and is in

the process of creating international cooperation between the American Bar and the Armenian.

10. This winter, Virgil Strohmeyer was a member of the ambassador's committee for the selection of local Fulbright Candidates

It has been a busy year at AUA in the English Department, and besides our normal duties training some 200 applicants to the university, we have also been, I hope, a worthy member of Yerevan's wider community.

Virgil Strohmeyer

cc Russ Campbell  
Michael Kouchakdjian  
Theony Condos  
Mihran Agbabian