

her own life: "As a preteen, I was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis. Reading about medications and hearing doctors talk about treatment options caught my attention and taught me that biology is an integral part of my life. This sparked my curiosity about how the human body works and the medications that allow people to live 'normal' lives."

US Graduate Fellowships

For the 2014–2015 academic year, close to 100 students enrolled in professional, masters and doctoral degree programs were awarded nearly \$365,000 in the form of US Graduate Fellowships. Harutyun Gevorgyan, one of this year's recipients, studies agriculture extension education at Penn State University in Pennsylvania. His doctoral research concerns developing an effective extension service in Armenia by studying similar services in the United States and Italy. "I chose this field, because there are a lot of gaps in agriculture in Armenia. We need to coordinate it and manage it properly to develop sustainability of agriculture and rural development."

The AGBU Graduate Fellowship was crucial in enabling Gevorgyan to conduct research at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Washington DC during the initial phase of his dissertation research. Upon graduation, Gevorgyan plans to return to his native Armenia where he will teach at the Armenian National Agrarian University and collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture to introduce his field of research to Armenian specialists.

American University of Armenia (AUA)

AGBU is also committed to supporting institutions of higher learning in Armenia. This year, \$50,000 in scholarships was awarded to 10 undergraduate and 20 graduate students at the American University of Armenia (AUA). Stressing the importance of the scholarship program, AUA president Armen Der Kiureghian said: "We are grateful to AGBU for providing scholarship funds in support of our students. This fund allows us to admit students based on their scholastic qualifications, regardless of their financial ability to pay the tuition. Thanks to this and similar scholarship funds, we are able to ensure an economically diverse student body."

In conjunction with AUA, 2014 marked the launch of a scholarship program for soldiers and representatives of the military through the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces that AGBU will fund and AUA will implement. The program, designed to create more education opportunities for service members, provides scholarships for ministry representatives enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs at AUA. Vasken Yacoubian, AGBU Central Board member, praised the venture, stating: "The Armed Forces is one of [Armenia's] key pillars and a source of pride and confidence for Armenians everywhere. We believe that this new program will further strengthen its efficiency and capabilities while continuing to produce highly qualified officers and

professionals. AGBU is very proud to play a role in it, working alongside the Ministry and AUA."

As one of the founding organizations of AUA, AGBU has been involved with the university since its inception in 1991.

L'Université française en Arménie (UFAR)

Also in Armenia, AGBU distributed \$30,000 to 23 students at the l'Université française en Arménie (UFAR) in the form of AGBU Scholarships of Excellence. Since 2007, AGBU has covered the tuition fees of the top students in years two, three and four. During this period, more than 200 UFAR students have received assistance.



Grace Torossian

One of this year's recipients, Anatoli Chernyayev, a third year marketing student at UFAR, is grateful not only for the financial support to further his studies at the university, but also for the prestige of the scholarship on his applications to international competitions: "Fellowship committees pay a great deal of attention to the applicant's achievements. When I applied to the 2014–2015 Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (UGRAD) to study in the United States for a semester

and the Council of Europe's 2015 Youth Peace Camp in France, I know seeing the AGBU scholarship on my application made a difference."

Scholarships for Syrian Armenian Students in Armenia

AGBU also allocated \$130,000 to covering the tuition fees for Syrian Armenian university students in Armenia. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia also lent their support to the initiative. This year, the scholarships were distributed to 400 undergraduate students and 15 graduate students.



Paul Mesrop Borekjian

AGBU Armenia's interim director Hovig Eordekian sees this program as an essential step in reversing the brain drain that continues to afflict the Republic of Armenia: "In October 2013, all Syrian Armenian students who submitted the papers from their universities benefited from this program. Taking into consideration the vitality and urgency of the matter, the parties have committed to continue the program for the next two academic years. This important educational initiative will help Syrian Armenian students continue their education in their homeland and not leave Armenia for other countries."

Financed through endowment funds established by AGBU donors since the 1920s, the AGBU Scholarship Program has proudly contributed to the academic achievements of gifted young Armenians, offering financial assistance to full-time students of Armenian descent from close to 40 countries across six continents. Today, through added specialized initiatives, the AGBU Scholarship Program offers financial assistance to a broader range of Armenian students across the globe. ■