

AUA Innovations: Leading by Example (2015)

Talking Points

Educational quality – Internationally accepted standards of instruction, both in content and method. “It doesn't matter what you teach, if you don't practice what you preach.” Intellectual curiosity, integrity, service/community responsibility.

Connecting to the world – English as a language of international scientific, political, economic discourse. The goal is not to replace but to expand and contextualize local and global cultures and problems, equip students with a broader repertoire of ideas, more varied palette, cultural versatility, help Armenia claim rightful place in the world.

Tailoring the Global to Local Needs & Conditions – This is a major added value of a local, yet globally oriented institution. Contextualized study is hard to simulate outside of its environment, demands constant grounding the rapidly changing landscape within and outside the country.

Life-long learning – AUA originally focused on the “non-traditional student” and mid-career students. In today's world, we are all expected to be “non-traditional” students. Change jobs and careers several times. AUA equips individuals to learn how to learn, and become independent learners, responsible for the realization of their potential.

Community service – Human beings are not born fully actualized. We become competent through instruction and practice. Becoming competent and productive is an acquired skill, and it is not an individual skill, it is a team activity. AUA's emphasis on teamwork and participatory learning, as well as its institutional processes of self-reflective practice, program reviews, are all a training ground and model for learning to be productive, competent and creative human beings.

Community of Scholars – a university is a unique community devoted to the world of ideas: one foot in the needs of the society in which we live and the other in the global community of our disciplines. One of the achievements of AUA in these 25 years has been creating a community of scholars that bridges disciplines and fosters connections with various overlapping networks around the world. Through these networks we stay attuned to the cutting edge of knowledge and technology, and most importantly, the frontier of ignorance and the places where there is likely to be a breakthrough. That improves efficacy, efficient use of limited time and resources, and avoids wasting time and effort on errors, on repeating others' mistakes, permitting us to leapfrog to more innovative activities that can make a difference. Similarly, the ability to communicate effectively across disciplines and through various networks, including the Armenian diasporan network, is an important asset. Much time, effort and enthusiasm are lost on miscommunication. A community of scholars that can interface across disciplines with a globalized diaspora that speaks their language, literally and figuratively, is a spur to innovation.