Turkey Visit May Open Doors

A recent trip to Turkey may open doors to study-abroad opportunities for Cal U students and their counterparts at several Turkish universities.

Three Cal U employees — Dr. Daniel Engrstrom, associate provost/associate vice president for Academic Success; Dr. Ali Sezer, associate professor in the Department of Chemistry and Physics; and Elizabeth “Bessy” Bennellick, director of international programming — met in December with officials at six universities in Turkey. "Turks adore Americans, Americans," said Sezer, a native of Istanbul, Izmir, Konya and Gaziantep, Pittsburgh’s “sister city” in Turkey.

“Turkish students are very interested in studying in the United States," said Bennellick, who received assistance from the Turkish Cultural Center of Pittsburgh in planning the university visits. Currently, about 12,000 Turkish students are studying at U.S. colleges and universities. Turkish universities, which typically conduct classes in English, also are interested in hosting American students.

"Turkey is a close ally of the United States where the public has a very positive opinion of Americans," said Sezer, a native of Turkey. "Turks adore Americans, the U.S., and the values it stands for. The higher education system in Turkey is modeled after the U.S. system."

Turkey has one of the world’s fastest-growing economies and one of the highest birth rates in the world.

Gould to Lead Research Center

Dr. Gregg Gould has been named director of the new Cal U Center for Undergraduate Research.

The center will promote undergraduate research across all disciplines on campus and work to secure funding for student-led research opportunities.

"There is an effort in place to do more with undergraduate research at all state-owned (PASSHE) institutions," says Gould, who teaches in the Department of Chemistry and Physics.

"A lot of faculty and staff worked hard to develop a plan to elevate our research activities on campus."

The idea for a new research center stemmed from a two-year program funded by the National Science Foundation to integrate undergraduate research into PASSHE schools.

Cal U professors Dr. Summer Arrigo-Nelson, Dr. John Nass and Dr. Kurt Kearcher were instrumental in developing the framework for a research center on campus.

Goals of the new center include raising awareness about undergraduate research across all disciplines.

So Cool! It’s the Cal U Ice Rink at PPG Place

Skaters have until Feb. 17 to visit the Cal U Ice Rink at PPG Place, a spectacular, one-of-a-kind ice-skating rink in the heart of the Steel City. Since mid-November the outdoor skating rink has been emblazoned with California University’s name, logo and website address. An estimated 60,000 skaters annually glide across the ice surface, which is larger than New York City’s ice rink at Rockefeller Center.

The Cal U Ice Rink at PPG Place is located at the intersection of Third Avenue and Market Street, in downtown Pittsburgh. It is open seven days a week. Admission is $8 for adults, $7 for children and seniors. Skates are available to rent for $3.

The outdoor facility has become a wintertime destination not only for city residents, but also for families throughout western Pennsylvania.

"Cal U is proud to be associated with this wonderful Pittsburgh tradition," said Craig Butzin, vice president for Academic Success; Dr. Ali Sezer, provost/associate vice president for Academic Success; Dr. Ali Sezer, associate professor in the Department of Chemistry and Physics; and Elizabeth “Bessy” Bennellick, director of international programming — met in December with officials at six universities in Turkey. "Turks adore Americans, Americans," said Sezer, a native of Istanbul, Izmir, Konya and Gaziantep, Pittsburgh’s “sister city” in Turkey.

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The Board of Governors of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) has approved a pilot program that would decrease tuition costs for active-duty military members and their families who enroll in Cal U Global Online.

If the University’s Council of Trustees also approves the plan, Cal U will reduce the tuition charged to active-duty members of all military branches, as well as their spouses and eligible dependents. The reduced rate of $250 per credit for undergraduates enrolled in Global Online would match the amount that students with military ties are reimbursed through G.I. assistance programs. Graduate students would pay $399 per credit, or 90 percent of the in-state rate.

Cal U’s plan notes that “by adjusting the tuition rate to the (Military Tuition Assistance) rate, the University’s programs will be more marketable to potential active-duty military and their families. Lowering the graduate tuition to a fixed rate … allows the University to have a competitive advantage among our competitors who provide graduate online programs to our military students and families.”

The pilot program is expected to begin in summer 2014 and end in 2016, when the results will be examined. The University anticipates a 5 percent increase in overall student military enrollment during the program’s first year, and an additional 5 percent enrollment increase in year two of the plan.

PASSHE universities historically have charged the same tuition rate to all resident students. The Board of Governors last summer began discussing the possibility of allowing the universities to charge different tuition rates based on program costs. The discussion gained momentum in October, when new Chancellor Frank T. Brogan endorsed the idea of allowing the universities to develop pilot programs, according to a PASSHE news release.

Young historians are preparing for regional competition at the seventh annual California University of Pennsylvania Primary Source History Day Competition. The competition is set for 9:15 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Feb. 19 in the Convocation Center’s north conference wing. Sponsored by the University’s Teaching with Primary Sources program, in collaboration with the Department of History and Political Science, the event is modeled after the National History Day™ competition. The Teaching with Primary Sources program at Cal U is funded by a grant from the Library of Congress.

“This year’s contest theme mirrors the National History Day theme, “Rights and Responsibilities.” Participants in junior (grades 6-8) and senior (grades 9-12) divisions will compete in both individual and group projects.

Cal U faculty members, students, Heinz History Center representatives and other community volunteers will judge exhibits, documentaries, websites, performances and historical research papers.

Cal U student judges can include this service learning activity in their electronic LiveText portfolio, used by education majors to document their academic and professional development, leadership, and extracurricular accomplishments. All competitors receive certificates and prizes will be awarded.

More than 90 students from the Belle Vernon Area, Trinity, Fort Cherry, Frazier, Monessen, Sewickley Academy and Unisontown Area schools will participate.

The regional competition, known as NHD-Pit, will be held March 1-2 at the Senator John Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh. Schools in Allegheny, Washington, Greene, Fayette, Westmoreland and Somerset counties will be represented.

For more information, call Lynne Berder at the TPS office, 724-938-6025, or e-mail berder@calu.edu.
A Snowy Start
Cal U students (left) a business major, and Linda Roberts, a liberal arts major, warm up with hot coffee while shoveling through the Quad on the first day of the spring semester. All members of the Cal U community can keep abreast of severe weather alerts by registering for Emergency Text Alerts at www.calu.edu. When severe weather causes classes to be delayed or canceled, the news is also announced online and on the Cal U telephone hotline, 724-938-4507.

Professor to Lead Honor Society

Dr. Joni Cramer Roh has begun her term as chair-elect of the board of directors for Kappa Omicron Nu, a nationally recognized honor society for students in the human sciences. Established in 1900, Kappa Omicron Nu has members in 100 campus chapters throughout the United States and more than 140,000 members worldwide.

KON is accredited by the Association of College Honor Societies. Its national office is in East Lansing, Mich.

Roh has been a faculty member in Cal U’s Department of Exercise Science and Sport Studies for the past 22 years. She was instrumental in forming the University’s Nu Omicron chapter of Kappa Omicron Nu in spring 2004, and she serves as the chapter’s adviser.

Under her leadership the Nu Omicron chapter received the honor society’s Chapter Award of Excellence for the 2008-2009 and the 2011-2012 academic years. At least 13 Cal U undergraduate students have had their research papers accepted for publication in the society’s Undergraduate Research Journal for the Human Sciences.

National honor societies do more than just recognize scholarship, Roh explained. KON, for example, sponsors activities and programs including a scholar program that awards local scholarships, a fellowship and grants program that makes national awards, and an undergraduate research initiative that includes a national conference and an online journal.

In addition, Kappa Omicron Nu publishes a scholarly journal and develops educational initiatives for the human sciences. “I like the idea that I can help guide students in the health sciences professions to utilize their knowledge and creativity to share with the community,” Roh said.

“As a faculty member, I want to continue to work with the Cal U community to further educate students and faculty members about the benefits of becoming involved with a national honor society at both the local and national levels.” Roh will serve one year as chair-elect and two years as chair of the board of directors.

“Nationally, I want to try to work more closely and collaborate with the NATA (National Athletic Trainers’ Association) and other human sciences organizations, while maintaining current affiliations and the other organizations within Kappa Omicron Nu,” she said.

Turkey Visit May Open Doors for Students

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of the youngest populations in Europe, with 20 million Turks between the ages of 10 and 24. “It’s a young, dynamic, active and vibrant country,” Sezer said.

Engstrom was impressed both with the modern facilities he visited and with the Turkish universities’ strong focus on student success. A number of majors are taught entirely in English, he learned, and Turkish students typically spend a year studying English as their university studies begin.

“This makes me comfortable that our students could go to Turkey and take four or five courses in English,” Engstrom said. “And it means that Turkish students who come to Cal U would already have had English training. They might need some ESL (English as a Second Language) support, which we could provide, but they would not face a language barrier.”

Bennellik hopes to introduce Cal U students to Turkey this summer by offering a non-credit tour in conjunction with the Turkish Cultural Center.

She also is planning a summer program at Cal U designed to introduce Turkish students to academic English and American culture. “This could help lay the groundwork for semester- or year-long study abroad programs for Turkish students at Cal U,” she said.

Private Turkish universities, in particular, are eager to collaborate with schools that can provide an “American experience” for their students. Faculty exchanges also are a possibility. “These types of programs, and others, would greatly benefit Cal U as an institution,” Sezer said.

“We have a responsibility to help our Cal U students to expand their horizons, not only in terms of their content studies, but also in terms of becoming building, community and informed citizens of the world.”

“And Cal U is in a safe, family-friendly environment, which is very attractive to Turkish families. We have a lot to offer in such collaborations, and a lot to gain and learn from them, as well.”

Campus BRIEFS

Open House Programs Begin Feb. 17

Cal U has scheduled three Academic Open House programs during the spring semester. The programs are designed to introduce prospective students to Cal U or to give students who already have been accepted a chance to explore the campus. Academic Open House programs are scheduled from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 17; Saturday, March 8; and Saturday, April 5. Registration begins at 8 a.m.

Students and families who attend will learn more about Cal U’s programs of study, housing, extracurricular activities and student life. They also can talk with Cal U students, meet faculty members and tour the campus.

For more information or to register online, visit www.calu.edu. Prospective students also may contact the Welcome Center at 724-938-1626 or e-mail Carrie Piotr at piont@cals.edu.

FPDC Nominations Due

Feb. 17 is the deadline for nominations for this year’s Faculty Professional Development Committee award.

Each FPDC subcommittee — Research, Teaching and Learning, Technology, Service and Service-Learning, Grants and Contracts — offers a $1,000 merit award that can be used for appropriate professional activities.

The form to nominate a faculty member for a merit award can be downloaded from the Cal U website. Visit www.calu.edu and use the keyword “FPDC grants,” or visit www.calu.edu/faculty-staff/fpdc/grant/index.htm. Any Cal U employee or student may submit nominations. Self-nominations will be accepted.

Completed nomination forms must be received by noon Feb. 17 in the Faculty Center, Room 134, Azonkey Hall.

OSD Sets Registration

The Office for Students with Disabilities is available to assist Cal U students.

The OSD office is located in Room 105, Azonkey Hall. Office hours are held from 8 a.m. -4 p.m. weekdays. To contact OSD, call 724-938-5871 or e-mail osdmail@calu.edu.

Interested students are invited to attend the OSD semester registration meeting, contact the OSD office for meeting dates and times.

More information can be found on the Cal U website, www.calu.edu, type the keyword “disability” into the search box at the top of the homepage.

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Dinzeo Receives PSAC Top 10 Honor for Third Time

Four-time All-American distance runner Aaron Dinzeo was named to the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference’s Fall Top 10 last month. The PSAC Top 10 Awards, initiated in the 1997-1998 academic year, recognize student-athletes who have achieved a minimum 3.50 cumulative grade-point average (GPA). Recipients are selected by the league’s sports information directors, who choose only five men and five women to honor during each sports season.

Dinzeo, a junior, is the first Cal U student-athlete to receive the award three times. He was named to the 2013 winter and spring editions of the PSAC Top 10 for his accomplishments during the indoor and outdoor track and field seasons.

Overall, the Vulcans have had 28 student-athletes selected to the PSAC Top 10, with a record four selections during the 2012-2013 academic year. Along with Dinzeo, last year’s honorees were Erin Kling (women’s track and field) and Meghan Franz (volleyball).

A native of Sidney, Ohio, Dinzeo earned All-America status after placing fifth overall at the NCAA Division II Cross Country National Championships in November. He also earned cross country All-American honors with a 20th-place national showing in 2011. On the track, Dinzeo earned two All-American honors in the 5,000-meter run last spring by finishing seventh and fifth at the indoor and outdoor national meets, respectively.

He owns a 3.88 cumulative GPA with a dual major in forensic anthropology and archaeology. Dinzeo was a Capital One First-Team Academic All-American last year and has been a four-time U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association All-Academic honoree, earning recognition twice for cross country and twice for track and field.

“Aaron is an exceptional young man with an immense desire to learn and improve,” said Daniel Caulfield, head coach for Cal U’s cross country and track and field programs. “Ever since his first visit to our campus as a high school junior, I have been completely impressed by his attitude towards academics, athletics and life in general. “His passion for his work is second to none, and I’m excited for what the future holds for him.”

Cal U Name on Rink at PPG Place

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Marketing and University Relations:

“We look forward to holding some special ice-skating sessions for students, staff and alumni. And of course we’re thrilled to welcome Pittsburghers and out-of-town visitors to the Cal U Ice Rink at PPG Place.”

Cal U senior Zach Zigmund and junior Dan Coyne laced up their skates and hit the ice during the winter break. Zigmund, who has dual majors in accounting and criminal justice, said he took his girlfriend, Kelli Malarkey, into the city.

“It’s a very nice rink, and we had a good time,” he said. “Skating there was a lot more fun than shopping.”

Added Coyne, a geology major: “It was cool seeing the Cal U logo and skating outside at night.”

The Cal U Ice Rink at PPG Place is open from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 6 p.m.-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and noon-8 p.m. Sunday. The rink will be open from 11 a.m.-10 p.m. on President’s Day, Feb. 17.

A live webcam trained on the skaters gives online viewers a reminder that information about California University is just a few clicks away, at www.calu.edu. For more information or a link to the webcam, visit www. pp gplace.com.

Grants Awarded

The Office of Sponsored Programs and Research reports that:

- Dr. Katherine Mitchem, of the Department of Special Education, has been awarded a $75,000 grant from the Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust to support Cal U’s program “Supporting Training for Students with Intellectual Disabilities.”
- Dr. David Argent, of the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, has been awarded a continuation contract of $50,483 from CONSOL to continue biomonitoring and assessment of the streambank fencing installed by Partners for Fish and Wildlife at Cal U.
- Sheri Boyle, of the Department of Social Work, has been awarded $10,000 from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Partners for Fish and Wildlife at Cal U.
- Dr. Vanessa MacKinnon, of the Department of Professional Golf Management, has been awarded a grant of $3,675 from the Women’s Sports Foundation. This funding will be used to introduce 8- to 10-year-old girls from diverse backgrounds to the sport of golf while incorporating character education, life lessons and elements of the GoGirlGo! curriculum.
- Dr. Greg Golub, of the Department of Chemistry and Physics, has been awarded a $3,000 grant from the Society for Analytical Chemists of Pittsburgh. The funding will be used to acquire laboratory equipment.
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