

# THE MUSKIE QUARTERLY

VOLUME 5: WINTER 2004

## Making the Most of Your Internship Experience



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*Muskie Fellows from Armenia at Beginning-of-Program Workshop in Washington, D.C. in fall 2003*



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The *Muskie Quarterly* is a publication for participants in the Edmund S. Muskie/FREEDOM Support Act Graduate Fellowship Program. Alumni and current Fellows are invited to share their Muskie experience, expand the Muskie network, and keep in touch with program administrators. MQ strongly encourages participants to contribute to this publication by submitting essays, short articles and photographs for the following regular features:

**Perspectives** ■ Topic for Next Issue: "The Power and Value of Muskie Linkages."

**Current Fellows:** Share your stories of the professional linkages you have established at your university or through your internship. How have they helped you so far? What role do you see them playing in your future career? **Alumni:** Tell us how linkages, made through the Muskie Program, have empowered you personally and professionally. What NGOs, international agencies, private companies, and alumni associations have you connected with as a result? Describe some of the personal linkages you made in the U.S. and how the friendships affected you or continue to affect you.

**On the Move** ■ Share your promotions, awards, achievements, conference participation, new jobs, volunteer activities, and other news with the Muskie community. Include a photo of yourself!

**Muskie Matters** ■ Highlight a recent alumni event in Eurasia or an interesting program activity in the U.S.

**Muskie Pix** ■ Send us your photos from alumni events, conferences, workshops, reunions, and professional, academic and community service activities. Number your photos and include a description with the names of those pictured. Hard copy originals will be returned to you.

**Opportunity Knocks** ■ Announce upcoming events and opportunities, such as reunions, re-entry seminars, and LIGP and SCOUT deadlines, for alumni in your region.

**Topics for future issues of MQ** ■ Help us keep MQ interesting and relevant. Tell us what topics you would like to see discussed or featured in future issues.

**Deadline for submissions for the Spring 2004 issue: January 15, 2004.**

**Submission Information** ■ Send all of your submissions, inquiries, and other communication about MQ to the Moscow office of American Councils. MQ submissions must be texts in English. Be sure to include your name, U.S. university, years of study, field of study, current position, employer, city and country of residence. Due to space limitations, not all submissions can be published. All text is subject to editing.

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The *Muskie Quarterly* is sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State, and is produced by American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS in cooperation with the Open Society Institute (OSI).

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COUNCILS**  
FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION  
ACTR ACCELS

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German Abaev in the newsroom of KGTV, San Diego

## PERSPECTIVES

### Making the Most of Your Internship Experience

#### German Abaev

*Moscow, Russia  
University of South Carolina  
Journalism and Mass Communications,  
1998–2000  
Project Management Specialist  
Independent Media Project, USAID*

Halfway through my first year at the University of South Carolina, I knew I wanted an internship in broadcasting. These are not easy to get—the competition is intense. I started looking for an appropriate internship months in advance. However, being a non-native English speaker and having no previous experience in television were not helpful (I had previous experience in public relations). I mailed about sixty applications to small television stations across America whose addresses I got from Internet sites with internship information. I also applied to a dozen national and cable networks from CNN to the Comedy Channel.

As I feared, none of the major channels were interested, but two out of six small television stations were. One was a WB affiliate in St. Louis, Missouri, and the other was an ABC affiliate in San Diego, California. I decided on the ABC affiliate and, after a telephone interview and a distance English test, I was behind the wheel and on my way to California.

The three months I spent in “America’s finest” city of San Diego at KGTV Channel 10 was the best period of my Muskie experience. I interned in the creative service department and worked on television station promotions. It was there that I had other interesting experiences, such as giving tours of the station, working on television production and promotional writing.

In short, getting what you want from an internship is just a matter of making the right choices and being persistent about pursuing your goals.



#### Aida Aidakyeva

*Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan  
Ohio University  
Journalism and Mass Communications,  
2001–2003*

I started my internship research about five months in advance and prepared a huge carton of yellow stock envelopes for my applications. I don’t remember exactly how much money I spent that year for Kinkos to print out my resumes on silky paper, or how many of my American friends proofread my cover letter. I learned all too well from various career websites that everything in my application had to be perfect. And still, in April I was anxious—I had not heard from anybody! It was amazing to me that in the U.S. you have to compete for internships, which in most cases are unpaid.

Thinking that all of my efforts were futile, I started getting used to the idea of spending my summer at a lo-

cal PBS television station in rural Athens, Ohio. They, of course, would take me and let me do reports about local coffee shops or city council meetings. “How borrrrrrring!” I thought.

Then one day, David, my roommate from Georgia (who is now a television celebrity in Tbilisi), casually mentioned that a woman from CNN had called. It seemed they wanted me to be their intern. Ten minutes later I was talking to Octavia Nasr, anchor of the World Report program at CNN International, who announced that I was, indeed, to spend my summer in Atlanta, Georgia.

The internship was not what I expected, but so much more. First, I met one hundred other interns from all over the U.S. and the world, all ambitious, smart and eager to do all it takes to win over this place. One literally had to fight for every little assignment; the work itself, not the workforce, was in demand.

My assignments at first surprised me with their simplicity. I was expected to dub videotapes, transfer them from one television format to another, and occasionally file some reports. In a week, when I learned to perform these tasks with the required precision, I realized I needed to do something about my internship experience.

From then on I decided to be a constant annoyance to everybody at CNN. I asked a million questions, offered my help to all departments, and shadowed every producer of World Report.

I wanted to learn from the staff, even if most of them were skeptical educators. I went to our video editor and asked if I could stay in the editing booth with him and learn how to edit. My teacher was an eccentric

Aida Aidakyeva and Ted Turner, founder of CNN, at headquarters in Atlanta

man, who worked part-time as a bartender and never knew where to put the stress in my name, A-ida (I didn't let him try to pronounce my country). I survived his skepticism, moodiness, and criticism. In two months, thanks to him, I was allowed to edit for the air. The best praise was hearing him whisper to other video editors, "She is good." This was coming from a man who rarely praised anyone or anything.

I was also lucky, because the International Professionals Program, which is organized at CNN twice a year, was happening in July, and sure enough I was around and eager to help. Fifteen journalists from South Africa, Spain, Lithuania, and other countries came to Atlanta for a month to meet CNN executives and learn how to do television news the CNN way. As their assistant I was responsible for setting up interviews, editing their video, logistics, etc., including showing them around Atlanta and making sure they didn't get lost on Atlanta's subway. Along with them, I got to meet CNN executives, including CNN's founder, Ted Turner. I attended workshops with the best media professionals in the country and got to participate in the international news production business.

Every day of my internship I sought opportunities to do something new. I went to work in the video archives. I made my own report on human cloning. I spent hours in the control room, watching how each news show came alive. I did voice overs of tapes. On top of all that, I wrote news copy for the anchor, and almost screamed with excitement when she read what I wrote on the air, word for word.

The most amazing thing of all was the opportunity to share my experiences and feelings with a group of journalists and interns who came from different backgrounds. I learned about reporting practices in Guyana and Guinea, Ukraine and Brazil. It turned out that mass media in all developing countries have similar problems, such as lack of adver-

tising revenue, censorship, and poor training for media professionals.

This internship dramatically changed my life, and this change is ongoing, but not only because it makes an impressive line on my resume. One of my colleagues from CNN, Ember Herrick, is coming to Central Asia to work as a reporter. I convinced her that this region has tremendous potential for future media development.

We hope that together as free-lancers we will be able to paint a clearer picture of this region for the outside world. I also hope to share the knowledge I gained with students interested in television news production at Central Asian universities.

### **Andrij Ignatov**

*Kyiv, Ukraine*

*Iowa State University*

*Business Administration, 2000–2002*

*Personal Financial Representative*

*Alico Aig Life*

The motto for internship success should be "plan early." Just as you planned which classes to take in your graduate program, it is a good idea to determine which type of internship you desire. Most prominent companies and organizations start recruiting interns as early as October, many months in advance of the actual internship.

Although the job market is tough, it is well worth competing for a world-class internship experience. Since response rates are usually low, plan to send hundreds of applications and go through dozens of interviews before you get the first offer. For the best strategies and practices, contact your career advisor immediately upon arrival at your university. Cooperate with other current fellows and alumni by using on-line foreign student resources, such as [www.nashadoba.org](http://www.nashadoba.org).

I had an incredibly enriching internship during my MBA program at Iowa State University. The company I worked with for four months,

Phytodyne, Inc., was engaged in biotechnology research and preparing for the commercialization of three of their patented plant gene modification technologies. While an intern, I helped prepare the company for the next stage of financing. I invited new members to sit on the board of directors, reconstructed the business plan, prepared the private equity placement memorandum, and coordinated the development of public relations materials—practically all the tasks that a biotech startup company is faced with. Now I know how those high-tech entrepreneurs make their millions!

A final piece of advice for current fellows: Try planning your internship using available resources. Don't be discouraged when a AAA company denies you an internship. In fact, internships at large companies sometimes end up with you "managing" a fax machine instead of a high value-added job. There may be plenty of internship opportunities right in your area. Keep your eyes open!



▲  
**Lilia Kazberuk with her two U.S. "trophy" - a LL.M in International Business and Trade Law and a Certificate in Corporate and Finance Law.**

### **Lilia Kazberuk**

*Samara, Russia*

*John Marshall Law School*

*Law, 2002–2003*

Almost all Muskie Fellows have had at least one job before coming to study for a U.S. degree. So, it is nothing new for a typical Muskie Fellow to draft impressive resumes and send them out. One outlines the particular skills he or she has to offer in a given

environment, and then starts approaching target firms.

However, an internship differs from a job in that an internship's primary goal is to gain experience, which is presumably lacking, instead of selling professional services for money. So the question is, what can you offer without a basic U.S. education, having been in the country only a few months?

Most Muskie lawyers are already experts in law and can offer valuable work experience. My thought was that the U.S. employers doing business with Eurasian countries should welcome such interns. Before applying to the Muskie Program, I had two legal internships in Europe, both of which were financed by the respective governments. They were legal assignments involving Russian and Eastern European law, and my input was gladly appreciated. I had also read about some successful internships organized by the American Bar Association in 1990, when the host law firms viewed Russian attorneys as possible conduits for future business in a new Russia. Times change.

Here is what you can offer: your understanding of both common and civil law, your recently acquired skills in U.S. legal research, your experience as a seasoned domestic attorney, and your commitment to the legal profession.

When I started to research law firms with a Russian presence, it became obvious that their American practices were distant from any Russian interests. Instead, many firms announced their 'Chinese desks,' just as the same law firms in Moscow offices offered 'German desks.' The American law office reflected the big picture. I resented feeling that the Russian economy was globally insignificant and that my expertise in Russian business law was not a selling point in Chicago.

I also talked to several Muskie Fellows and alumni about their internship

search. One fellow from a top law school told me that, during the internship campaign, she sent out about sixty applications, but they yielded no desired results. Some well-positioned alumni remembered that they found internships through personal references and recommendations. The vast majority of them who succeeded in finding a place at an international law firm had no Eurasia-related assignments during their internships in the U.S. So the question became, what did they have to offer their host firms besides their home experience?

My attitude changed when I assisted American attorneys in doing their jobs. When faced with a pending petition, I looked up the available documents and after a few hours of work reported how a winning petition should be approached, what points need to be proven by which arguments, and composed a draft by myself. Finally, my version was submitted. Another time I was asked to research a disputable corporate question. In both cases, my legal skills were used rather than any particular knowledge of the subject. After that, I began to think that I could

really do worthwhile legal work in the U.S. by treating it the way I would at home. Here is what you can offer: your understanding of both common and civil law, your recently acquired skills in U.S. legal research, your experience as a seasoned domestic attorney, and your commitment to the legal profession.

I cannot provide a recipe for getting an internship with an international law firm in the U.S. Many are highly reluctant to host interns. Based on my personal research and on what I have heard from others, however, here are some things one might prefer to know in advance of an internship search.

- In the U.S., October and November are the months for a summer law internship campaign. A law student is supposed to secure an internship by the winter break in most cases. After January, the chances for a summer internship are drastically reduced. Act quickly.
- Bring an English translation of your university transcripts to the U.S. Most employers require them as part of an internship application package. Although some required courses, like 'the science of crime detection' or 'forensic psychiatry,' might look strange for a practicing business lawyer, it is best to show what courses you actually took to receive your diploma.
- Have a legal writing sample in English ready. They are not often used in job searches in our home countries, and could be difficult for you to obtain. The problem is that your first legal memoranda will most likely come during your classes in the U.S., and the search for an internship should begin as early as possible. A good way may be to translate some of your Russian coursework papers or a graduation paper into English before coming to the U.S.
- Do research to figure out which international law firms in the U.S. actually accept foreign law graduates. Few of them announce foreign associate programs, so look on their websites.
- Two weeks after sending an application, follow up with a phone call. It is one thing when a partner visually scans your letter and forgets it the next minute, and quite another when he or she is prompted to react in person. Choose a time at the end of a typical workday, when the secretaries are most likely gone.
- Most importantly, network at any cost! An insider's personal reference for a prospective intern is a powerful tool.

**Vladimir Kuryshev**

*Volgograd, Russia  
Indiana University  
Public Administration, 2000–2002  
Chief of the Economic Department  
Octopus*

One of the primary headaches of new graduate students in the U.S. is the search for available internships. They are limited. I have gone through the routine of compiling resumes, printing them on nice paper, sending them by mail (e-mail letters basically do not work), and anxiously waiting for answers with no result. Graduate students typically send between seventy and one hundred resumes and get three to five responses that match their expectations to some degree. One rule works, however: if you start early, you have more chances to get into some organization or company.

To save yourself some gray hair and to enjoy your studies in the U.S., I recommend finding a good instructor to advise you on internships and to look up his or her contacts for you. The best way to look for an internship is to go to a professional conference with your advisor where you can enjoy his or her techniques of “selling” you to prospective employers during coffee breaks. That’s what I did. I went to a conference on public administration in Washington, D.C. After two or three rounds of “tough selling,” I was offered an internship with the American Society for Public Administration and an enjoyable summer in Washington.

**Olga Novik**

*Minsk, Belarus  
Emory University  
Public Health, 1999–2001  
Program Assistant  
American Center for  
Education and Research.*

Now that my experience at Emory University is a few years behind me, I love to recall that part of my life—a time of greater responsibility and independence; a life lived anew with school, new friends and achieve-

ments. I’ve often been asked what it has given me. Every time I have to pause to think, because it is hardly possible to pick out one single thing. Yes, I have grown professionally. I learned a lot, worked with the best scientists and organizations in my field, and started a career of which I had not dreamt before. Moreover, it was an invaluable experience for me personally. Living in another culture taught me a great deal about flexibility, understanding and patience.

Apart from shaping my character, I gained confidence in my abilities and a lot of new opportunities were opened to me. As a Muskie Fellow studying international public health, I was able to intern with Save the Children in Nepal. In addition to that remarkable cultural experience, I had real-life practice in all that I had studied at Emory. I worked on two different health care projects concurrently in Katmandu and in remote communities with no running water, electricity or access to health care. I learned how NGOs operate, and I use that experience every day. After that summer, my knowledge of project cycle development and implementation was so clear that I was offered a teaching assistantship for a core course at the Rollins School of Public Health when I returned to Emory.



▲ *Olga Novik worked with Save the Children to improve the health care system in Nepal. People living in rural areas in developing countries, like these Nepalese children, often have little or no access to health care.*

Another memory of my school years is playing fullback on Emory’s soccer team and our victory in the university championship in 2001. In short, if I had to choose one thing to describe what the Muskie Program granted me, I would say that it has opened a door to the world and to my self-realization.

## Increasing Your Employability: Working Effectively with Recruiting Agencies

**Irina Shestakova**

*Syracuse University  
Public Administration, 1997–1998  
Compensation Manager  
Washington Post*

*Irina continues her series of articles on career development and job search strategies*

My friend is a compensation manager for a large multinational company, which has production facilities and distribution chains throughout Russia. She used to be a payroll accountant, but then she realized that she did not like dealing with numbers all day long. The recruiter who found her the payroll accounting job recommended that she try a career in human resources (HR) management, specifically in compensation. The same recruiter placed her in her first HR job. The recruiter’s advice proved to be invaluable, because my friend truly enjoys working in HR, and her career development is pretty remarkable. Needless to say, my friend believes in working with and through recruiters. She believes that cooperation with recruiting firms pays dividends. All her job offers have come through recruiting firms, including her job as a compensation manager.

Another success story is that of an FSA Undergraduate Program Alumnus, Mikhail. After spending a year at a U.S. college, where he specialized in finance, he returned to Russia to complete his program at a Rus-

sian university. He was interested in a temporary job. He met with the temporary project manager at one of the recruiting agencies that provided temporary staff to their clients. The agency did not have any temporary finance/accounting jobs at that time; however, Mikhail kept calling periodically, so the temporary project manager remembered him. When a large western computer company needed an accountant for a temporary assignment, Mikhail was the first person the temporary project manager could think of. After Mikhail completed his temporary assignment, the company offered him a full-time job in their finance department.

For many of us, experience with recruiting companies can be much less successful, sometimes even disappointing. However, recruiters can be a valuable resource in your job search, and, as in my friend's case, they can even become your personal career counselors. But to make this happen, you need not only to understand how recruiting companies work, but also how to make recruiters work with you and for you.

## How recruiting companies work

**Nature of the recruiting business.** The most important thing to remember is that recruiting companies work for their clients, that is, companies, not job seekers. If companies do not have vacancies, recruiters can not place people in a job. Job seekers are the only resource recruiters have to offer to their clients; this is why competition for talented and qualified candidates is very high among recruiting companies.

**Structure of recruiting companies.** Most successful recruiting companies offer their services to job seekers for free. Usually, it is the clients who pay the service fee for filling the position, and fees range from one to three times the candidate's monthly salary, depending on the agency.

In the majority of agencies, recruiters have different areas of specialization. For example, one recruiter may focus only on financial/accounting jobs, and another recruiter may specialize in sales/marketing positions. That is why it is important to know who is the right person to talk to about a specific job.

As in other organizations, labor is divided in recruiting companies. Organizational structures in recruiting agencies are rather flat (see the chart below).



Recruiters (also called consultants in some companies) play the main role in the process of filling a position as they interact both with client companies and candidates. In many respects, they act as consultants advising clients on labor market conditions and prevalent salary levels, as well as advising candidates on what to expect from the company and how to succeed during the interview. Consultants also negotiate contract terms and conditions with the client, interview candidates, and present them to the client.

Recruiters are assisted by junior consultants whose major responsibilities are searching applicant databases (that is why they are called researchers) and reviewing incoming resumes to identify potential candidates. Researchers are also involved in interviewing applicants.

**Recruiting process.** Every time a recruiting company is looking for candidates for an existing vacancy, it goes through the same process:

1. Determining job requirements
2. Sourcing potential candidates
3. Identifying potential candidates (interviewing and compiling a shortlist of qualified candidates)
4. Presenting the candidates to the company
5. Closing (functioning as a liaison between the company and candidate to ensure a win-win situation for both parties)

The recruiting process starts as soon as the client company calls the recruiting agency and places an order. At this point it is very important for a recruiter to obtain as much information as possible about the vacancy, including job requirements, skills and qualifications the potential candidate should have, as well as any personal traits he or she should possess.

After the major job requirements are determined and agreed upon with the client, recruiters and researchers start the search process. First, they may put a job posting in a newspaper or on the Internet—this is how most of us find out about vacancies. They also search their existing database of resumes and identify applicants who most closely match the job requirements.

Small recruiting companies maintain paper-based databases, where all resumes are sorted by candidates' specialization. Larger companies have electronic databases, which significantly simplify the search process. The database that I had a chance to work with was very sophisticated. In addition to applicants' resumes, it stored recruiters' comments about candidates, such as summaries of telephone interviews or recruiters' impressions of the candidate after the interview. This database was searchable by many parameters, including key words, a candidate's specialization, type of education, specific skills and qualifications, and many others.

After interviewing potential candidates and checking their references, the recruiter presents a shortlist of candidates to the client. Usually there are

five to six candidates on a short list, along with their resumes. Most recruiting companies modify the resumes they receive from candidates before presenting those resumes to clients. For example, candidates' contact details are removed so that the company cannot contact the candidate without the recruiter knowing.

After receiving the short list, the client company starts the interview process and makes the final decision on the person they want to hire. Recruiters play an important role at this stage. Clients may ask recruiters for advice on a specific candidate, and a professional recruiter cannot allow his or her personal opinion about the candidate to interfere with their assessment of how the person may perform on the job. Recruiters also help candidates prepare for the interview and may answer questions about the company. Since recruiters may have worked with this client before, they may have insight into the company, its culture, and type of behavior that will help the candidate succeed in that environment.

### How to work with recruiting companies

Now that you know how the recruiting process works, let me give you some advice that I hope will help you avoid frustration when dealing with recruiting companies:

**Know your recruiter.** Find out the name of the recruiter who specializes in the jobs you are interested in and try to arrange a personal meeting. Even if the recruiting company currently does not have vacancies for which you may qualify, it is important to establish a rapport with the recruiter and make sure that he or she remembers you when a vacancy appears in your area of specialization. Ask to meet with the recruiter for lunch and talk about industry dynamics and labor market conditions, or ask for an independent assessment of your skills and qualifications. Remember, people like to think of themselves as experts in their field—this is true about recruiters as well. Also,

who does not like giving free advice, so make the recruiter's expertise work for you!

Another way to endear yourself to a recruiter is to ask if he or she is working on a particularly difficult search and offer your assistance to refer candidates that would meet the requirements. Be sure of your referrals and their qualifications to ensure they match the requirements. If you refer a good candidate to the recruiter, especially for a difficult position for them to fill, they will remember you.

**Enhance your chances to be found.** Make sure that your resume is database searchable. Think about recruiters' databases as Internet job banks, and on your resume, include key words that are related to your expertise. This will enable recruiters to find your resume among hundreds of others.

**One page rule.** If you submit your resume to a recruiting company in response to a job posting, make sure that the resume does not exceed one page. If, however, you send your resume to be placed in the recruiting company's database, you may expand it and provide more details on your skills and qualifications. If there is a match in the future with a specific job, the recruiting company will modify your resume according to their standards/format.

**Dress for success and be prepared.** If invited to an interview with a recruiter, prepare for it as you would prepare for an interview with a company. Dress professionally – recruiters pay attention to your appearance as much as companies do. Practice answering tough questions about your previous boss, your strengths and weaknesses, and selling your skills and qualifications. Prepare a list of questions about the employer and job requirements. Do not forget that in most recruiting companies, recruiters' impressions of the interview (and you) are placed in the applicant database for future reference, so you want to

make sure that these comments are as favorable as possible.

**Modifying your resume.** After the interview, most recruiting companies will prepare a resume (according to their standards) to match specific job requirements. Their resume is based on the resume they received from you and on what they learned from the interview. If you have good relations with the recruiter, ask to review their version of your resume (or at least the 'professional experience' section of it) before they send it to the client. This will help you ensure that the client sees all the information about your skills and qualifications that you want them to see. This is also critical when you feel that the recruiter is not very experienced and may not be able to present all your assets in the most favorable light.

**Be persistent and follow up.** If you sent your resume to a recruiting company but nobody called you, do not get frustrated. Try and schedule a personal interview (see section 1 above), and if this works, call the recruiter periodically after the interview (at least once a month) to remind them about you. Ask if there are any current openings that match your qualifications (or what the chances are that there might be any in the near future).

If your name was on the short list but the client selected another candidate, keep a positive attitude. Thank the recruiters for their help and promise to stay in touch. Since they worked closely with you on that vacancy, the chances are they will remember you for the next one. So do not forget to call the recruiter periodically.

I hope that this article was useful for your understanding of how recruiting companies work. I also hope that it will help you avoid pain and frustration the next time you send your resume to a recruiter. And finally, if you need more information on recruiting companies in Russia, you may check the following web site:



www.geocities.com/hr\_catalog. In the section “Russian Resources” you will find the subsection, “Recruitment” with links to major recruiting and headhunting companies. Good luck!



## ON THE MOVE

▲ *In addition to contributing to the Ukrainian legal profession, Olexiy Soshenko decided to create something beautiful in Kyiv. He renovated his old Volga GAZ-21!*

### Kyiv Attorneys

Four Muskie Alumni have moved to the newly-established Kyiv office of the international law firm, Chadbourne & Parke: **Valeriy Fedichin** (Southern Methodist University, 1992–93), **Anton Lymar** (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1996–97), **Sergei Onischenko** (Cornell University, 1992–93), and **Olexiy Soshenko** (University of Minnesota, 1996-97).

### Alexey Tikhomirov

*Cherepovets, Russia  
State University of New York at Binghamton  
Public Policy, 2002–2004*

In April 2003, during its annual meeting, the Family and Children’s Society of Broome County, New York awarded Alexey Tikhomirov the society’s Certificate of Appreciation. The award was given in recognition of Alexey’s efforts in data analysis for the Family Homes for the Elderly program and his presentation of the findings to state legislators in a white paper in March 2003.

At that time, Alexey joined Catherine Williams, executive director of the Family & Children’s Society, in a meeting with State Senator Thomas Libous and Assemblyman Robert Warner. The aim of the meeting was to lobby for permanent financing for one of the society’s programs—Family Homes for the Elderly. From late January, Alexey and Catherine conducted a detailed policy analysis of the program, which is also Alexey’s final project for his class, “Strategies for Policy Analysis.” Alexey and Catherine co-authored the white paper that illustrates the program’s ability to provide significant savings to Medicaid by providing a lower cost alternative to nursing home care.

The white paper is available at the following web site: <http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~atikhom1/finalversionofwhitepaper.htm>



### Keneshbek Sainazarov

*Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan  
University of Colorado at Denver  
Public Administration  
1999–2001*

With the support of a Local Initiative Grant, Keneshbek Sainazarov has been working to improve education legislation in Kyrgyzstan. He recently completed the draft of a secondary school education bill, which is now being considered by a working group and in public discussions.

▶ *Keneshbek Sainazarov (left) and Deputy Jangoroz Kanimetov*



### Svetlana Kulikova

*Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan  
Kansas State University  
Journalism and Mass Communications, 1995*

▲ *Public relations workshop in Bishkek*

Svetlana Kulikova led a seminar in public relations for alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. She explained the differences between public relations, advertising, marketing and journalism. The thirteen alumni who participated learned through case studies and small-group exercises that success in public relations comes from creativity, good language and writing skills, analysis, problem solving, and persuasion.

▶ *Alexey Tikhomirov with Catherine R. Williams, executive director of the Family and Children’s Society of Broome County, and State Senator Thomas Libous.*





## MUSKIE MATTERS

### American Alumni Club of Kazakhstan Helps Muskie Applicants

On October 3, 2003, at the University of International Business, Muskie Alumni shared with potential Muskie applicants their insights and experience about passing the first round of the competition. Opening remarks were delivered by Zachary Thomas, new country director of American Councils, Kazakhstan, and Elmira Abdikarimova, president of the American Alumni Club (AAC).

Elmira spoke about the AAC, which is a grass-roots initiative by alumni who obtained undergraduate and graduate degrees in the U.S. The AAC has been active for more than two years with the goal of making a difference in the community. Members of the club represent local and international companies and organizations operating in Kazakhstan. They work in commercial and investment banks, law firms, international organizations, oil and gas companies, production entities, pension funds, NGOs, and IT companies. As part of their activities, Muskie Alumni of the AAC reach out to potential applicants, program semifinalists, and new fellows.

At the help session, seventy potential Muskie applicants got information on the following issues:

- how to fill out the application form (Yulia Mitrofanskaya, American University, Law, 1998–99)
- recommendation letters (Dana Ospanova, Southern Methodist University, Economics, 1996–98)

- how to write a statement of purpose (Dmitriy Zhukov, SUNY Binghamton, Business Administration, 1998–2000)

In addition to the presentations, Muskie Alumni and American Councils staff fielded extensive questions from the audience.

The help session provided an opportunity for potential applicants to network with Muskie Alumni and to share stories and learn techniques for completing the application.

### St. Petersburg Alumni WOW Northwest Russia

*The Northwest Alumni Association in St. Petersburg, Russia has a tradition of traversing boundaries in outreach efforts known as WOW—Workshop on Wheels, Workshop on Wings, and Workshop on Water. Read about the two most recent WOW events below!*

#### Workshop On Wings—Syktyvkar

The goals of WOW Syktyvkar were to give alumni an opportunity to share their experience and knowledge with university teachers; to promote new approaches to education and interactive methods of teaching; and to promote U.S. government-sponsored programs in the regions.

The seminar, English for Specific Purposes: Teacher Development Issues, was hosted by Ludmila Kuznetsova (Rutgers University, Public Administration, 1992–94), senior lecturer of English for the Social Disciplines Department at St. Petersburg State University. Fifteen teachers from Syktyvkar State University, the Pedagogical Institute, the Lesnoy Institute, and other institutes of higher education, as well as a few school teachers, attended the seminar.

At the seminar the participants discussed issues crucial for today's schools: how to make education more efficient; how to involve students in the educational process; how to increase students' responsibilities; and how to make students more active and motivated.

The seminar followed a lecture on higher education programs by American Councils Alumni Coordinator Laysan Mirzagitova. Ludmila Kuznetsova assisted by answering attendees' questions and sharing her experience as a program participant.

The participants liked the seminar very much, recognizing that the topic of the seminar was important and interesting. One trainer's observation was interesting and rather unexpected: school teachers seemed more mobile and were using a greater variety of interactive methods in their classrooms than were their colleagues from the universities. This demonstrates that such seminars are very topical for the university teachers.



▲ *Marina Danilova (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Library and Information Science, 1999–2000) at the lecture in Petrozavodsk*

#### Workshop On Wheels—Karelia

In Karelia, WOW was a six-day project consisting of several events: an alumni networking meeting, workshops, lectures and trainings by St. Petersburg and Petrozavodsk alumni, and a lecture on higher education programs. Three alumni from St. Petersburg, Natalia Silantieva (Ohio

University, Journalism and Mass Communications, 2000–01), Ludmila Kuznetsova (Rutgers University, Public Administration, 1992–94), and Anna Menshchikova (JFDP), traveled by minivan from St. Petersburg to Karelia to conduct seminars in three Karelian cities, accompanied by Laysan Mirzagitova.

In Petrozavodsk, a lecture on the Muskie Graduate Fellowship and Junior Faculty Development Programs took place at the Karelian National Library. Natalia Silantieva and Marina Danilova (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Library and Information Science, 1999–2000) helped conduct the lecture, sharing their experiences, describing the Muskie Program, and answering questions.

The next day, three alumni from St. Petersburg and four alumni from Petrozavodsk conducted lectures, trainings and workshops in Petrozavodsk: Igor Krasnov (JFDP), Nadezhda Shablikova (JFDP), and Nadezhda Krylova (JFDP) gave lectures at the Teacher Training Institute for school teachers of English. With the same audience, Marina Vassilieva (TEA) discussed the TEA program, sharing her recent impressions with school teachers.

Natalia Silantieva gave two lectures on the role of mass media and pop culture for the students of two Petrozavodsk universities. Ludmila Kuznetsova conducted a training for university teachers at Petrozavodsk State University. Anna Menshchikova (JFDP) conducted a training session for school psychologists and elementary school teachers.

In Kostomuksha, the alumni held four workshops and made a presentation on the TEA program for local school teachers. The next day they repeated the workshops and presentations for school teachers in Medvezhyegorsk.

WOW Karelia covered a range of topics for 235 educators and students who attended the training sessions

and lectures. They included the role of mass media and pop culture (lecture for students at the Karelian Pedagogical University by Natalia Silantieva); teacher development issues (training for university teachers by Ludmila Kuznetsova); developing intercultural communication skills in English classes (seminar for teachers of English by Ludmila Kuznetsova); and project development training (seminar for teachers of various subjects by Natalia Silantieva and Laysan Mirzagitova).



## New Alumni Association Created in Tajikistan: TajAl

In July, the Association of the Alumni of U.S.-Tajikistan Student Exchange Programs, TajAl, held its first conference for all U.S. government-sponsored exchange program alumni. The conference took place in Dushanbe, where twelve alumni from different regions of Tajikistan and twenty-eight alumni from Dushanbe joined with U.S. Embassy officials, members of the media, guests from the government of Tajikistan, and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The aim of the conference was to unite the efforts of all alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs toward the development of Tajikistan. Alumni used the conference to elect members of the association in the regions and cities of Tajikistan, define the main purpose of the association, share ideas and discuss plans for the future, and define spheres of cooperation with the international community, NGOs, and others.



## Uzbekistan Welcomes New Alumni

Alumni listen to welcoming remarks

Recently returned alumni of the Muskie, Junior Faculty Development, and FSA Undergraduate Programs were welcomed home to Uzbekistan in October. Eight long-time Muskie Alumni joined staff from American Councils, IREX and the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent to organize a re-entry seminar. Yoshlar Radio interviewed several alumni at the seminar during a live broadcast.

The discussion of personal changes that occurred while in the U.S. was both serious and lively, with topics ranging from depression to funny stories about cultural differences. Women in the group were almost unanimous in describing how their return to their previous role in Uzbek society was nearly impossible and forced difficult decisions upon them. This sparked debate over whether U.S. government programs are designed to “Americanize” Uzbek citizens. Most alumni agreed, however, that their experience opened their eyes to new perspectives that could be construed as American, but they kept their cultural identity and only used this experience in the U.S. to see things from a different perspective.

Alumni also spoke openly about the need for democratization and social reform in Uzbekistan. Many contrasted the pace at which change was able to take place in the U.S. with the pace of changes in Uzbekistan. Change can be difficult to observe, particularly from home, and some alumni went on to describe changes that were easy to see after leaving Uzbekistan for a period of time and returning.



*Workshop on Wings in Syktyvkar, Russia*



*Alumni panel discussion at re-entry seminar in Moscow*



*Muskie re-entry seminar in Moscow*



*Muskie re-entry seminar in Bishkek*



*Muskie Alumni and SCOUT Fellows Olga Denyshchuk (left) and Olena Maslyukivska (right) of Ukraine tell students about opportunities to study environmental management in the U.S.*



***Muskie re-entry seminar in Kyiv***



***Olim Khomidov and Almaz Saifutdinov of Tajikistan***



***Alexander Bryukhanov (Iowa State University, Business Administration, 2000-02) and Ruslan Nozdryakov (Duquesne University, International Affairs, 2001-03) at Muskie re-entry seminar in St. Petersburg***



***Member of Parliament David Koguashvili (left) receives Muskie Alumni Leadership Award from U.S. Ambassador to Georgia Richard Miles***



***Askar Yelemessov (Washington University, Business Administration, 1992-94) from Kazakhstan with his son***



**Muskie Fellows from Azerbaijan at Beginning-of-Program Workshop in Washington, D.C. in fall 2003**

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*CORRECTIONS: Corina Cepoi's short biography was published in volume 3: summer 2003 (pages 6-7) containing incorrect information. Corina Cepoi is the project director of the Independent Journalism Center (IJC) in Chisinau, Moldova and not the country coordinator of the Internet Access and Training Program (IATP). Also, her position at the NGO Open World House was of IJC director, not counselor, when the IJC was part of that NGO.*

*The MQ cover photos of volumes 3 (summer 2003) and 4 (fall 2003) should have been credited to photographer Benjamin Gaylord.*



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Nadezhda Sinelnik  
Public Relations Deputy Director  
IFC Project "Entrepreneurs associations development in Belarus"



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Project Harmony Inc., and its Internet Access and Training Program (IATP) has opened a new IATP Alumni Center in Moscow. The Center opened on June 1st for all ECA exchange programs alumni and serves as a place to access the Internet and meet other alumni. The Center is located in Ushinsky Library, Tolmachevsky per. # 3, (m. Tretjakovskaja). You are welcome! For more information contact Galina Angarova at [angalina@projectharmony.ru](mailto:angalina@projectharmony.ru)



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The *Muskie Quarterly* is sponsored  
by the Bureau of Educational  
and Cultural Affairs,  
U.S. Department of State  
and is produced by  
American Councils for  
International Education:  
ACTR/ACCELS in cooperation with  
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