

TOWARDS THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY



The Building of Teachers' Seminary (Astafyan str.)

Yerevan State University, has been considered Alma Mater of Armenia for nine decades. These were the years of its development and establishment as a research center. Today YSU is considered the leading educational institution in the country that can boast of the high-level education it provides, diversity of subjects taught and its

international cooperation with the leading universities and educational centers worldwide. But things were not that easy nearly a century ago. Along with the establishment of the First Republic in 1918, the idea of an independent higher educational institution was born. Hence, in 1919, May 16, the RA Council of Ministers passed a resolution to found a university in Yerevan.

It should be noted, however, that this was not the first University founded in Armenia. Education has traditionally played a key role in the life of Armenian people, and it has quite a long history, dating as far back as the early Bronze Age, when the stone observatory and 'university' at Karahundj was constructed. Interestingly enough the first universities in Asia Minor appeared in Armenia at Ani, Tatev and Gladzor, along with academies attached to monasteries throughout the kingdom. However, much of this was lost in the 16th-18th centuries, while Armenia was under the control of Persia and Ottoman Turkey, though Persia gave limited freedoms to Armenians in its territories to educate their young.

The official opening ceremony of the University of Armenia took place on January 31 on the premises Alexandropol's trade school. Over the first academic year the university had only one faculty - the Faculty of History and Linguistics comprised of 262 students and 32 lecturers. After the establishment of the Soviet Rule on December 21, 1920, Ashot Hovhannisyan, the first national commissioner of education of the Armenian SSR, gave an order to reconstruct the University. The University was soon renamed as Yerevan National University. In the following several years new faculties were established within the University.

On October 20, 1923, by the government resolution, the National University was renamed Yerevan State University. Therefore, the status and the responsibilities of the Alma Mater increased and simultaneously the requirements set before the University

became more defined. The timespan between 1960-1990 is marked in the history of the University as a period of an unprecedented development. These years saw the opening of new faculties and new scientific laboratories. One of the most remarkable achievements was the foundation of the Armenology Center. The publication of articles from the center showed the beginning of its activities.

The 1995-1996 academic year marked the beginning of the new educational process for Yerevan State University. Aiming at enjoying an educational system in conformity with the European standards YSU, as well as a number of Armenian higher educational institutions, adopted the two-level system of education.

During the past years consistent work was carried out to improve the master's and bachelor's educational programs and the development and introduction of regulations and standards related to the educational process.

Considering the provision of high level education as the main goal, the University has initiated and is currently realizing numerous academic-educational projects of university education, which correspond international academic standards and stem from the requirements of the Bologna Declaration. Armenia joined it in May, 2005.

Presently, there are 13 000 students studying in 22 faculties of the University. More than 200 lecturers out of 1200 have doctoral degrees and more than 500 have PhDs. The university has a number of core objectives among which the most notable ones are:

- To strengthen YSU's status as a Research University.

- To promote YSU's participation in the state and international academic integration processes

- To promote the establishment of an employer's institution

- To strengthen the process of the development of close and cultural links between Armenia and Diaspora.

Armenians have always regarded knowledge as a pledge for success and national prosperity. The universities and educational centers founded within the territory have always been famed for their quality education and teaching skills, and the repository of knowledge that has been accumulated during all these long years has not faded away but has reflected itself in the traditions and customs which have successfully been preserved, modernized and passed to the coming generations. Hence, as a bearer of this most important national value, Yerevan State University does its best to be faithful to these traditions and give them a new breath.