



The Alumni Newsletter

Your Guide to the State Alumni Community of Macedonia

Volume I, Issue I

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U.S. Embassy, Skopje



See what Ambassador Reeker has to say to the Alumni from Macedonia

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The State Department Alumni of Macedonia



Vilma Jovanova is head of the Goce Delčev library in Štip. Her efforts toward the advancement of librarianship in Macedonia are inspiring tremendous strides in Macedonian education and culture.

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Ron Brown Fellowship Program

Zoran Martinovski, Marija Našokovska, and Katarina Kohen are using the Ron Brown Fellowship Program to build synergy among all members of the State Alumni community.

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After travelling around the United States on his International Visitor Leadership Program, Rilind Mahmudi is now working to integrate minority groups within Macedonia.

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Read about several Junior Faculty Development Program Alumni and their success stories (Pages 5-6).

A Message from Ambassador Reeker

Dear Alumni Community,

It is with great pleasure that I share with you the first edition of our newsletter for Exchange Program Alumni from Macedonia. The U.S. Embassy in Skopje is devoted to supporting an active and innovative Alumni community. Our successful Alumni Reception brought hundreds of Alumni together, reigniting old friendships and forging new partnerships. Our goal is to see more and more State Department Alumni working together to develop and strengthen networks of other Alumni in order to expand their opportunities and even more effectively contribute to their communities. We see the newsletter as a vehicle with which you may share your stories and ideas, and a resource for each and every one of you to network, share experiences and pursue projects of interest to all Alumni.

In addition to this



“Our goal is to see more and more State Department Alumni working together...”

newsletter, the U.S. Embassy remains committed to supporting our Alumni through special programs and grants. I encourage you to stay in touch with us and with each other, and to be a frequent visitor to the Exchange Alumni website <http://alumni.state.gov>. State Alumni grant opportunities provide

you with resources to put your ideas and visions to work. Through this website, you can also interact with your fellow Alumni and further benefit from your exchange experience.

You have all partaken in an unforgettable exchange experience in the United States. So many of you have used this experience to contribute to the advancement of society by giving back to your communities through service, mentoring and volunteerism. You all have valuable experiences to contribute and an important role to play in strengthening and inspiring the institutions and the people of Macedonia. I look forward to seeing the ways in which you continue to serve as catalysts for the future development of this country.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Philip T. Reeker

This week a web page on the State Alumni website that is dedicated specifically to Macedonian Alumni members was launched. This portal will feature the latest news from your community and provide a forum for you to interact with your counterparts around the country!



Log on to the Macedonian State Alumni Webpage at:
alumni.state.gov/Macedonia

We will be hosting a competition to come up with the best logo for the new web page! If you think you have a great idea, find a computer and start creating! The winning logo will be used as the official Macedonian Alumni page seal, and the winning candidate will receive a prize.

Vilma Jovanova: The Future of Libraries in Macedonia



Accentuated by aged architecture and budding with young students from local high schools and universities, the antiquated town of Štip serves as an ideal axis for both education and culture. Perhaps this is why the city's public library – named “Goce Delčev” after the late Macedonian independence leader – has recently become a popular setting for young children and scholarly adults alike. Headed by Director Vilma Jovanova, State Department Alumnus from the IVLP program, the library now consists of several well-defined sections, along with a media-

support unit and a sizable hall which is used to host conferences and other cultural events. Vilma's vision for “Goce Delčev” is an equal access institution that promotes the development of education, contributes to professional and academic research, and meets the cultural needs of the local citizens.

Vilma derived a great deal of her inspiration over the summer of 2008 from her IVLP exchange experience in the United States where she was able to tour libraries across the country and develop her own ideas for the library in Štip. Most recently, under Vilma's

leadership, the Goce Delčev Library opened a room dedi-

cated to university students – a quiet environment, fully equipped with computer workstations and college textbooks. Vilma's ambitions, however, extend beyond the public library in Štip – her passion for librarianship has instigated hope for a nation-wide library partnership in Macedonia. Projects such as the “Info-Bus”, a mobile resource center mounted on wheels, help to bring educational materials to isolated towns. These are the types of endeavors that Vilma wishes to help implement throughout the country.

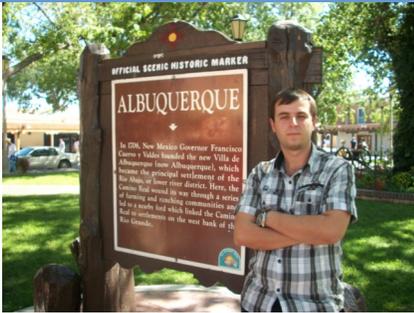
In addition to bringing about new projects, Vilma has been working hard to augment the level of service in the national libraries and to create a more inviting and intriguing atmosphere for the public. In an attempt to enhance educational allure, Vilma has helped in distributing over 20,000 donated books to 10 different libraries across the region. These books, catering to a wide array of readers, are already helping to develop and diversify the libraries in Macedonia. Vilma is fervently using her zeal for librarianship, coupled with her IVLP exchange experience, for the betterment of education and culture in the country. Her efforts are an inspiration to the Alumni community, and serve as a prime example of active commitment to the development of Macedonian society.



Vilma has posted a project proposal for the Alumni Innovation Engagement Fund supporting unemployed women from the municipality of Štip. To support Vilma's project and view others from Macedonia, log on to [State Alumni](#) now!

“...her passion for librarianship has instigated hope for a nation-wide library partnership in Macedonia”

Rilind Mahmudi: Working to Integrate Minority Groups



In September of 2010, Rilind Mahmudi took part in an IVLP exchange program focusing on education and minority rights in the United States. Rilind, an assistant professor at the State University of Tetovo, toured five different cities across America in order to become acquainted with the government, civic life, NGOs, and diversified education. The primary purpose of Rilind's visit was to learn more

about American culture, and to observe the ways in which minority rights have been upheld by the United States government. Having the opportunity to network with fellow Macedonians and Albanians, Rilind was able to employ ideas from the United States as a motivation to help in developing a more integrated and accepting society in Macedonia.

Upon his return from America, Rilind began working on a grant proposal for opening English language clubs in multi-ethnic high schools – an effort that seeks to bring young students to-

gether in one diverse working atmosphere. Drawing inspiration from his exchange program, Rilind is thus working to integrate minority groups through the use of educational programs in schools. Moreover, Rilind is now a joint-chairman of the Model United Nations Program in Macedonia. His contribution through this program is helping to develop students for future leadership roles within the country and internationally. Rilind's service to minority groups and aspiring young students is building promise for a bright future in this region.

Dr. Irina Petrovska: Bringing a Piece of Macedonia to America

Dr. Irina Petrovska – professor at St. Kliment Ohridski University in Ohrid and Bitola, and second-tour Fulbright Scholar – recently returned from a five-month exchange program in the United States. Irina spent a semester lecturing at Davidson County Community College (DCCC) in Lexington, North Carolina. Her time focused on teaching intercultural communication and ESL courses at two of the college's most prominent schools: the School of Arts, Science and Education; and the School of Foundational Studies and Academic Support. In addition to teaching, Irina was also involved in several extra-curricular pro-

grams which included enriching presentations on the Macedonian language, culture, and tradition. While leaving behind a lasting impact on the students at DCCC, Irina's most valuable contribution as a Fulbright Scholar was, no doubt, in opening a channel for educational and cultural understanding between U.S. citizens and the Macedonian people.

Aside from her time at DCCC in Lexington, Irina also spent several days in Puerto Rico at Universidad Del Este. There she was able to extend Macedonia's international channel by giving a

series of presentations at the university. Irina was responsible for laying the groundwork of future collaboration between Universidad Del Este and St. Kliment Ohridski University. Her contribution as a Fulbright Scholar has opened the door for Macedonia to have open communication with other nations across the globe, and has brought increased awareness of the Macedonian culture internationally.



JFDP

Elena Filipovska-Božinovska and Atanasko Atanaskovski: Maintaining the Active Classroom



As student-to-teacher ratios soar higher in Macedonia’s public universities, active student learning and quality of education are becoming a challenge. Atanasko Atanaskovski and Elena Filipovska-Božinovska, State Department Alumni from the JFDP program, have instigated efforts to tackle this issue head-on. In September of last year, Elena and Atanasko launched a three-month series of workshops reaching out to university-level professors. The essence of this project

was to provide ideas for maintaining active learning within classroom environments that have recently grown larger and less interactive. The workshops took place at three of the largest state-universities, located in Štip, Ohrid, and Skopje.

With a Master’s Degree in language pedagogy, and working on her PhD in active learning, Elena was able to serve as an experienced speaker at the workshops. Atanasko—university lecturer—integrated his own experiences from the classroom and from his exchange in the United States in order to impart wisdom and ideas to his fellow professors. A discussion period allotted to each workshop also allowed attendees to brainstorm new methods of stimulating active student participation during classroom lectures.

As a final summary to the workshop marathon, a conference was held at the national library in Skopje, and an informatory brochure was published and distributed throughout universities in Macedonia. Attracting 86 professors from faculties around the country, this critical project succeeded in spreading strategies for active learning to even the most remote areas in the region. Through this original and innovative venture, Elena and Atanasko – along with the rest of the JFDP-workshop staff – have shown an unwavering sense of dedication to the future of education in this country.

JFDP

Ana Lazarevska: Campaigning for Special Needs in Macedonia

Institutions of higher education are molding the future leaders of Macedonia. Unfortunately, many universities throughout the country lack the amenities needed to accommodate students with disabilities. Inspired by her JFDP exchange program in the United States, as well as her visits to other European and Asian countries, Dr. Ana Lazarevska from the University of Cyril and Methodius in Skopje has been campaigning to establish a more disability-friendly Macedonia. In conjunction with Atanasko Atanaskovski, Ana headed a project this past November that aimed to pro-

mote equal access for disabled students within institutions of higher education. The project – marked by a three-day conference – was organized by JFDP Alumni staff, and welcomed Macedonian and international professors, ministry executives, administrators, and NGO leaders. Taking place in Ohrid and Skopje, this conference outlined some of the necessities for facilitating equal access to educational institutions.

Ana and Atanasko’s vision for this venture was to lay the groundwork for legislation in regards to special needs individuals, and to establish a network of experts and officials who could help carry the conference’s ideas to fruition. With 63 active participants repre-

senting a broad collection of countries, the conference provided grounds for international cooperation, and widespread awareness of the issues. Ana’s compassion for students with disabilities has thus established a framework for equal access institutions in Macedonia.



JFDP

Aida Koci: Alumni Grant Sets Foundation for Model U.N. Project

While working as an assistant professor at South Eastern European University (SEEU) in Tetovo, Aida Koci embarked on a Junior Faculty Development Program (JFDP) with the U.S. State Department in 2003. Upon her arrival to the University of Kansas where she would be studying and teaching, Aida's preconceptions of the Midwest were transformed, and she found herself engaging with an international group of intellectuals. Aida's time at the University of Kansas provided her with a deeper understanding of American culture, and enabled her to attain valuable skills needed for her professorship.

Returning from the United States in July of 2004, Aida immediately began implementing some of the important teaching techniques that she had picked up at the University of

Kansas. She organized two international video conferences between the University of Kansas and SEEU, which sparked a long-distance conversation on law and culture. Additionally, she also took part in a project aiming to accom-



modate students with special needs. Along with other project leaders and members of the Peace Corps, Aida was able to raise awareness about the needs of dis-

abled students in public schools and universities.

Among other projects, Aida's work with the Model United Nations in Macedonia has been one of her most successful endeavors. Her commitment to organizing this project has offered a broad global experience and a bright future to over 280 students from around the country. Aida has used her experience with the JFDP exchange to impact the lives of many Macedonian youth, and in turn has created a forum for thousands of others to experience the same life-changing opportunities.

Katerina Vasileska: Bringing Entrepreneurship for Women to the American Corners



Having completed multiple presentations at the American Corner in Struga and working closely with volunteers from the Peace Corps, Katerina Vasileska has proven herself a proactive member of the State Department Alumni. Upon finishing her IVLP program in the United States, Katerina returned to Macedonia with her own ideas for

the advancement of the country's institutions. One of her main objectives was to endorse entrepreneurship among the women of Macedonia. "Women," she says, "must become more entrepreneurial and financially independent. It will strengthen their self-confidence and enable them to contribute more to their families and society." Katerina's desire is to uplift the country's women as independent characters who can have a positive impact on society.

Successfully implementing materials from the United States to present ideas for entrepreneurship, Katerina is now looking for further ways to get women involved. From leadership training and business owner awards to cross-border projects

with Albania, Katerina's ideas project a promising future for female business operators in Macedonia.

Katerina is devoted to establishing support for female small businesses owners, and for working women who have children. She plans to present family-friendly business concepts modeled after companies in the West in order to encourage women to join in the workplace environment. Katerina's efforts demonstrate the desire to create opportunities for women in Macedonia, and her contribution to the community serves as motivation to all Alumni in the region.

The American Corners are open to all Alumni for presentations and events. If you are interested in hosting something at an American Corner, please contact Renata Trajkovska-Bubevska at trajkovskaBR@state.gov

Tatjana Martinoska: The Fight for Safe Motherhood



Tatjana Martinoska is a medical doctor, participant of the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship, and an Alumni of the American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) - a program devoted to molding the next generation of world leaders. Her impressive list of accomplishments, however, is still growing as she is now pushing to establish a National White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood in Macedonia. The goals of this undertaking are aimed at

raising awareness about women and children who have died during childbirth, and at taking progressive steps toward revamping backward healthcare infrastructure. Tatjana is presently leading a group of volunteers in organizing a series of events for the upcoming months. From holding presentations at the American Corner in Skopje, to collaborating with the Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra and arranging a women's photo exhibition, Tatjana and her ambitious campaign are providing education and hope to expecting mothers.

In addition to promoting awareness about the dangers of pregnancy complications, Tatjana wishes to provide women with vital information and mate-

rials on childbirth that are otherwise not readily available in the region. In order to supply such materials, Tatjana wants to offer free prenatal classes to women in the local community, beginning in April. Along with her team of enthusiastic volunteers, Tatjana has already made strides toward lowering the national rate of maternal mortality. Her dedication to the health of women and young children in Macedonia is an awe-inspiring instance of Alumni outreach.

Vesel Memedi: Taking Time to Care for the Local Community

Dr. Vesel Memedi is a Fulbright Scholar who spent his State Department exchange period working primarily in the Center for Conflict Resolution at Columbia University. Upon his return from Columbia, Vesel resumed his professorship at the State University of Tetovo where he was able to campaign for a more cohesive and harmony-driven mindset among his students. Vesel's research on intractable conflicts has spurred a trend toward student leadership, and has helped in supporting the Model UN project in Macedonia. In addition to presenting his studies on conflict mitigation and political dialogue at

the American Corner in Tetovo, Vesel is also writing a book about intractable conflicts, which he hopes to publish in the near future.

Moreover, Vesel is a leading member of the local community in Gostivar. Having been recently elected as a counselor to the Municipality of Gostivar, he now serves as a voice for the civilians in the city. Vesel also dedicates a large portion of his time to a local soccer team in Gostivar. This undertaking has extended an excellent opportunity to many of the young, talented sportsmen of the community. The time that Vesel spends devoting

himself to the people of Macedonia—whether to students at the university in Tetovo, or soccer players in Gostivar—truly exemplifies how he has made the most out of the Fulbright program. Vesel is the type of Alumnus that the State Department is proud to continually uphold.



Ron Brown Fellowship: Creating an Alumni Bond



The Ron Brown Fellowship Program offered a fully-funded two-year Master's Degree curriculum to young professionals from Eastern Europe. Established in 1994, the program promoted the advancement of economy, democracy, and civil society in Eastern European countries. The Ron Brown Fellowship has produced many active Alumni in the region. Zoran Martinovski and Marija Našokovska have led the Macedonian Association of Ron Brown Fellows and have been passionately working to maintain collaboration and advancement within the Alumni community of Eastern Europe. In October of 2010, Zoran and Marija organized a forum in Ohrid with the goal of boosting activism and sustaining accountability among the Ron Brown Fellows. The hope for the conference was to produce individual Ron Brown Association Chapters in each of the countries hosting the program, and to provide a venue for members to exchange ideas and practices.

With 58 Ron Brown Fel-

lows in attendance – as well as guests from Italy, Hungary, Azerbaijan, and the U.S. Embassies of Slovenia and Macedonia – the forum was a success not only in numbers, but in evident project accomplishment. The three-day conference inspired Ron Brown National Association Chapters in both Slovenia and Macedonia, and laid the groundwork for Croatia, Serbia and Kosovo to follow. Furthermore, an official website for the Ron Brown Fellowship

Check out the new Ron Brown web page at: <http://www.ronbrownalumni.org>

Program was produced, a body was formed to promote the representation of the Ron Brown Fellowship in the European Network of American Alumni Associations (ENAM), and an outline for the future tactical direction of the Ron Brown Alumni Network was developed.

More recently, on February 18, 2011, a weekend conference in Mavrovo was set up as a follow-up venture to the previous forum in Ohrid. Katarina Kohen, an active member of ENAM, assisted Marija

Našokovska in organizing the conference. As a result of this project, an official Ron Brown Fellowship Network was established with headquarters in Croatia. Zoran, Marija, and Katarina's focus for the future is now aimed at creating a more inclusive Alumni network – one in which members of all Alumni associations are able to share experiences and collaborate openly. With future Alumni gatherings already in the works, the trio's dedication to improving the communication between Alumni members in Eastern Europe reflects their unconditional care for this region of the world.



Katarina, who works closely with the regional Alumni organization, ENAM, has also inspired an NGO in Serbia called the "Think Big Team". For more information on ENAM and Think Big Team, follow the links below.



Dr. Atanas Kocov: Creating a Bond for Alumni in the Region



After completing his Fulbright exchange program at the University of Washington in Seattle, Dr. Atanas Kocov – Dean of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in Skopje – returned to Macedonia to take on several duties that would contribute to the advancement of local institutions. In 2005, Dr. Kocov became the general manager of the Center for Research, Development and Continuing Research (CIRKO) – a position that he held until 2008. Additionally, since 2006, Dr. Kocov has headed the UNIDO project, which is part of the National Cleaner Production Center in Macedonia.

While Dr. Kocov has spent time teaching outside of Macedonia – both at University of

Washington and at the University of Applied Sciences in Wildau, Germany – he has also taught at the University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje. However, his extensive experience in teaching and involvement in professional bodies such as the Board of Governors of the Joint European Research Center are not the only impressive accomplishments that Dr. Kocov has achieved.

In 2005, he became the President of the Macedonian American Alumni Association (MAAA) – the largest and most active Alumni association in the country. Under Dr. Kocov's guidance, MAAA has become an active community that supports communication and collaboration between members of the State Alumni family in Macedonia. Additionally, MAAA helps to manage the administration of the American Corners, and has played a role in bringing American culture and literature to local audiences. While leading MAAA, Dr. Kocov helped to open one of the first internship programs in the country. This

program was dedicated to providing students in higher education with experience relevant to their studies, and to providing a source of cultural enrichment for trainees and their host communities.

In August of 2010, Dr. Kocov was present at a conference in Paris marking the opening of ENAM—the European Network of American Alumni Associations. His contributions to the commencement of this international Alumni network are still being seen today as ENAM continues to leave its footprint across Europe by strengthening Alumni bonds and participation. Through his involvement in professional organizations and Alumni bodies alike, Dr. Kocov has clearly shown a passion for bringing together all members of State Alumni under the same roof, in order to foster advancement in Macedonia and across the globe.



**The
Macedonian American
Alumni Association**

If you are not currently a member of an American Alumni Association in Macedonia, take this opportunity to join your peers in the ever-growing community of State Alumni members! Register with MAAA now at: <http://www.maaa.com.mk/>

Grant Opportunities

There are many grant opportunities available to State Alumni Members. For a full list of sponsored grants, log on to the State Alumni website at: alumni.state.gov. Follow the instructions below to gain complete access to grant opportunities in Macedonia!

How To Apply:



1 In your web browser, type in "alumni.state.gov" and you will end up at the State Alumni homepage.



2 In the upper right-hand corner, log in with your username and password, or select "Click here to register" if you are not yet a member. Your access will be approved by an administrator within a few days.



3 Toward the center of the screen you will see a section called "Grant & Funding Opportunities". Click this button to see available grants.



4 On the right hand side of the page, select the "Europe" region for grants. Now you should see a list of grants available within Europe. Most of these should apply to Macedonia.

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Grant	Grant Type	Deadline
In Grants, Dissertation Grants and Young Investigators Grants - The Jacobs Foundation	Study and Research Grants	Rolling
F. Szepe Endow Fellowships	Study and Research Grants	Rolling
Foundation: The International Fellowships Program (IFP)	Study and Research Grants	Varies
Gates Foundation International Scholarships Programme	Study and Research Grants	Varies
Gifford P. Sloan Foundation	Study and Research Grants	Rolling
National Venture Fund	Other	Rolling
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation	Project Grants	Varies
The Moses Foundation Major Benefactor Grants	Other	Varies
Warner Grant Foundation Dissertation Fellowship Grant	Study and Research Grants	Varies
Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program	Study and Research Grants	Varies
Rotary World Peace Fellow	Study and Research Grants	Rolling
Open Society Institute - Fellowship	Project Grants	Rolling
National Endowment for Democracy Project Grants	Project Grants	Varies
Fellowships and Grants for Advanced Study or Research in the USA	Study and Research Grants	Varies
Jan Professor Distinguished Scholarship	Study and Research Grants	Rolling
Albanian Scholarship - American University in Bulgaria	Study and Research Grants	Rolling
Orlando B. Ligonis Foundation Distinguished Scholarship	Study and Research Grants	Rolling
Scholarships for Penn State School of Neuroscience	Study and Research Grants	Rolling
Newton International Fellowships	Study and Research Grants	Rolling
Google Lime Scholarship for Students with Disabilities	Study and Research Grants	Varies
Atlas Corps Fellowships in Bogotá, Colombia	Professional Development / Training	Varies
Atlas Corps Fellowship to the U.S.	Professional Development / Training	Varies
CEU Professional and CEU Mellon Research Fellowship	Study and Research Grants	2011-02-15
Five weeks at Pennsylvania School for Global Entrepreneurship, Lehigh University	Study and Research Grants	2011-02-15
ACMS Intensive Mongolian Language Fellowship Program Summer 2011	Study and Research Grants	2011-02-15

Embassy Grant Opportunities

The U.S. Embassy, Skopje offers two types of grants through the "Democracy Commission Small Grants Program" and through "Cultural Grants". Small Grants are awarded for projects that support the development of democratic institutions in Macedonia. Cultural Grants are reserved for individuals or organizations who successfully portray the richness and diversity of American culture. For more information on how to apply for these grants, visit the Embassy website's grant section at: <http://macedonia.usembassy.gov/grants.html>

Other Grant Opportunities

Other grant opportunities can be found on the [State Alumni website](http://alumni.state.gov). The following is a list of a few grants that are currently available on the site:

- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation**
 This foundation funds a wide array of cultural and educational projects across the globe. Find out more at: www.packard.org
- Open Society Institute—Fellowship**
 OSI promotes project proposals that inspire meaningful public debate, shape policy, and inform the thinking and activities of the Open Society Institute.
- National Endowment for Democracy Grants**
 These grants are truly all-inclusive, and provide financial assistance to projects ranging from video endeavors to housing and educational infrastructure.



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Ron Brown
Fellowship Program

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The Alumni Newsletter—Your Guide to the State Alumni Community of Macedonia

Send Your Stories to Albion!



Albion Abdullai is the Information Resource Center Assistant for the Public Affairs team at the U.S. Embassy in Skopje. He heads the Embassy's social media projects, and is also the Alumni coordinator. Albion will be the primary editor for The Alumni Newsletter, and he welcomes your participation and input. Send your stories and suggestions to Albion, and your contributions could be published in the next edition of The Alumni Newsletter!

Tim Lehn: Behind this Edition of the Alumni Newsletter



Currently enrolled at Rollins College in Orlando, Florida, Tim Lehn—Public Affairs Intern at the U.S. Embassy in Skopje—has pieced together this first edition of The Alumni Newsletter. Tim looks forward to closely following the work of the Macedonian State Alumni community even as he returns to the U.S. to work on his degree this spring.



ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT INNOVATION FUND

STATE ALUMNI
YOUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Launched in February of this year, the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund extends study and project opportunities to State Alumni members. For information on projects, visit <https://alumni.state.gov/aeif-info>. Hurry! Project proposals posted before March 13, 2011 are online now for comments, participation and new members.

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