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Kosovo president returns to ASU

Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu became the first recipient of the Arizona State University Distinguished Global Leadership Award during his recent visit to the ASU Tempe campus just days after the first anniversary of Kosovo's declaration of independence and just days before he was scheduled to meet with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Sejdiu received the leadership award from ASU's Office of the Vice President for Global Engagement for his work in enhancing international understanding through his professional endeavors.

"President Sejdiu has the distinction of leading this new nation on its exciting path," said Anthony "Bud" Rock, ASU vice president for global engagement.

Sejdiu was a professor of law at the University of Prishtina when he spent a semester at ASU in 2003. He was among 17 participants from Kosovo who were part of an educational partnership administered by ASU's Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies through a grant from the U.S. Department of State. The visiting scholars attended classes in public administration and business management, and met with scholars from across the university, to develop courses and teaching methods to bolster education programs at the University of Prishtina.

ASU research aids U.S. security policy

ASU is one of seven U.S. universities selected from 211 applicants to receive a Minerva award for a research project titled "Finding Allies for the War of Words: Mapping the Diffusion and Influence of Counter-Radical Muslim Discourse."

The project is spearheaded by Mark Woodward, an associate professor in ASU's School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies. It is funded by the Minerva Research Initiative, a program that focuses on areas of strategic importance to U.S. national security policy.

In addition to ASU, the other research universities to receive a Minerva award include Princeton University, San Francisco State University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Monterey Institute of International Studies, University of California-San Diego and the University of Texas-Austin.

"Earning one of the first-ever Minerva awards is a testament to the hard work of faculty involved with the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict in advancing basic research approaches that have the potential to enhance the wisdom and effectiveness of U.S. policy with regard to the rest of the world," says ASU President Michael Crow.

The Minerva Research Initiative is a new Department of Defense program. By supporting university-based basic research, the initiative is aimed at improving the Department of Defense's intellectual capital in the social sciences and humanities. Awards are for an initial five-year period, with a five-year option for renewal.

New study could reduce risk of Alzheimer's disease

A drug used to improve blood flow to the brain also could help improve learning and memory and reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease, according to a new study by a team of Arizona scientists, including two researchers from ASU.

Hydroxyfasudil, also known as Fasudil, has been used for more than 10 years to help protect the brain in stroke patients by dilating blood vessels when blood flow is curtailed.

Now, a team of Arizona psychologists, geneticists and neuroscientists report in the current issue of the journal *Behavioral Neuroscience* that hydroxyfasudil improved spatial learning and working memory in middle-aged rats when negotiating a complicated maze. The findings suggest that hydroxyfasudil could be involved in similar cognitive processes in humans involving the hippocampus, a part of the brain that has been shown to decline in patients with age-related disorders.

"Fasudil shows great promise as a cognitive enhancer during aging," says Heather Bimonte-Nelson, a co-author of the *Behavioral Neuroscience* paper and an ASU assistant professor of psychology. "The possibility that these findings may translate to benefits to human brain health and function is very exciting."

Outstanding student earns acclaim

At age 23, Jason Bronowitz plans to complete his doctoral degree in business education this summer at ASU, and one of his recent honors

includes his research project on entrepreneurship earning "Outstanding Research Paper of the Year" by Delta Pi Epsilon. The national award typically is given to professors.

Bronowitz began his research in the spring of 2007 by surveying 120 students in the business school about their reasons for enrolling in entrepreneurship classes. The surveys, administered before and after students completed the classes, were designed to "see how we can improve our teaching, and from a program level, see how we can improve our curriculum as a whole," Bronowitz says.

He has surveyed 2,000 freshmen from across the university about their knack for innovative business practices, and he plans to continue his research by evaluating students enrolled in entrepreneurship courses at the university.

"I grew up around a family of entrepreneurs," he says. "When my mother took me home from the hospital, we went right to our family's alarm company in Hewlett, N.Y."

ASU grads choose Peace Corps in record numbers

ASU recently was named the top producer of Peace Corps volunteers in Arizona in the annual list of the Peace Corps' "Top Colleges and Universities." Since the Peace Corps' inception in 1961, 813 ASU alumni have volunteered.

ASU has alumni serving in 29 countries, with the highest concentration in Albania (three). Two graduates each are posted in Bulgaria, China, the Dominican Republic, the Eastern Caribbean, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Turkmenistan and Ukraine. The majority of ASU volunteers are working in education and business development.

Tiffany Dodson, who received a degree in history in December, learned last month that she had been accepted into the Peace Corps. She'll be leaving at the end of May for Romania, where she will teach English to secondary school students.

"It's something I've been planning since I was 17, when my mom first suggested it to me," Dodson says. "I like the idea of being able to help people and represent my country. It's a bit daunting, but it's exciting – and I'm looking forward to it."