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For further information, please contact:
Gloria Caudill, Administrator
Armenian Studies Program
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
gcaudill@umich.edu
(734) 763-0622

**A MUCH NEEDED PROJECT TO STUDY
“THE STATE OF ARMENIAN STUDIES”
GLOBALLY**

The Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in collaboration with the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research and other major institutions and organizations has embarked on an ambitious project to study “The State of Armenian Studies.”

Universities and the Academy of Sciences in Armenia have departments and institutes that deal with the subject. In the Diaspora, a large number of organizations, endowed chairs, and programs in academic institutions and outside devote substantial resources to promote Armenian Studies.

In the past the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, the National Academy of Science of Armenia, the International Association for Armenian Studies have organized conferences and colloquia to study various aspects of the field; so have individual scholars. Based on these efforts and undertaking comprehensive surveys and analyses, the University of Michigan project aims at producing a first of its kind comprehensive and global Report on the “State of Armenian Studies” and making it available to all concerned by the end of 2009 with the cooperation of organizations, institutions, and scholars involved in Armenian Studies worldwide.

That report will encompass a quantitative as well as a qualitative analysis of the whole array of activities, from existing programs and their activities, books and articles published in the last decades, programs and chairs established, to gaps in knowledge, relationship between current output and advances in the social sciences and humanities in general, and future needs.

To produce that report, the Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan invited an initial, organizational meeting of organizations and institutions that might contribute to the planning of and logistical support to the project. That first meeting was held on September 19 and 20 on the campus of the University of Michigan.

Participating in the first meeting of the workshop were representatives of the National Academy of Sciences (Prof. Ruben Safrastyan), Yerevan State University (Prof. Albert Stepanyan), the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (Belmont, Mass., Marc Mamigonian), the Society for Armenian Studies (US, Barlow Der Mugrdechian), the Society for Armenian Studies (Europe, Seta Claire Mouradian), the Armenian Research Center, University of Michigan-Dearborn (Prof. Ara Sanjian and Gerald Ottenbreit), and the Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (Professors Gerard Libaridian and Kevork Bardakjian). The Director of the Matenadaran in Armenia, Dr. Hrach Tamrazian, was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict, but pledged his support to the project. The president of the International Association of Armenian Studies, Prof. Valentina Calzolari, based in Geneva, could not attend because of a personal emergency but sent a full commentary on the questions posed and is fully engaged in the process.

During the next months the project will be made operational; Armenian Studies chair holders, program directors and individual scholars will be asked to contribute to the preparation of the draft report. A second, expanded meeting of the workshop will convene in the spring of 2009 to discuss and review the draft Report.

“It is obvious that Armenian Studies is critical to scholarship that will help us understand and interpret the Armenian past, culture and identity,” stated Prof. Gerard Libaridian, Director of the Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan and director of the project.

“But Armenian Studies also constitutes an integral part of the life of our people in Armenia and in communities in the Diaspora. Scholarship has been critical in the way the Armenian nation articulated itself in the modern era; policy and agenda making interact on so many levels. This is the time to do an inventory of our resources, think about the problems, and propose solutions,” he said. “We are delighted to have the support of all institutions and organizations concerned and I am confident we will have the support of individual scholars as well to produce as comprehensive, thoughtful, and useful Report as possible.”

This workshop is being supported by the Harry Ardashes Paul Memorial Fund of the Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.