

# CROSSING THE

BY KYNA RUBIN

**G**REEKS, TURKS, POLITICS, history, brainwashing, buffer zone, suffocation, opportunity. These are the words that dominate conversations about higher education on the divided island of Cyprus, an emotionally inflamed entity of less than a million people that lies 45 miles south of Turkey in the Mediterranean Sea. “As a mediator, I was stunned by how little had been done to deal with the raw emotions felt on both sides about the atrocities committed by both between 1955 and 1974,” says arbitrator Edward Costello in describing the conflict resolution work he did on Cyprus as a Fulbright scholar in 2005. “Those emotional wounds appear to have been passed down to later generations in the schools.”

Cyprus’s wounds are born from its complex history. The island, the size of Connecticut, is a horseshoe-crab-shaped strip of land whose strategic importance and mineral wealth historically has spawned its occupation by every power in the region. Part of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century, the island whose name means copper in Greek became a British colony in 1878 and gained independence in 1960. Unrest between its Greek and Turkish communities plagued the nation from the get-go. A 1974 coup against the Cyprus government by Greece’s military dictatorship resulted in the intervention of Turkish troops, followed by division of the island and formation of ethnic enclaves that forced

Cypriots on both sides from their homes. Today a United Nations buffer zone still runs west to east, separating Greek Cypriots in the southern two-thirds of the island, known as the Republic of Cyprus (ROC), from minority Turkish Cypriots in the North, which in 1983 declared itself the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Of the island’s 780,000 people, 77 percent are Greek Cypriots and 18 percent are Turkish Cypriots.

In an April 2004 referendum Greek Cypriots rejected the United Nations reunification initiative known as the Annan Plan, sparking ire on the part of Turkish Cypriots who had approved the plan. The next month, the Republic of Cyprus joined the European Union (EU)—an event that has brought both benefits and challenges to southern Cyprus, but little change to the trade-embargoed and economic underdog North, which is recognized by no nation but Turkey.

The fact that full-fledged universities have a short history on the island—its oldest university is only 26 years old—is tied to this troubling backdrop. Tangled political relationships with Greece and Turkey and the 1974 war inhibited demand for home-based universities. Before the 1980s Greek and Turkish Cypriot parents typically sent their children abroad to study—to Greece and Turkey, respectively, and when they could afford it, to the United Kingdom (UK), Europe, and the United States. Financially able young Cypriots continue to prefer these

Higher education on the divided island of Cyprus is both a conduit of change and, at times, a stark reminder of the difficulties that remain acute across the cultural and political divide.

# GREEN LINE



GETTY IMAGES

destinations for university education. Indeed, over half of all Greek Cypriot and 15 percent of all Turkish Cypriot college students studied abroad in 2004-2005. But the 1980s and 1990s saw a proliferation of local private institutions, which now number almost 40, and two flagship public universities, one on each side. These now provide opportunities for quality higher education at home—particularly in technical and business fields, but increasingly in the traditionally less popular humanities and social sciences.

Key to the island's ability to sustain so many colleges and universities, relative to its small population, is the same factor that has shaped its history for centuries: geography. Cyprus's proximity to the Middle East—it is 60 miles from Syria—coupled with competitive tuition rates makes it an attractive destination for the region's university students, whose fees are sorely needed. Politicians on both sides of the island are keen to educate foreign students who, beyond revenue, create goodwill once they return home. Students from Muslim countries share a special cultural affinity with northern Cyprus, but plenty of them also enroll in Greek Cypriot institutions.

## **The Genesis of an Industry**

In the South, development priorities have included goals to become a regional hub for medical, educational, high-tech, and business service centers. These aims could not be met without a more robust

higher education infrastructure. North of the buffer zone, higher education is one of the few economic engines available to Turkish Cypriots. The blossoming of private universities is due in part to Turkey's recognition of degrees provided by these northern Cyprus institutions, and to excess demand for higher education among students in Turkey, who occupy a large portion of slots on Turkish Cypriot campuses. "Higher education is more than just education for us," says Osman Ertug, Washington representative of the Turkish Republic of northern Cyprus. "It's an industry, a pillar of economic development, and a way out of our current isolation."

The result of these changes is a plethora of universities, many still in their adolescence, on an island that not so long ago had none. Quality is variable, which is to be expected in a young industry. But many institutions hire faculty who are foreign or foreign-trained and enjoy some form of exchange or joint degree agreement with overseas counterparts. Generally recognized leaders are Eastern Mediterranean University (which is state-run) and Near East University in the North, and the University of Cyprus (state-run), Intercollege, Cyprus College, and Fredericks Institute of Technology in the South. These two sets of institutions operate on completely separate tracks.

The 30-plus colleges in the South follow the Greek university system and teach in Greek, though the more prominent private schools stick to English. The official languages of the University of Cyprus are Greek and Turkish, but Greek is used most (English is limited to the English department) and, as such, is a deterrent to foreign students, admits the ROC's Ministry of Education and Culture. Greek is also the instruction language of two new public institutions—the Technological University of Cyprus (opening in 2007) and the Open University of Cyprus (2006). But the Ministry of Education and Culture notes that the laws governing these schools might be revised to include English as the language of instruction "in order to attract foreign students." All university instruction in the North is in English.

The Ministry of Education and Culture accredits institutions in the South; Turkey's Higher Education Council recognizes northern universities. Shared by schools on both sides is an adherence to authority and hierarchal systems that some foreign faculty on the island reportedly are trying to loosen. Critical thinking and skepticism toward received wisdom and authority are not as integral to Cyprus primary education as they can be in the United States, found Karin Costello, a Santa Monica College English professor who spent six months as a 2005 Fulbright scholar on Cyprus. Some of this phenomenon is

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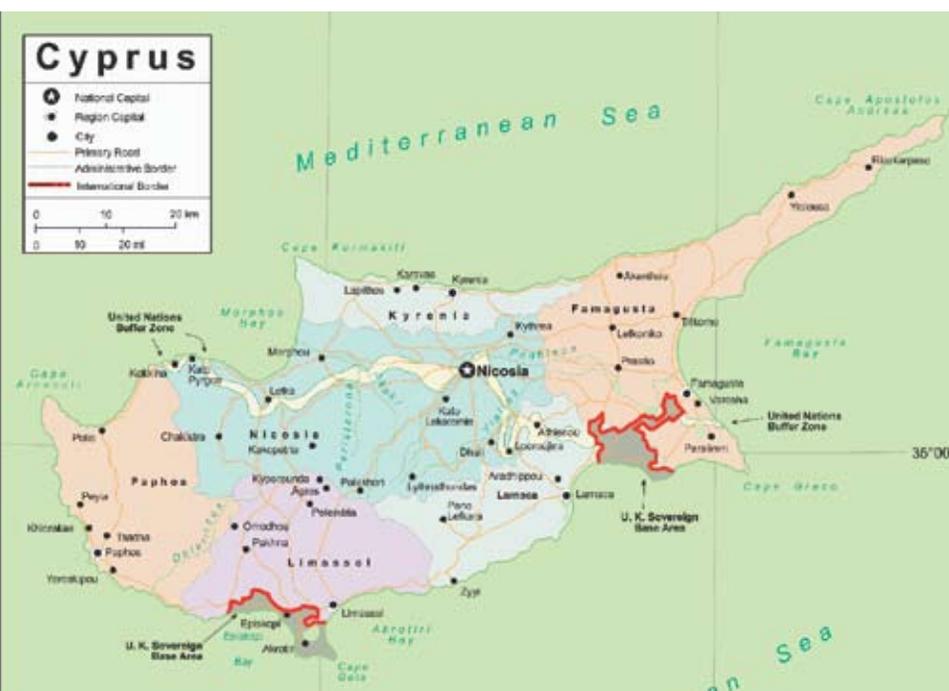
common to traditional societies, some is due to politics. "Cypriot college and university students often prefer to be 'lectured at' and given the 'right' answer," she says. Education is also colored by the "distorted perspective" that the educational systems on both sides of the green line encouraged. "Each side was taught to see their side as right, the other as wrong." Given the almost complete lack of contact between 1974 and 2003, when checkpoint restrictions were lifted, she says, "an entire generation grew up deprived of the firsthand experiences that would have encouraged them to moderate and revise these stereotypes." Efforts on both sides are now underway, she notes, to create a more balanced presentation of the island's history.

Old world mentalities, and perhaps political prejudices, may slowly give way as Cypriot academic officials seek to expand and modernize their institutions—in the South to meet EU standards, in the North to engage in a precious trade opportunity, and on both sides to bolster national pride. Part of an opening process on Cyprus would, bi-communalists hope, also include increased Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot interaction. Cyprus politics preclude official collaboration between Greek and Turkish Cypriot universities, but informal links among researchers north and south of the green line, and at conferences off the island, are not uncommon. Phone calls, e-mail, and neutral meeting spaces within the buffer zone are channels for people-to-people discussions and cooperative projects.

### **Stepping Up to the EU Plate**

The biggest news for the Greek Cypriot academic community is the benefits and obligations ensuing from the ROC's May 2004 ascension to the European Union. According to Spyros Spyrou, assistant professor of anthropology and sociology at Cyprus College in Nicosia, a slew of EU regulations that local institutions are expected to follow if they are to remain competitive will help improve higher education. For instance, many schools are expected to introduce the European Credit Transfer System, which will facilitate Cypriot students taking courses in EU universities. Other regulations, he says, require setting up national quality assurance agencies. "These are big challenges for the country and for higher education institutions," says Spyrou, who received his Ph.D. from SUNY/Binghamton.

Cyprus's EU membership has brought significant drops in tuition fees for Cypriot students studying in EU countries, says Spyrou, making higher education in places like the UK even more attractive to Cyprus's young people. "This has in some ways meant that the local colleges lost part of their market share," he says. But tempering this



The island of Cyprus is near Syria (to the east), Turkey (to the north), and Greece (to the northwest).

trend is the long-awaited passage in 2005 of a law regulating the establishment of private universities. A number of colleges in the ROC offer bachelor's and graduate degrees, but were impeded by law from calling themselves universities. Now, after what another observer calls "a long political struggle," institutions can apply for the right to university status. This means, says Daniel Hadjittofi, executive director of the Cyprus Fulbright Commission, that colleges in the ROC that meet the legislation's criteria for university recognition will no longer have to apply to the Ministry of Education and Culture for recognition one program or department at a time, as they did previously; they will now be on a par with the University of Cyprus. The new law, says another observer, results from EU pressure "to allow for fair practices in higher education and to avoid EU penalties for being too restrictive." Another spur that is expected to enhance higher education competition and improve quality is that EU membership allows any EU institution to set up shop on the island.

Spyrou believes that these changes will result in the best colleges improving their standards even more. A U.S. Embassy official in Cyprus observes that the top private colleges in the South—Intercollege, Cyprus College, and Fredericks Institute of Technology—are gearing up to become universities. And the Ministry of Education and Culture reports government moves to enrich undergraduate and graduate programs at the University of Cyprus, and to open two new universities in the next few years. Stronger institutions are likely to convince some Cypriots to stay home for college.

The Republic of Cyprus's EU club card is likely to exacerbate a six-year drop in number of Cypriot students studying in the United

States. The availability elsewhere of high-quality, lower cost options had been pushing those numbers down even before Cyprus's EU ascension. According to Ministry of Education and Culture statistics, of the 19,000 Greek Cypriot students studying abroad in 2004-2005, about 66 percent went to Greece, 20 percent to the UK, and 5 percent (925 students) to the United States. That last figure had been 8 percent of the study abroad total in 2002-2003.

At the same time that more Cypriots are now likely to head to Europe to study, numbers of European students hopping planes for southern Cypriot campuses could grow. Traditionally, however, most of the foreign student ranks of ROC institutions have come from less-developed countries. For instance, an Intercollege newsletter story about a recent international spring festival on campus highlights students from Africa, India, Iran, Pakistan, and the Middle East. Karin Costello, who lectured at Intercollege for a month, notes that these students find southern Cyprus a safe and peaceful environment. "It's expensive to live in Cyprus, especially in the South," she says, "but some of these international students find a more varied and perhaps better education in Cyprus" than in their own countries. A quarter of Cyprus College's 3,500 enrollees are international students. Spyros Spyrou says that source countries on that campus are Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Nigeria, India, Jordan, Nepal, Palestine, Romania, Russia, and Sri Lanka.

Job prospects for Greek Cypriot college graduates are good, relative to their Turkish Cypriot counterparts, because of the ROC's generally healthy economy—tourism and financial services dominate—and liberal foreign investment climate. According to Spyrou, Greek Cypriot graduates from Cyprus College, for example, traditionally have found work on the island in business and information technology—both are popular majors at ROC institutions. Further, Cyprus's EU membership grants Republic of Cyprus students the right to work freely in EU countries of their choice, enhancing their job options.

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### Operating in a Box

Unlike the Republic of Cyprus, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus functions in an economic vacuum, cut off from trade, investments, and direct flights to Europe and elsewhere because of its unrecognized status by all nations except Turkey. Absent a sizeable private sector, the Turkish Cypriot economy produces only a third of the South's per capita GDP. The North relies heavily on support from Turkey to finance its government and infrastructure. The economic disparities between the two sides of the island are stark. One Fulbright scholar describes the South as "new wealth, all brand new Mercedes without a dent," and the North as "people living in squalor."

This helps explain why Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot students seem to have such different values and priorities, at least in the eyes of foreign teachers. While in Cyprus, English professor Karin Costello edited *Cypriot Identities*, an anthology of writings by students, poets, academics, and civic leaders from both sides. Recalling a reception for the book's contributors that was held in a Fulbright meeting room in the buffer zone, she says that students from the North were thrilled to come (though a few were unable to attend because they are from Turkish settler families [those from Turkey who moved to Cyprus], who are not allowed to cross the green line). In contrast, she says, Greek Cypriots are not as interested in getting together with people from the North. Greek Cypriots are looking ahead, she says. They hold more middle-American concerns like materialism, conformity, and prosperity. Another U.S. professor notes the general distaste Greek Cypriot students have for making forays across the green line. "The kids in my poetry class regard a trip to the North as comparable to a holiday in Kabul," observes Kenneth Rosen, a poet and Fulbright professor of American Studies teaching at the University of Cyprus in fall 2005. Most Greek Cypriots simply have fewer reasons to reach out to the North. "But students in the North who contributed to my book," says Costello, "all expressed a longing to be heard. They feel locked out, invisible, and silenced."

The TRNC itself is longing for channels of communication with the outside and for revenue. Higher education in the North provides both, and therefore is treated as an essential industry, following government and tourism. Turkish Cypriot policymakers, according to the TRNC State Planning Organization, promote northern Cyprus as an "island of universities." Government finances the needed infrastructure for the schools and provides incentives for developers. As the result of considerable investment on the part of local Turkish Cypriot businessmen, who one informed observer says are making "decent profits," higher education—if not the economy as a whole—is thriving on lush campuses with beautiful buildings. The TRNC State Planning Organization calls these institutions "grow poles" for the cities and towns scattered across the North in sometimes remote locales, where their construction "changes the physical environment and contributes to social, cultural, and economic development."

Five (mostly private) universities, as well as a recently opened branch campus of Turkey's prestigious Middle Eastern Technical University, dot northern Cyprus. According to Erol Kaymak, a professor of international relations at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), other high-profile Turkish universities may follow suit. Referring to universities other than EMU and Near Eastern University, Osman Ertug admits that their quality of education does not always match their fine infrastructure. Faced with the prospect of local competition from some of Turkey's best schools, however, quality could improve.

## Opportunities and Competition

Turkish Cypriots, whose numbers include poor Kurdish farmer settlers from Turkey, alone could not sustain the North's higher education system. These universities' main student source for the 25 years of their existence has been overflow from Turkey. Kaymak estimates that of EMU's roughly 15,000 students, more than 60 percent are from Turkey, 30 percent from Cyprus, and 10 percent from overseas. (The same general breakdown applies to the 33,000 total students enrolled on all northern campuses in 2004-2005.) Why so many from Turkey? Until about a decade ago, he explains, Turkey had very few private universities; only elite students enjoyed a university education. EMU, located in Famagusta, an hour and a half east of Nicosia, was

able to accommodate the spillover because Turkey recognizes EMU-granted degrees. "The business savvy soon caught on," says Kaymak, "and before you knew it everybody was building a campus in northern Cyprus to cater to the pent-up demand from Turkey." Turkey's loosening of restrictions on creation of its own private universities will still leave business for northern Cyprus institutions, he believes.

Kaymak, who earned his doctorate from Texas Tech (Turkish Cypriots with American Ph.D.s are rare but increasing, he says), admits that student quality on TRNC campuses is a concern. The best Turkish students prefer Turkey's top schools, he says, and the best

Turkish Cypriot students may opt for education off the island, including U.S. institutions via a Fulbright scholarship. (Of the 1,900 Turkish Cypriot students studying abroad in 2004, 1,500 were in Turkey and 400 in the United States or Europe, per TRNC State Planning Organization statistics.) Kaymak compares EMU to a second-tier university in Turkey, which "isn't that bad overall." A Fulbright scholar who spent time on Cyprus was told that because of EMU's close association with the TRNC government, faculty and students there enjoy less academic freedom than those in private institutions.

Study destinations for some Turkish Cypriots have broadened by dint of the ROC's EU privileges. Due to their families' long-standing residence on the island, a subset of Turkish Cypriots is eligible to apply to the Republic of Cyprus for EU passports. Such documents grant access to UK and European universities, thus expanding study abroad opportunities for those with English or European language skills. The April 2003 lifting of restrictions on green line crossings has facilitated this process. According to Osman Ertug, applying for an EU passport calls for Turkish Cypriots to obtain an ROC identity card, which requires an ROC birth certificate. "With an EU passport people can have their children educated in England for only a few thousand pounds, much cheaper than elsewhere." Adds Ertug, recipient of a Fulbright scholarship at Central Connecticut State University in the early 1970s, Turkish Cypriots seek the passport for purely practical reasons, not "to change loyalties," because they do not renounce their TRNC passports or citizenship.





Even though an overseas education is still the more likely route for students with means or scholarships, Turkish Cypriots who remain on the island can find a global linguistic element on home campuses. The language of instruction across the North is English because TRNC's higher education is modeled after the U.S. system. "Instruction in English was a deliberate decision," explains Ertug. It provides an opening to the outside world that gives these universities "breathing space," he says, in the middle of a "suffocating" blockade. According to Greg Paulsen of Educational Credential Evaluators, a Milwaukee-based evaluator of foreign student transcripts, the relative newness of institutions in northern Cyprus has encouraged them to "hit the ground running." English is the language that most university-bound Turkish students will have studied at the secondary level, he notes, and foreign students, so central to the higher education enterprise in the North, are more likely to know English than Turkish.

Students, and to some extent faculty, from Turkey and elsewhere are indeed the main fuel for TRNC higher education institutions. Kaymak says that aside from countries in the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean University recruits students from Albania and the Balkans, Azerbaijan, Nigeria, and other parts of Africa. Some of these students may receive scholarships from Turkey's foreign ministry. Ertug is proud of the presence of 2,400 foreign students in the TRNC. They bring in revenue, he says, and help remove the TRNC's isolation. "They get education from us and learn from our unique experiences and local culture." Universities in the North aggressively market to international students, touting low tuition and living expenses. For example, the Web site of the European University of Lefke, a small nonprofit public university opened in 1990 in a relatively remote northwestern town, can be read in Turkish, English, and Chinese. Its 3,000 students come from 30 different countries; its degrees, it states, are recognized by the higher education authorities in Turkey, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and the Sultanate of Oman.

Despite the ability to attract overseas students to their shores, higher education institutions in the North feel that the ROC has been blocking measures designed to lift the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community. "TRNC-based universities continue to be shunned," says EMU's Kaymak. "This is not to say that Turkish Cypriots do nothing in their own interest." For instance, EMU has joined the European University Association, he says, and his department

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is now a member of the European Political Research Consortium. "But we are in the cold when it comes to official EU institutions, so we cannot benefit from ERASMUS," the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, or from ERASMUS-related programs.

The Turkish Cypriot community's restricted economy offers limited job prospects for local graduates. Ertug acknowledges unemployment and underemployment in the TRNC, where the largest employer, government, is bloated, and the tiny private sector—tourism and gaming—cannot support college graduates. "Some seek jobs in Turkey and Europe," he says. "Brain drain is a problem on any island, but more so in northern Cyprus."

### **Where the Two Meet**

Bicommunal contacts are growing between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, thanks in part to the 2003 easing of buffer zone crossings. At the same time, recalcitrance and toxic emotion continue to taint how the island's bifurcated inhabitants view each other and the world.

Students intermingle across communities to the extent that a small number of Turkish Cypriots are currently enrolled at colleges in the South, for instance in a Turkish Studies program at the University of Cyprus. According to the TRNC State Planning Organization, 118 students from the North attend institutions below the green line. They do so, says the state agency, to take advantage of scholarships that southern institutions offer to Turkish Cypriots, and because of expectations of getting a better education there.

Some Turkish Cypriot institutions would like to cooperate with the University of Cyprus, just as some private institutions in both communities already enjoy informal agreements that bring

their faculties together. But the Greek Cypriot government puts a damper on formal interactions, says former Fulbright scholar Edward Costello, which explains why the University of Cyprus has not yet moved in that direction. "There are many faculty on both sides of the green line who are eager to interact with their colleagues on the other side," says Costello. A host of informal professor-to-professor or department-to-department ties will continue, he says, as long as they keep a low visibility.

A large chunk of the collaboration between North and South academics and professionals that takes place does so via on-island intermediaries such as the United Nations, the Fulbright Center, and the U.S. Embassy. Mark Childs of the University of New Mexico, who

spent the first half of 2005 as a Fulbright scholar helping the University of Cyprus set up an architecture program, says a group of experts from both sides of the island have been working closely for decades on the UN's Nicosia Master Plan. They started out fixing the city's sewer system; next they created pedestrian streets in the old town, renovated Venetian walls, and restored old monuments.

While he was on the island Childs knew of University of Cyprus faculty members who set up lectures in buffer zone facilities, quietly notifying people from both sides about the events. These neutral meeting spaces, which include the UN-run Ledra Palace (a former hotel), the Fulbright center next door, and the German Goethe Institute next door to that, were "booked solid" during his time there. What Childs calls "a minor industry" of bicomunal events involving poets without borders, musicians, artists, and "civil society walking back and forth across the buffer zone" are fairly routine. The Weaving Mill, a café-film-screening-salon one block south of the green line in Nicosia's old city, is a popular gathering spot for Cyprus's small intellectual and artistic community, according to Peter Rutkoff, a Kenyon College American Studies professor in Cyprus in 2005. Cypriots from both North and South attend, as do UN workers and U.S. and European ex-pats. It is a place, he says, where "dialog and real friendships are taking hold."

Scientific fields with pressing practical relevance for all Cypriots are promising targets for collaboration. "My experience is that geologists on both sides are willing to share data and work together," says Richard Wayne Harrison of the U.S. Geological Service. He participated in a UN program on earthquake research that brought Turkish Cypriot geologists to the South and Greek Cypriot experts to the North. As well, he says, the over-pumping and salification of groundwater, a huge problem on Cyprus, has brought together hydrologists from both sides of the island.

A bicomunal group of 30 to 40 academics belong to the unique Cyprus Academic Forum (CAF), chaired by Hubert Faustmann. The assistant professor for international relations at Intercollege, just south of the green line, refers to himself as a "neutral German" who started convening meetings after a group of Turkish Cypriot academics approached him in late 2003 and he received the support of Intercollege's dean to do so. Ten to 15 of CAF's more active members meet every two weeks during the school year, says Faustmann. The organization's aim is to facilitate networking among Cyprus's island-wide academics and to encourage joint research. The expressly nonpolitical group

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has held two conferences whose very arrangements have been infused with politics. The first gathering was at Intercollege in the South; the second one, says one CAF member, was supposed to have been at EMU in the North. But Greek Cypriot CAF members were not comfortable with granting that kind of recognition to EMU (which, like all northern institutions, is not officially acknowledged by the South). So the group arranged instead an "interim" conference, held last November, which involved Greek Cypriots crossing the green line to a more neutral north Nicosia venue.

After the Greek Cypriots rejected the Annan Plan in 2004, Turkish Cypriot participation in the group went down, a situation Faustmann was hoping as of fall 2005 to reverse with the November CAF event held north of the green line. "The referendum outcome has not made our lives easier," says Faustmann. "But irrespective of what kind of future the island will have, contact and cooperation between academics from both sides is a necessity. To convince as many academics as possible of this is the task of CAF, which is still a very small organization."

### **U.S. Initiatives**

The U.S. Embassy, based in Nicosia, coordinates a wide range of bicomunal activities. On the island, the embassy provides grants for locally inspired projects such as a conference on the "Psycho-Social Aspects of Reunification" that was attended by academics on both sides. Another grant went to a bicomunal music group of university students who organized a tribute to slain journalist and musician Daniel Pearl that reaffirmed the importance of cross-cultural dialogue. The U.S. Embassy also

sponsors a summer program that brings together 30 university students (half from each community) who gather at American University in Washington, D.C. for a three-week program. Its aim is to promote collaborative leadership, civic engagement, and tolerance; the program continues after participants have returned home by requiring them to volunteer at island-wide nongovernmental organizations.

The Cyprus Fulbright Commission, which has an office in the South, a smaller one in the North, and some meeting space in the buffer zone, has for many years sponsored conflict resolution workshops and professional training that targets mixed groups of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. These programs have helped form the ranks of Cyprus's bicomunalists—individuals who are committed to bi-island contact and understanding. The Commission's complementary U.S.-based activity, the Cyprus-America Scholar-

ship Program (CASP), is administered by AMIDEAST. Kate Archambault, CASP's program director, says that annually CASP provides four-year and two-year scholarships, respectively, to about 30 Cypriot students for undergraduate and graduate study in U.S. universities. The program requires participants to attend a week-long conflict resolution workshop during their stay.

Christiana Varda, a Greek Cypriot CASP recipient who graduated from Penn State in December with a B.A. in journalism and English, attended two of these bicomunal workshops. Although getting to know North Cypriot students in an intimate setting improved her views about Turkish Cypriots, she says the experience "rounded" rather than changed the views of the Greek Cypriots she knows. "It says something that they attended the workshop at all," says Varda, who explains that her fellow Greek Cypriots have been "brainwashed" by history books with photos of northern Cyprus whose captions read "We will never forget." Open minds about Cyprus have to be formed early, she believes. She argues that CASP's summer camps for Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot high school students probably bring the most bang for the buck by reaching young people "who may not be as influenced yet" in their thinking about the Cyprus situation.

That situation being what it is, even CASP is not immune to Cypriot politics. Up to now, says Kate Archambault, CASP scholarship

slots have been granted to Greek and Turkish Cypriot students on the basis of a demographic ratio on the island of four Greek Cypriots to one Turkish Cypriot. Starting with applicants for U.S. study in 2006-2007, these traditional ratios have been abolished; applicants will be selected on merit and need alone. Why the change, which was bound to cause a stir? Several former Fulbright scholars attribute it to a U.S. government desire to level the playing field—and reward Turkish Cypriots for voting yes to the Annan Plan—by granting more aid to students from the North, who are typically more needy than those in the South.

### What's Ahead

Daniel Hadjittofi, the Greek Cypriot head of Cyprus's Fulbright Commission, has worked for years to bring the two communities together. He says that Greek and Turkish Cypriots are "reinventing their traditional relationships" and, he wants to believe, rediscovering their common humanity. He argues that politically Cyprus is in a transition period where global realities will bring about positive changes in the local scene, with the catalyst being Cyprus's EU ascension. Cypriots island-wide are extremely hospitable to millions of tourists every year, he observes. "It is only normal that they would apply similar principles to each other." **IE**

**KYNA RUBIN** is a regular contributor to *IE*.

## THEY'RE NAFSA NEW CENTURY CIRCLE MEMBERS



**JANENE OETTEL AND LARRY BELL**

### LARRY BELL

University of Colorado, Boulder

NAFSA MEMBER SINCE: 1984

**FAVORITE PLACE TO VISIT:** The next place I see for the first time. However, there are also two places I have already seen - Mongolia, since at the time of my visit it was a place little visited by Americans, and Viet Nam before 1990 for similar reasons

**MOST MEMORABLE STUDENT:** Too many to name, particularly from my days as an ESL teacher. Their desire to learn new things and make life changes using the tools they were offered always kept me young and interested in the next student to come along

**FAVORITE NAFSA CONFERENCE SITE:** Denver - since I co-chaired local arrangements there, I can say nothing other - although Snowmass and the massive June snowstorm was a real treat if you weren't on local arrangements!

**OTHER THAN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION, WHAT IS YOUR FANTASY CAREER:** Professional baseball player (non-steroidal, but overpaid)

**WHAT DO YOU KNOW NOW THAT YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER:** This list is too long to publish here; however, on the short list is the idea that people really appreciate being helped and how rewarding it is to provide that help

**WHY DID YOU PLEDGE TO THE NEW CENTURY CIRCLE:** It is a substantive way to give back to the profession and the association that have given me so much in my career

### JANENE OETTEL

Towson University

NAFSA MEMBER SINCE: 1989

**FAVORITE PLACE TO VISIT:** Anywhere I have never been, with interesting new people and ways of enjoying life, with different kinds of music, food, craft, art

**MOST MEMORABLE STUDENT:** Naming one student is as difficult as selecting a "favorite child." A rich reward of this work is the hundreds of impressive, memorable students who enter our lives. So many have impressed me with their perseverance, adaptability, courage, and sense of fun

**FAVORITE NAFSA CONFERENCE SITE:** New Orleans, as I now wonder if it will ever be the same again

**OTHER THAN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION, WHAT IS YOUR FANTASY CAREER:** Fantasy careers would be running a cooking school, or being paid to create floral designs! Maybe one day.....

**WHAT DO YOU KNOW NOW THAT YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER:** I wish I had known that most university faculty and staff, even beyond those with that defined role on campus, are generally pleased to provide career advice

**WHY DID YOU PLEDGE TO THE NEW CENTURY CIRCLE:** NAFSA is not just professional but also personally important. We give to organizations that match our values

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