



# AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA

BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN



**“Appreciate the allusions to local culture. Facade has interesting design elements with a nice mixture of materials, forms, and colors. Innovative planning and a joy-filled dynamic interior with pleasing symmetry.”**

—2017 JURY



Where the former Soviet Union’s eastern border met the ancient Silk Road is the new campus for the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The architecture, inspired by local nomadic traditions of mobility and hospitality, supports an American style education.

The design’s open and flexible spaces are densely woven to generate a free exchange of ideas and high energy. At the same time, AUCA comfortably accommodates its 1600 students in 125 square feet per student, which is half the median area per student at American colleges as reported by American School and University.

Students inhabit the diverse campus spaces like nomads with iPads. Faculty and administrators migrate from open office suites to communal banks of quiet meeting and study rooms. The furniture is nomadic too. Tables and seating on wheels beckon anyone to freely stage spaces.

The architecture fits its environment and culture. Pitched roofs echo nearby alpine mountains. The façade patterns recall native rugs, called shyrdaks. Central skylights operate like the crown of a yurt. Rocks gathered from the construction site clad an arcade to say “AUCA.” The building’s geothermal system for heating and cooling was a first in Kyrgyzstan. ■

## HMA2 Architects

**Associated Firms:** AKF Group (MEP), Thornton Tomasetti (Structure), Fisher Marantz Stone (Lighting), Ardak (Architect and Engineer, Bishkek), Kent Inshaat (Construction Manager)

### Design team

Henry Myerberg (Principal-in-Charge), Christine Sheridan (Project Architect), Miranda Danusugondo (Project Manager), Owen Huang (Architect), Karen Foley (Designer), Bryan Jug (Architect), Aida Sulova (Designer), Tucker Viemeister and Alexey Lysogorov (Graphic Design), Karen Davidov (Designer)

### Client

American University of Central Asia

### Area

200,000 sq. ft.

### Total cost

\$27,000,000

### Capacity

1,600

### Space per student

125 sq. ft.

### Cost/square foot

\$125  
(including site work)

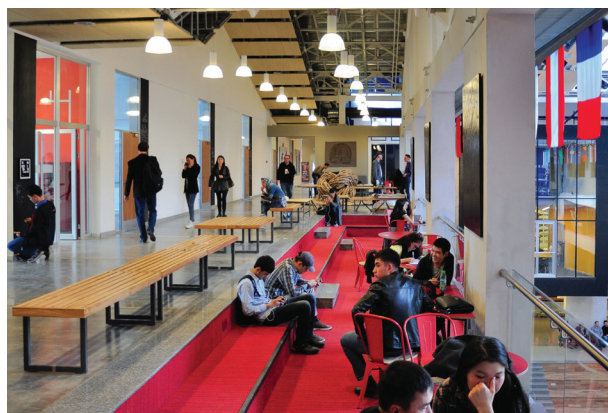
### Completion

August 2015

### Photographer

Christine Sheridan, Henry Myerberg





**“The new AUCA campus building brilliantly models the behaviors and modes of thought we try to inculcate in our entire community: openness, transparency, and flexibility.”**

—ANDREW WACHTEL, PRESIDENT,  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA,  
BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

