



Student profile: Galine Torossian Active curriculum lays foundation for higher learning

A wealth of opportunities and life choices are what Galine Torossian gained from her experiences at the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Alex and Marie Manoogian School in Southfield.

“One of the most intellectually stimulating activities for me at Manoogian was being a peer mediator,” said Torossian, who currently works part time at the University of Michigan’s Office of Student Conflict Resolution. “My role taught me the principles of communication and the importance of listening to others.”

“If I hadn’t gone to Manoogian, I wouldn’t be the same person that I am today.”

-Galine Torossian

The Central Michigan University-authorized charter public school helped lay the foundation for a career choice in communications and political science for Torossian, a senior at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. What that might lead to in terms of a career isn’t definite yet, said Torossian. Her experiences have opened a wide variety of choices.

For eight weeks during the summer of 2007, she interned on Capitol Hill in Washington, D. C., for U.S. Congressman Joe Knollenberg. This experience was realized with help from the Armenian Assembly of America. While there, she wrote a speech on the Armenian genocide that is now part of the congressional record.

Through AGBU, she also combined her interests in politics and communications in 2006 with another internship at Ruder-Finn, a public relations firm in New York City. There, she worked in the global issues department, where she updated the databases for media relations, created press kits and collected media clips for clients.

She credits her education at Manoogian with being able to have these opportunities.

“Sometimes, I look back and wonder what it would have been like to go to a traditional public high school, because I know it would have been a completely different experience,” said Galine. “If I hadn’t gone to Manoogian, I wouldn’t be the same person that I am today.”

Each experience allowed her to use the skills she’s developing in college and the cultural and academic background she had in a charter school. She plans to go on to graduate school, perhaps into law. Another interest area is newspaper work, initiated from being co-editor of her high school newspaper. One thing is certain: she has many, many options.

The daughter of Dr. Hosesep Torossian, the principal at the Alex and Marie Manoogian High School, and Shelly Torossian, a piano teacher, Galine began attending charter schools in second grade.

After 11 years at Manoogian, Galine had not only learned the English and Armenian languages, she also learned about her own culture and heritage. At the University of Michigan, she is on the board of a multicultural group called Encompass, in which she choreographs Armenian dances for annual performances. Galine also is vice president of the Armenian Students' Cultural Association.

“Learning how to read and write Armenian was of huge importance. As an Armenian, I was very lucky to learn the language and history at school. Also, my parents liked that it was a safe, tight-knit school with a lot of family and parental involvement,” she added.

Her brother Garen, a freshman at Wayne State University, and sister Grace, a sixth grader, also attended Manoogian. Although she'd like to see the more sports and other classes added to the curriculum, Galine took advantage of almost every possible activity offered.

She played varsity volleyball, was on the Class of 2004 Fundraising Committee and Senior Trip Committee, and was part of the yearbook staff. As a senior in high school, she was the National Honor Society (NHS) President and the Student Council Vice President concurrently. Previously, she served as vice president of the NHS and secretary of the Student Council. From her sophomore through senior years, she was a peer mediator and one of the co-editors of her school newspaper.

Through dual enrollment, and because her GPA was above 3.5 (4.0), she was able to take classes at the University of Michigan Dearborn, enabling her to earn 12 college-transferable credits while still in high school. Among her other accomplishments are:

- Class of 2004 Salutatorian
- Science Fair grand prize winner
- Oakland County Certified Peer Mediator
- Outstanding Citizenship Award
- School Leadership Award
- Outstanding English Achievement
- Certificate of Special Merit in Yearbook
- Michigan Competitive Scholarship recipient
- Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) Merit Award

“I would recommend attending a charter school, because the quality of education I received provided me with the background I needed to succeed at the University of Michigan,” said Galine, who expects to graduate with a double major in communications and political science in spring 2008.