

U.S.-Central Asia Education Foundation (U.S.-CAEF) Enterprise Student Fellowships is an undergraduate business education scholarship program for academically gifted students sponsored by the U.S.-Central Asia Education Foundation (The Foundation) & administered by American Councils for International Education. The Foundation, in partnership with the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek (AUCA) & the KIMEP University in Almaty, provides educational opportunities in business and other activities for students from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan & Uzbekistan to cultivate a principled entrepreneurial environment in Central Asia that fosters the growth of free enterprise and open markets.

# NEWSLETTER

## PERSON OF THE YEAR PAGE 2



SENIOR YERZHAN SMAGULOV, KIMEP UNIVERSITY

### TWO FELLOWS GRADUATE EARLY

Two senior fellows from KIMEP University, Aigerim Nurgaliev of Kazakhstan and Bahtiyar Jalilov of Turkmenistan, successfully graduated one semester early in December 2013. Both fellows are infinitely grateful for the opportunities provided by U.S.-CAEF. In the letters below, the fellows share their thoughts about the impact of the program.

### A LETTER FROM AIGERIM NURGALIYEVA

Dear U.S.-CAEF Family,

I would like to express my gratitude for your guidance and financial support throughout my three and a half years at KIMEP University. It is because of your generosity that I was able to focus on my studies. I am a graduate of the business program. I chose Finance as my major because I have always been interested in improving the economy of Kazakhstan. And in my opinion, to develop my country, first of all it is better to increase the number of really good specialists in the finance field.

KIMEP University gives a lot of opportunities for self-development. Participation in different student organizations improved my communication skills. I felt constant support from the program through the events that the coordinators and U.S.-CAEF Student Association organized. This support means a lot, especially for fellows like me who are far away from

their home towns. I can surely say that without the help of U.S.-CAEF I could not achieve my goals and find myself and my place in this life. After graduation, I received an offer to become part of Ernst and Young Company. I am especially interested in audit, because, as KIMEP professors tell students, without knowledge in accounting you cannot become a good financier. Therefore I think that I am moving in the right direction. As for now, I found this work very interesting, as you can see in reality how different companies in Kazakhstan work. I am glad that I am really using the knowledge that I received at the university. Auditing companies located in my country help Kazakhstan to make its financial system more transparent and win people's trust.

I would like to thank you again for all that you have done for me to make my dream come true and for helping my country to develop.

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AIGERIM NURGALIYEVA  
KIMEP UNIVERSITY

## A LETTER FROM BAHTIYAR JALILOV

Dear Fellows,

Being a U.S-CAEF fellow is one of the most fascinating and remarkable parts of my social life. As an alumnus of this wonderful program I can certainly say that U.S-CAEF is not only a scholarship that covers tuition at university and provides the best facilities, but also it is a microenvironment that gives an opportunity to demonstrate and develop fellows' full potential. U.S-CAEF is a diverse family with intelligent and smart students from different parts of Central Asia. In my point of view, this diversity is the best part of the whole fellowship program because communication and socializing with our brilliant fellows has a huge influence on one's personal development. It creates a perfect environment for fellows to develop social skills and to build a strong personality.

Social events organized by fellowship coordinators are the perfect example of such environment. Teambuilding, workshops, lecturers, and field trips definitely create a unique atmosphere for fellows to improve their responsibility, leadership and maintain a good relationship with other fellows.

As a graduate, I think I can give some tips to current fellows. First, your social student life depends only on you. If you want interesting social events, go organize them yourself. Second, if you want something, ask for it. Don't be shy. The last and the most important advice: if someone is trying to organize an event for you, be respectful and value their time and efforts. You are very lucky to be part of U.S-CAEF Fellowship program and definitely should be proud of this wonderful opportunity.



BAHTIYAR JALILOV  
KIMEP UNIVERSITY

## MEET OUR LEADERS

### PERSON OF THE YEAR

BY YERZHAN SMAGULOV, KIMEP UNIVERSITY



YERZHAN SMAGULOV

Since my first years at KIMEP University I decided to be active in social events and became a member of different academic, sports, and entertainment clubs. My decision gave good results, and I can surely say that the fall semester was successful and productive for me.

In September, I was elected as a participant in the youth political camp, Youth to Motherland, which was organized by Zhas Otan, a youth wing of the leading party of Kazakhstan Nur Otan. I was honored to be one of the seven students representing Almaty. Before going to the camp, we - representatives of our city - had a meeting with the mayor

of Almaty and had a great conversation where he wished us good luck and explained our roles as ambassadors of the city of Almaty.

The political camp was held from September 11 to 17 in northern Kazakhstan, in the amazing Burabay. The most active young leaders of the country were invited there, and we had a great time sharing ideas, experience, and vision with each other. Guest lecturers were also invited from the top branches of the government. The camp also included sports activities, talent shows, and different team games. I gained experience in politics and received a lot of positive energy there!

Another event that I took part in is the XV Extraordinary Congress of the Nur Otan party that was held in Astana under the chairmanship of its leader, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev. The congress was attended by 1,200 delegates from all regional branches of the party and more than 1,000 invited guests, among whom were the heads of state agencies, national holdings, members of Parliament, representatives of non-governmental and youth organizations, the diplomatic corps, and representatives of culture and sports. Because of my active participation in the social life of Almaty and as a representative of the youth wing, I was invited to the congress with the right to vote. It was a big honor to be part of the congress because we approved a new doctrine, which is one of the main strategic documents in Kazakhstan.

Before the congress started we had three days of seminars with senators and other political leaders on different real-world topics such as the role of youth in developing Kazakhstan, exports, health-care, knowledge and spiritual values. The seminar schedule was very tight. We were busy from early morning to late at night, but we had one day off to visit museums and other sights.

On one of the evenings, delegates from Almaty were invited to one of the best restaurants in Astana,

Astana Music Hall, by the ministry of Industry and New Technologies. We received diplomas and gifts for our important contribution to the development of Kazakhstan. (Yerzhan was also featured on television news speaking about this congress. Here is the link - <http://24.kz/ru/news/politika/item/2691-doktrina>)

This year I ran for the position of Vice-President of Finance for KIMEP's Student Government. Last year I won the elections, and this year I repeated that success. As a future financier, the position of VPF gives me excellent experience in working as the chair of a budget committee, making key decisions, and budget planning.

At the end of the fall semester, KIMEP PIE, a student club, held a big event called KIMEP Awards. KIMEP Awards is an annual charity event where the best professors and students of KIMEP receive awards in 12 different categories. Thanks to the support of students, I won the nomination for the Person of the Year at KIMEP. I truly believe that all of these successes are the result of the right decisions. The key decisions which helped me to become what I am now are: sports, the FLEX Exchange Program, the U.S.-CAEF Scholarship, KIMEP University, the KIMEP Student Association and my active student life. It is important to choose an active position in life!

## FRESHMAN BECOMES A CITY REPRESENTATIVE

BY NASIBA NURMATOVA, AUCA

The FLEX alumni program is one of the most active youth networks in Kyrgyzstan. During the twenty years since the program's inception, FLEX alumni have made a great contribution to the Kyrgyz community. Usually FLEX alumni organize social projects and events for children, people with limited abilities, senior citizens and other vulnerable groups of the society. The most active alumni are always recognized by the FLEX alumni community.

As Alumni Coordinator, I was proud to assign Zhamilia Klycheva to the position of FLEX City Representative of Balykchy (a town located at the western end of Lake Issyk-Kul in Kyrgyzstan). Here is what Zhamilia says about her new responsibility: "In the beginning of this academic year, I became a Future Leaders Exchange Program City Representative of my home town Balykchy. It is a great honor for me. I was delighted to take this position.

It is not surprising, but I started my work with children, the most vulnerable and important members of our society. I have already organized some events. One of them was devoted to current ecological issues. I held a training, "Be Eco-friendly," for elementary school children. The idea was to develop children's awareness about pollution. I was surprised to see how children learn fast and take these global problems close to their hearts.



Visiting orphanages and seeing shining smiles on the faces of children can easily make anybody's heart melt. As I started working with these little angels, the new world opened its gates for me, the world of purity, resounding laughter and thankful smiles. I realized that I can make a child happy just by giving him a tiny bit of attention. Isn't it a simple thing? Now my goal is to help these children, bring happiness to them and make this world a better place to live in."

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



NASIBA NURMATOVA

I am a junior in the Business Administration department, AUCA. All my free time I spend on getting experience and practical knowledge through my work at the U.S. Embassy, FLEX Alumni Association and American Councils. I was selected as a FLEX Alumni Coordinator for the Month for October for organizing various charity and community events. Experience is something I value the most because it cannot be taken from books.

INTERVIEW WITH ALEXEY YAN

BY BATIMA MYRZABEKOVA, KIMEP UNIVERSITY



FRESHMAN ALEXEY YAN PERFORMING MAGIC TRICKS

Five, four, three, two, one! This countdown has become a tradition at every talent show and the audience joins in. The November show was again held in KIMEP University's Fan Club, and this time hosted by our senior Gufrojon Ayubjonov. The event kicked off with a joyful video prepared by our fellows that immediately set a warm atmosphere for the rest of the evening.

Every year, our fellows use this event as an opportunity to say goodbye to our seniors and welcome freshmen to our U.S.-CAEF family, and prepare a special program for them. Sakina Yasakieva and Dilobar Tuychieva performed a Central Asian dance medley, while senior Aigerim Nurgaliyeva impressed the audience with a beautiful Kazakh dance.

Hedjera Suleeva, a senior fellow from Kyrgyzstan sang an Uzbek song "Tamannozi". Bahtiyar Jalilov and Malika Pulotova, our famous duo, rocked the Fun Club that evening with their new song "Sing the Anthem to This Feat" (<https://soundcloud.com/ylyhamataysyz/sing-the-anthem-to-this-feat-melpomena>). All freshmen proudly wore T-shirts saying "I love KIMEP." They felt very welcome and did not feel shy to show their talents. Timur Azizov, a freshman from Kazakhstan, impressed everybody by playing rock hits on his electric guitar. Alexey Yan, another freshman from Kazakhstan, showed amazing magic tricks. After the show, I met with Alexey for an interview.

**BATIMA:** It's really nice to see you in a person! So, let's talk about you and your passion for magic tricks. Can you tell us more about yourself?

**ALEXEY:** It's a great pleasure for me to be present here and have a chat with you. First of all, for those who do not know me, my name is Alexey, I'm 18 and I am a first year student at KIMEP University. Originally, I come from Uzbekistan, however when I was 15 my family moved to Kazakhstan where I graduated from a local school and entered the university. When I was a high school student, entering KIMEP became my long-term goal. Even though I have always been devoting much time to studies I could never imagine my life without my hobbies and interests. One of the most unusual hobbies of mine is performing magic.

**BATIMA:** I guess there is someone who inspired you to show tricks. How did everything start?

**ALEXEY:** It may seem strange, but at the beginning I didn't have any kind of a role model or a favorite magician who would trigger my interest to magic. To be honest, at the beginning I was only interested in revealing magicians' techniques and finding out their secrets of tricks rather than trying to apply them myself and entertain people. When I finally showed a couple of simple yet interesting tricks myself I understood that knowing the secret and actually performing magic are two different things that cause different emotions and feelings. I decided to stick to the latter.

**BATIMA:** Can you reveal some secrets of your tricks to our readers?

**ALEXEY:** As you know, magicians do not reveal their secrets. Even though I am not a professional magician and I started showing tricks only when I was 15 or 16, I also try not to reveal the techniques I apply. Magic is not about secrets. It is an art the main objective of which is to astonish people, to inspire them and to make them believe in something special.

**BATIMA:** You are a freshman and everything is new to you. Do you enjoy your academic and social life in KIMEP?

**ALEXEY:** Oh yeah! I really enjoy being a KIMEP student. There are so many opportunities I can discover and use here! I really like the possibility of being taught by qualified staff, the idea of being able to communicate with foreign students and professors and taking part in unique events.

**BATIMA:** Can you say some words to our readers?

**ALEXEY:** I'd like to wish students to have more patience in relation to their studies and at the same time to enjoy their academic life, make it more diverse and fun.

**BATIMA:** It was great talking to you! Wishing you to study well and to continue to amaze people further!

**ALEXEY:** Thank you very much! I enjoyed spending time with you!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



BATIMA MYRZABEKOVA

I'm a second-year fellow at KIMEP University majoring in finance. Beside my studies, I'm interested in law, photography and mass media. Therefore, I decided to be actively involved in our newsletter this year. Being part of the U.S.-CAEF family is priceless. Thus, I'm extremely excited to write success stories about our fellows and alumni.



ALEXEY YAN

## DIVERSITY WEEK 2014 AT AUCA

BY INNA TSOI, AUCA

My first semester at AUCA has ended successfully. December was very eventful and intense with exams, project deadlines, and New Year parties, of course. One of the greatest things about studying at AUCA is that one thing comes right after another.

Shortly after the winter break, the preparation for Diversity Week 2014 started. I was very happy to be part of the Korean delegation. This event is all about sharing your culture, making more friends, and having tons of fun! I did not even imagine what was ahead of me when I signed up for this event. The first day was devoted to presentations. I was amazed by the diversity and creativity of our students. There were thirteen delegations, including an imaginary country "Sustainstan." There was an incredible AUCA spirit of friendliness and warmth. The tastiest day of the Diversity Week was the FOOD DAY! People lined up to taste delicious national dishes, original drinks, and mouth-watering desserts, impatiently waiting to taste "a piece of culture." However, the real fun was making kim-pab (traditional Korean rolls) together with students in my group. We boiled a ton of rice and worked really hard to make these yummy kim-pabs!

The third day was the flash mob day. Each delegation made nice and funny videos which I absolutely enjoyed watching! No two of them were alike. They all demonstrated the uniqueness of each delegation and the way they interacted with ordinary city people.

Of course, the culmination of the week was the final concert. The concert was more like a huge celebration that included dancing, singing, acting, musical performances, and a demonstration of exotic costumes. Although each performance was different, all of them seemed to be part of one puzzle. They all perfectly fit in the whole picture; they complemented each other. I was very excited to dance with our Korean team. I did not expect that the event will be held at such a high level, but it turned out to be amazing, despite the short preparation time. There was an after party that was a perfect way to conclude the event! The Diversity Week broadened my knowledge about world cultures. I met so many talented and nice people. I am already looking forward to the next Diversity Week! It seems that life in AUCA will never be quiet and easy, but we are ready to accept new challenges.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



INNA TSOI

I am a freshman at AUCA. One of my hobbies is reading. It is always the best way for me to relax and develop my personality at the same time. Some of my favorite authors are Albert Camus, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Leo Tolstoy. I enjoy playing tennis and volunteering. I am a member of Enactus AUCA team. I am ambitious about applying the knowledge I get to make our community a better place in future.



## INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF OUR FELLOWS

### ONE YOUNG WORLD SUMMIT IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY CHYNARA ERKULOVA, KIMEP UNIVERSITY

In the beginning of October, I attended the One Young World Summit (OYW) which took place in Johannesburg, South Africa. I found out about OYW from my friends who have attended this summit two years in a row and told me that this summit is almost like United Nations - all countries of the world but two are represented there and more than 1,200 delegates come together each year to discuss the most important problems facing the world. I told myself that I definitely should become part of this dream platform! I am proud that I was chosen to be the only representative of Kyrgyzstan.

This year's Summit delegates were joined by a line-up of Counsellors that included Kofi Annan, the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations; Sir Richard Branson, an English business magnate and investor; Professor Muhammad Yunus, a 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Bangladeshi social entrepreneur, banker, economist and civil society leader; Bob Geldof, an Irish singer, author, and political activist; Jamie Oliver, a world-famous British chef, restaurateur, and media personality; Jack Dorsey, an American web developer and businessman widely known as a co-founder and co-creator

of Twitter; and Arianna Huffington, the president and editor-in-chief of the Huffington Post Media Group. At the Summit, we debated and discussed innovative solutions for the pressing current issues. The event made me realize how important networking is. Invest in your network, expand your network, and leverage your network became my motto. OYW delegates and speakers inspired me to do more than I thought I can accomplish. Now as a One Young World Ambassador, I can work on my own initiatives.

This event was also a great eye-opening cultural experience for me that changed my views about Africa. When some of my friends heard that I was going to South Africa, they asked me: 'Are you going to save children's lives there?' There is still a stereotype that Africa as a whole is undeveloped. But South Africa impressed

me—I think it is one of the most developed countries. During the four days of the summit, you could feel the huge respect and admiration of every single person in the country towards Nelson Mandela (Madiba). I met people who personally knew Madiba and shared their stories about him. All these stories showed what a humble, forgiving, wise, optimistic, and compassionate person he was. He's definitely an icon not only for South Africans, but also for the international community.

Among the most fascinating things about the summit were the people of Africa. These well-educated, ambitious and enthusiastic African young people made me realize that this continent indeed has a bright future. This is why I believe that Africa is going to rise.



CHYNARA (FRONT) WITH OYW PARTICIPANTS



OYW PARTICIPANTS HOLDING COUNTRY FLAGS



CHYNARA (MIDDLE) AT OYW SUMMIT

## THE LIFE OF AN EXCHANGE STUDENT IN NORWAY

BY VALENTINA KHOMENKO, AUCA

Every time when someone asks me "How is Norway?" I reply, "Different."

The first difference that comes to my mind is that at UMB (my Norwegian University) you do not stop every minute or every two meters in order to say "Hi" to your friend. Here is the explanation: there are 5,000 students, including 800 international students from all over the world, 1,700 employees, 64 study programs and many buildings at UMB, while the numbers at AUCA are way smaller. If I were asked to suggest one thing to change at AUCA I would definitely propose increasing the number of exchange students from different countries. From my personal experience as an exchange student, I know what a great contribution to the development of the university this can make.

One of my favorite places at my Norwegian University was its library. It was a very nice and quiet place where you could come and study without any distractions. Personally, I do not like spending time at the AUCA library because it is not the place where you can concentrate and study, it's rather a place where you meet your friends and loudly discuss the latest news.

After studying at AUCA I did not expect that the system of education in Norway would be very different. Usually at AUCA we are required to be present at every single class, do our homework, do projects, write test #1, mid-term, test#2, final exam, submit essays, and so on. The first month of the semester in Norway I was so confused, since I had no seminars and no practical work. I attended lectures where teachers would write everything on the board. So by the end of the semester, my thick notebook was overloaded with notes. I was so happy that I was not going to take any tests and mid-term exams during the semester. The feeling of disappointment, regret, and sadness came to me when it was time to take final exams. In Norway, it does not matter whether you were active during the whole semester and attended all classes; the only thing that matters is a grade you receive on your final exam. It is a matter of luck, because even the most brilliant student can get some tasks wrong and fail the whole course.

I can talk non-stop about these differences. However, the combination of them explains why I enjoyed studying in Norway and why I am so happy to be back to AUCA.



VALENTINA KHOMENKO

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

### NEVER GIVE UP!

BY AZHAR AKIMBAEVA, AUCA ALUMNA

Life after university is not as easy as I imagined. You should have big ambitions, motivation and passion in order to achieve your goals.



AZHAR AKIMBAEVA

After I graduated AUCA with a degree in marketing, I decided to work at Beta Stores, a retail company. I learned that the company was not growing and their marketing and advertising strategies were out-dated, so I thought it would be a great place for me to work where I could help revitalize the business.

After doing some research and analysis, I started offering new ideas that could attract more customers and suppliers; however the managers did not support me. I understand that they are satisfied with the current situation and do not want to take any risks and change anything because they are afraid of losing existing clients.

After several unsuccessful attempts, I decided to test my ideas outside of the office. Together with my friend I opened a small company which offers romantic date and marriage proposal ideas. The idea came up when a friend of my partner asked me to help him organize a romantic date with his girlfriend. Later we became even more creative and decided to implement four projects:

- «Hitch & Co»: organizing exclusive romantic dates, marriage proposals, various surprises, and gifts. Our goal is to help people become closer to each other and bring more romance to their lives.

- «Vis-à-Vis»: promoting «Vis-à-Vis», a young but very promising musical band. The band masterfully combines guitar and violin melodies performing popular classical and contemporary music.

- «Social Network»: promoting local businesses through social media marketing. We develop several effective promotion packages, and companies, in turn, can choose the most suitable option.

- Project «X»: organizing intellectual and entertainment events. Through these events we can bring people together and help companies strengthen corporate spirit.

It is a really interesting and very creative job, and I love it very much. The main message that I want to convey to my co-fellows is don't be afraid to leave your comfort zone and never give up! And I am sure you will achieve your goals.



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