

NEWSLETTER

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM: 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.

THE FOUNDATION IS GRATEFUL FOR SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, ITS CITIZENS & THE CENTRAL ASIAN-AMERICAN ENTERPRISE FUND, WHICH HAVE MADE ITS OPERATION POSSIBLE.

ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EXPERIENCE

FIRST STEPS IN BUSINESS

BY MAKSAT ALYBAEV

I opened the bakery in Bishkek with my brother during the summer break. First, I thought that it would be so easy to run such a business. However, while working, I faced many challenges. Every problem taught me to be stronger and motivated me to achieve new goals. Now, I have a better understanding of this business, and believe that everyone must be ready to take risks as risk-taking always pays off.



WORKING WITH BIG DATA AT BEELINE

BY DANIAR ABDIEV

I was invited to work in the Big Data Department of Beeline telecommunications company. My official job title is Expert in Support and Development of Big Data Analytics Tools. I have been developing algorithms that detect patterns in big data using machine learning techniques like deep neural networks or gradient boosting algorithms. I love my job, it is creative, it is challenging and most importantly, every day I learn something new. I am very happy to have an opportunity to apply my theoretical knowledge in such a promising field as machine learning in the real commercial production world.

STOCK SIMULATOR COMPETITION

BY PALUAN RIMOV



From September 17 to October 17, Kazakhstan Stock Exchange (KASE) organized a stock simulator competition among students majoring in business. Stock simulator is an annual event organized by KASE. The main goal of the project is providing an opportunity for participants to enhance and practice their financial knowledge. Each participant received virtual money in the amount of 1,000,000 KZT (\$2697.89) in the beginning of the competition. Those who had the highest portfolio value won. Over 1000 students participated in the event. Top 23 students were offered internships at the leading Kazakhstani banks & investment companies.

By the end of the competition, I was able to increase my virtual portfolio value from 1,000,000 KZT to 1,365,676.99 KZT. As a result, I was placed among top 5 students and received an internship offer from Freedom Finance investment company. According to Forbes Kazakhstan, Freedom Finance was the best investment company in Kazakhstan in 2017.

This event had a great impact and changed my perception of financial markets. I tested my theoretical knowledge about different types of financial analysis. I advise everyone to participate in this kind of challenges. I am sure that at least you experience a great adrenaline rush while investing and trading.



ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EXPERIENCE

CONTINUED

BANKING EXPERIENCE IN JALAL-ABAD

BY BEGIMAI BOLOTBEKOVA



In the summer, I interned in the Operations Division of Kyrgyz Investment & Credit Bank (KICB) in my native town, Jalal-Abad. I learned how to operate with the banking software, analyze and update the database of clients' information, & prepare documents for archiving. On top of that, I also

learned to provide general banking services. During the second week, one of the deposit officers took a vacation. I was honored to replace her for two weeks. During that time, I provided banking services to clients such as opening bank accounts and cards, withdrawing cash from accounts, and calling the clients and updating their passport information. This experience enhanced my problem-solving skills.

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION WHERE EDUCATION & BUSINESS MEET

BY KASJET MAMBETKUL KYZY

I received a job offer for Program Assistant at the Institute of Education (IOE) at AUCA. IOE is a new institution at AUCA that offers a Master of Arts in Teaching program.

One of my duties was to inform students and faculty about the program procedures. I also worked closely with the finance and registrar offices and Shared Services Center (SSC). Thanks to this experience, I learned about the AUCA organizational structure, uniqueness of each department and communication with students, staff, local and international faculty from a different perspective.

In the beginning, I thought that this job had nothing to do with business administration. However, I realized that it has to do with business as we offer a product- education, and we promote it to our main customers- students. As this program is new at AUCA, it is still evolving, and there is a lot to do.

Hence, I was involved in branding, developing the website content and user-friendly tools for online teaching.



ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EXPERIENCE

CONTINUED

RESEARCH ON ELECTRIC VEHICLES

BY SEZIM ZHENISHBEKOVA

Since summer, my AUCA team and I have been involved in a research project called

"ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EVS) IN KYRGYZSTAN: STATUS QUO, POTENTIALS AND STRATEGIES FOR ACCELERATED DEPLOYMENT"

SPONSORED BY USAID.

The purpose of our research is to provide an analysis of the situation with electric vehicles in Kyrgyzstan, review the existing policies and present options for an accelerated

adoption. In addition, assessment of the total costs of ownership was also part of the analysis.

The 4-month research has shown that different types of EVs are already present in Kyrgyzstan. Their penetration level is low because of high costs, lack of knowledge about EV technologies and their advantages, and limited availability of EVs on the Kyrgyz market. Several measures were identified, which could facilitate a wider

adoption of EVs. These include awareness creation, government procurement, financial incentives and capacity development.

Overall, by conducting interviews and attending meetings and conferences with governmental and non-profit organizations, I was able to develop independent critical thinking skills along with oral and written communication skills which will be handy when I work on my senior thesis.



LEARNING CRITICAL SKILLS ON AND OFF CAMPUS

BY FARZONA KHAIDAROVA

In August, I started working in the AUCA international dormitory as Resident Assistant. There, I deal with students' needs and concerns, which helps me develop a set of skills, such as communication, planning, organizing and conflict-resolution. As the work involves a lot of documentation, I am also learning to write reports and developing planning skills. In addition, I started working in the Writing and Academic Resource Center of AUCA as a math and finance tutor. The experience helped me develop my interpersonal and presentation skills.

Lastly, I was employed as a Business Analyst by Neobis, where I deal not only with IT projects, but also organize events, meet-ups and hackathons.



ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EXPERIENCE

CONTINUED

INSURANCE FOR FARMERS: IMPORTANT LESSONS

BY SEVARA TADZHIBAIEVA



In July, I had an opportunity to help a group of researchers from Germany to collect data for the new project, Insurance for Farmers, launched by a local insurance company “Jubilee”. Even though the research was no longer than a week, it was very beneficial and taught me a lot about the challenges of implementing a business plan.

My main role was to assist with translation and presentations for farmers in the Chui district. In addition, I organized training about the business concepts of the project and its implementation, which helped me realize the challenges of delivering such ideas to farmers. We presented the new product to farmers that would help them alleviate financial losses during droughts. To help farmers understand the policy better, we even played “Farmopoly” with them.

However, the farmers struggled with the ideas and acted skeptical. The experience taught me that making a business plan is not enough for success. I also learned that detailed research of a targeted demographic group is essential. One really needs to know if there is a demand for the offered product. I think it is necessary for a company to try to put itself in clients’ shoes to see their concerns. Nevertheless, working on this project was a great chance to enhance my business skills and make friends with the German colleagues.



REMEMBERING ASEL USUBALIEVA

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On September 22, tragedy struck U.S.-CAEF (AUCA) rising sophomore **Asel Usubaliev** who passed away after fighting cancer for nearly a year.

Asel will stay in our memory as a kind, bright and generous person who cared deeply about people around her.

EMBRACING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

OSCE SUMMER SCHOOL IN BISHKEK

BY NIGORA BURHONOVA & SUHAILO MAMADNIYOZOVA



On August 13-31, Nigora Burhonova and Suhailo Mamadniyozova participated in the first summer school program organized by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. It was designed to be a preparatory program for two master's degree programs— MA in Economic Governance and Development and MA in Politics and Security.

Nigora and Suhailo took part in the Economics program. They studied together with students from Central Asia and Afghanistan, including newly admitted graduate students.

The participants had an opportunity to study graduate - level courses such as Mathematics for Economists, Probability Theory and Statistics, and Academic Writing conducted

by highly qualified professors with teaching experience in the USA, Turkey and Kyrgyzstan.

“The summer school was very productive and gave me a taste of studying in a master's degree program, which I hope will help me in continuing my studies sometime in the future. I highly recommend it to our fellows if they want to pursue their graduate studies at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek or simply want to expand their knowledge of the courses mentioned above,” shared Nigora.

“For me, studying among graduate students, who come from different backgrounds, was a great experience. I enjoyed learning about their life paths as well as sharing my own experiences and perspectives with them,” wrote Suhailo.



EXPLORING BAVARIAN HERITAGE

BY AIZHARKYN KUDAIBERGENOVA

German Language Courses SDI University, Munich

From July 26 to August 24, as a recipient of a DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) scholarship, I attended German language courses in Munich. It was an incredible opportunity to strengthen my German language skills and learn about the Bavarian culture and history. The teachers were energetic and cheerful, and infected the students with their positive attitude. In addition to lectures and seminars, we had excursions that allowed us to immerse ourselves in the Bavarian heritage. As a result, I improved my German from level B1 to B2. I met many aspiring students from around the world.

EMBRACING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

CONTINUED

IMMERSING IN KOREAN CULTURE

BY ALUA CHYNTEMIROVA



This summer I was selected for the 2018 ANU Cultural Adventures Program which was hosted and operated by the Andong National University, South Korea. 12 people from different regions of Kazakhstan were chosen based on their English and Korean language skills. From July 30th through August 5th, we visited around 5 different cities, studied Korean, discovered traditions, went to some tourist places, tried ourselves in taekwondo, archery and Korean dancing. The main purpose of this project was to share the culture and traditions of the country and to

generate interest of Kazakhstani people in South Korea. Our group consisted of students of different ages, from 14 to 19, with various levels of Korean and English. Since my language skills were better, I tried to help other students. After this camp I fell in love with this country and its culture again! Moreover, I have found some gaps in my Korean that I need to improve. My enthusiasm in learning it has grown significantly. I am grateful for this trip and priceless experience in such an amazing place.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

“WOMEN MAKE CHANGE” TRAINING

BY NIGORA BURHONOVA

After taking part in Study of U.S. Institutes (SUSI) on Women’s Leadership Program in the summer of 2017, I was very motivated to return to my hometown and share my knowledge that I gained in the US with the girls in my community. Therefore, in August I conducted a two-day training program called “Women Make Change” for girls in my hometown, Khujand.



Most girls in Tajikistan have limited opportunities for development and fulfillment of their goals such as continuing studies after school and studying abroad, although many of them have potential to make a positive change in their lives and society. Consequently, the initial goal of the training was to teach young girls aged 14-18 about women’s leadership and help them develop their leadership and communication skills, learn about project management and later implement their own projects. Moreover, several student leaders were invited as guest speakers to share their leadership experiences with young girls, which participants found

very interesting and motivating. The training was conducted in English and included different activities such as team work, group discussions, guest speakers and presentations on leadership, women’s roles in society, project management and study abroad opportunities.

By the end of the training, the participants came up with their own project ideas that they would like to implement, which would address one of the issues that women face in our community.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED

FLEX ABILITY WORKSHOP 2018

BY MEERIM ZHANYBEK KYZY

On August 2-5, the Central Asia FLEX Ability Workshop 2018 brought together 62 FLEX Alumni from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Mongolia. We met in Almaty to focus on developing skills in project design and management. At this workshop, we had eight senior alumni, who shared their experiences in implementing ideas from scratch. Moreover, I enjoyed learning the strategies and methods of executing entrepreneurial projects from Simon, a graduate of Harvard University.



In addition, on August 3, the participants of the workshop celebrated the 25th anniversary of FLEX in Kazakhstan. During the ceremony, we were inspired by speeches of the most active FLEX alumni.

At the end of the workshop, the participants of nine teams presented their projects focused on leadership development, personal finance skills, STEM, and mental health awareness.

Each participant had an opportunity to apply for a “Follow – on - Grant” to implement their ideas. As a recipient of the “Follow – on - Grant”, I will be implementing a project “Dream Girl” this coming November, in Kochkor-Ata town. The project will focus on developing self-confidence and leadership skills in high school girls.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED

CENTRAL ASIAN YOUTH NETWORK CONFERENCE IN ALMATY

BY GAVKHARKHON MAMADZHANOVA

On June 26-28, I participated in the Central Asian Youth Network (CAYN) conference, established by OSCE's Program in Almaty, Kazakhstan.



CAYN was a great opportunity for young leaders from Central Asia, Mongolia and Afghanistan to discuss the problems of the region. This year's theme was "Innovating Central Asia". The teams of participants were asked to find creative ways to solve assigned problems. Our team had representatives of all Central Asian countries. Our project was focused on governance. We interviewed more than 30 people in Almaty, and

based on their answers, we proposed our solution. Interviewees had quite different backgrounds and were from different age categories. The members of our team were also diverse; we all had different majors and represented different universities. Hence, this helped us to analyze the given issue from different perspectives. This experience improved my public speaking, communication and teamwork skills.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED

VOLUNTEERING AT WORLD NOMAD GAMES

BY OLGA PYKHOVA

On August 20- September 9, I volunteered at the 3rd World Nomad Games, Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan. I was a translator and a guide for a group of 7 journalists from the USA, Germany, Ireland, Austria, South Africa and Russia. This experience taught me how to communicate with foreigners, deal with problems and miscommunication, and be responsible. The World Nomad Games gave me an opportunity to fall in love with Kyrgyzstan once again.



A total of 550 representatives of different media agencies came to the World Nomad Games. While helping the journalists by explaining the Kyrgyz traditions and sports, I learned about the Kyrgyz culture more myself. I had a chance to be on the backstage of the arena where the Kok-Boru was played. Kok-Boru is a traditional game played by two teams on horseback, where players try to maneuver with a goat's carcass. I gained an understanding of the whole powerful meaning of this game.

Networking with other volunteers was one of the highlights. While studying at AUCA, sometimes we do not know what is going on at other universities. It was amazing to see that there are so many talented students and patriots who are eager to bring positive changes to Kyrgyzstan. I've learned so much from them, like how to stay strong and be nice to people no matter what.

On the other hand, it was a challenging experience. The volunteers needed to solve all the problems that journalists had and deal with their complaints, which required a lot of patience.

Unfortunately, Kyrgyzstan will not hold these Games for the next 6 years. I am proud that I volunteered at the 3rd World Nomad Games. New friends, an expanded network, and new emotions are only a small part of the advantages. It gave me many ideas for improving tourism in Kyrgyzstan.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED

**FIRST UNICEF
VOLUNTEERS
IN KYRGYZSTAN**

BY BEGIMAI BOLOTBEKOVA

In August, I started volunteering with UNICEF Kyrgyzstan. It was the first time that UNICEF Kyrgyzstan invited volunteers, and I am happy to have been chosen as one of its first group of 40 volunteers. The program will continue until November of this year. It is called “Safe Schools.” We make presentations about safety at schools for parents and teachers, conduct fire alarm and earthquake simulation exercises, and post information on social media to raise awareness about safety in society. Before the program started, all volunteers participated in a three-day training conducted by professionals. I was happy to meet Ms. Yukie Mokuo, a UNICEF representative in the Kyrgyz Republic, and other influential people during the trainings. I am happy that my summer was productive.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED

**SUMMER
CAMP
AMERICA**

BY SEVARA TADZHIBAEVA

In August, I became Summer Camp America Counselor in a rural region of Kyrgyzstan, Isfana. U.S.-CAEF alumnus Azatbek Ismailov, my mentor and good friend, was responsible for the logistics of this camp. The summer camp included a wide range of activities related to music, dancing, literature, language learning, art, baseball and a lot more for children from small villages. As a counselor, my duties were to teach classes, resolve conflicts between kids and prepare class materials for them. I had a great chance to challenge myself to work with kids from different backgrounds. Living in a camp with no Internet or mobile service made me realize how much time we had and could spend in a very productive way. Moreover, I can say that this experience improved my self-discipline and teaching skills. Interacting with pure and innocent kids melted my heart. This experience was another reminder how good it is to spend your time on social projects, camps and activities, because you do not only give but take and learn from people you meet there!



DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED

INTERNATIONAL KINDERGARTEN IN DENIZLI, TURKEY

BY DILNAZ IMERAMZAYEVA

On July 16- August 25, I volunteered for the “International Kindergarten” project in Denizli, Turkey. This project was organized by AIESEC, an international not-for-profit youth organization. During my stay in Denizli, I worked at a kindergarten and taught children English through conducting lessons and cultural presentations and playing interactive games. In addition, I gained cultural experience by exploring some cities in Turkey, practicing Turkish with native speakers, and interacting with other volunteers from different countries.



One of the unforgettable events that connected all the volunteers and local people was Global Village. During the event, participants presented their culture and traditions. It was very inspiring for me to see how different and at the same time similar people around the world are. The experience had a great impact both on my professional and personal development and made me realize that I am a global citizen – a member of the world!

REGIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

3 YEARS OF SUCCESS IN TAJIKISTAN



Since the expansion of the Regional Internship Program to Tajikistan, a total of 14 sophomores have taken part in the program. All Fellows had substantive internship experiences at leading international companies in Dushanbe, and several of them received job offers. Motivated by the success of the program, Tajik students of other cohorts sought out summer internship opportunities in Dushanbe as well, leading us to believe that more Tajik Fellows are interested in pursuing careers in their native country, which needs highly qualified, English-speaking specialists in finance, accounting, and auditing. ►

REGIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

CONTINUED

KIMEP senior Nilufar Umarova, who interned with JYSK through the Regional Internship Program last year, decided to take another internship with the same company this summer. “I loved my internship company and the people of JYSK Tajikistan, so I decided to do an internship for a month there for the second summer in a row. After taking the Digital Marketing course at KIMEP, I wanted to gain practical knowledge through maintaining JYSK’s social media pages and website. With my supervisor Jovid Bakhtovarkhonov’s support, I became in charge of JYSK’s Facebook and Instagram pages. Within a month of the internship, I received a job offer for an assistant of the marketing manager that I might accept after graduating from KIMEP.”

Zarrina Muhiddinova, U.S.-CAEF Coordinator in Tajikistan, reported that all host companies expressed their satisfaction with the program and confirmed their eagerness to continue working with U.S.-CAEF interns in the future. This success is largely due to the partnership of American Councils with the American Chamber of Commerce in Tajikistan. Since the start of the program, AmCham’s support has been highly important in identifying internship placements for U.S.-CAEF Fellows.

In addition, this year AmCham invited U.S.-CAEF interns and alumni to participate in the business training conducted by Crowe Horwath ACG on August 7 on Risks and Methods of Risk Evaluation, Legal Risks in Bank Activities and The Advantages of External Audit in Development of Business. Over 15 representatives from leading business companies attended the meeting such as Coca-Cola, General Electric, Deloitte, ASR Leasing, Spitamen Bank, Sheraton Hotel and others.

“This business training motivated our fellows to pursue their career aspirations in Tajikistan. The meeting helped them learn about development of businesses in Tajikistan. The interns reported that the training was timely and very useful, and it made them feel more confident about their future.

I am so grateful for the continued support provided by Coca-Cola Tajikistan, AmCham Tajikistan, BDO Tajikistan, Deloitte, JYSK Tajikistan, FINCA, Moores Rowland Crowe, and RSM Tajikistan in Dushanbe. These companies have been helping Fellows gain valuable professional experience and launch their careers in Tajikistan,” shared Zarrina.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FIRST U.S.-CAEF COUPLE, JAHONGIR & ZULFIYA!

ZULFIYA URUNOVA AND JAHONGIR RAHIMOV HAD THEIR MARRIAGE CEREMONY AT H. CARL MOULTRIE COURTHOUSE IN WASHINGTON, DC ON OCTOBER 5.

CURRENTLY, BOTH FELLOWS ARE TAKING PART IN THE CAPSTONE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN THE U.S.

EXPLORING THE WORLD THROUGH WORK & TRAVEL

**WORK
& TRAVEL
GERMANY**

BY TALGAT MURATBEKOV

The first year at AUCA was very productive and fascinating. However, the last three months that I spent in Germany were the time that influenced my vision and horizon. During the spring semester, I applied for Work and Travel Germany which motivated me to study German for three months so that I could meet the eligibility requirements. In May 2018, I successfully obtained my Schengen visa and was ready to go. Three months in Germany were amazing in terms of work, travel and getting life experience.

I worked in ten different places and learned about some small companies and businesses and work environment. It was flattering that many supervisors offered me permanent jobs with higher salaries if I could stay longer. But my favorite part of the whole trip was a chance to watch a live soccer match between Manchester United and Bayern München.

Overall, I covered all my expenses and came back to Kyrgyzstan with huge motivation to study and get knowledge to have more days like these in the future.

EXPLORING THE WORLD THROUGH WORK & TRAVEL

CONTINUED

**WORK
& TRAVEL
USA**

BY MEERIM MOLDAIEVA

Every student participating in Work and Travel USA sets different goals. My goals were to improve my English skills, gain valuable experience of living and working abroad, and to do sightseeing. I worked in the service sector in Rapid City, South Dakota. It was my first time working abroad, so I had many new experiences and challenges.

I got acquainted with the American culture and made many friends not only from



the US but also from other countries in Asia, Europe and South America. I had an opportunity to live with a host family which made my stay in the US truly enjoyable and enriching.

The outcome of this program depends on the goals set by each participant and efforts applied. I managed to balance work and leisure effectively- I was able to travel to Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, California, NYC, Washington DC, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and New Jersey, and to see the differences between these states.

Overall, this program was unique and very different from the academic and volunteer exchange programs that I had participated in before. It gave me unforgettable memories, enriched my outlook, and opened new horizons for much bigger opportunities and perspectives for my post-graduate years.



ALUMNI STORIES

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ECONOMIC
ASSISTANT
US EMBASSY
ASHGABAT
TURKMENISTAN



NILUFAR MATYAKUBOVA

More than three years of audit experience gave me understanding of the banking sector in Turkmenistan, as well as rules and regulations of the Central Bank and economy of the country as a whole. This experience prepared me to overcome a huge competition for the position of Economic Assistant at the US Embassy, Ashgabat where I began working in May 2017.

My responsibilities include working with business leaders of Turkmenistan and US and facilitate trade and cooperation between the two countries. As part of my personal development, I was sent by the ambassador himself to Houston, TX in August to take the Petroleum and Gas Industry course organized by Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and Petroleum Equipment & Services Association (PESA). The training was about the future of the oil & gas sectors with the focus on exploration & development, new tools and techniques conducted by leading specialists and executives of such companies as Chevron, Exxon Mobil, Schlumberger, etc. Besides gaining in-depth knowledge of the industry, I was also able to network.

In September, I took another business trip as a group leader with Cochran fellows to UC Davis, California. The training conducted by a leading agricultural university, UC Davis, increased my knowledge of agricultural practices in the arid environment.



MSc
INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS
MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY OF
HUDDERSFIELD
UK



KIMEP
UNIVERSITY
CLASS OF 2013
KAZAKHSTAN

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DUBAI
BUSINESS
ASSOCIATE
FALCON &
ASSOCIATES
UAE



NAZERKE ZARLYKHANOVA

Nazerke, a Yenching Scholar, has been taking every opportunity to complement her studies at Peking University, Beijing, China where she is currently pursuing her master's degree in Chinese Studies in Economics and Business. She is on track to graduate in June 2019.

On August 16-20, Nazerke received a Harvard University scholarship to attend the Harvard Project for Asian and International Relations (HPAIR) conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The conference brought together 600 participants from over 60 countries and focused on the theme of Sustainable Disruption. Nazerke attended multiple sessions featuring influential leaders from academia, business, and government.

In the fall, Nazerke started a ten-month internship program led under the patronage of HH Sheikh Muhammad, Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai. It is a multi-cultural, rotational program that offers outstanding graduate students from all over the world fully-funded management training and a great opportunity to study and do business in Dubai and develop as future cultural ambassadors and business leaders. Most recently, Nazerke completed the PwC's Mini MBA training program and started her internship with the Emirates Group in-house consulting department.



YENCHING
SCHOLAR
PEKING
UNIVERSITY



KIMEP
UNIVERSITY
CLASS OF 2015
KAZAKHSTAN

ALUMNI STORIES

CONTINUED

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MASTER'S
PROGRAM IN
INTERNATIONAL
POLITICAL
ECONOMY
CLAREMONT
GRADUATE
UNIVERSITY
(CGU), CA



AUCA
CLASS OF 2017
KYRGYZSTAN

**ADVICE TO
MY YOUNGER
PEERS:**

*"CHOOSE
A HARDER
PATH. IT WILL
PAY OFF."*



ZHAMILIA KLYCHEVA

What happens after graduation?

"It's just the beginning", I told myself. The past year was the most intensive one in terms of decision making. I had to think carefully, before I finally made a decision to pursue a higher education in International Studies, concentrating on Data Analytics. My choice fell to Claremont Graduate University (CGU), which offers only graduate programs, located in Southern California.

The reasons why I chose CGU were the staff, small classroom size, combination of theory and practice and location. The application process was fairly straightforward. I had to submit a standard application package, including my GRE score to get accepted to this school. The whole process took about half a year. The first thing that people think of when I tell them about life in California is the sun, palm trees and a carefree life. In fact, it's true. There are palms, sun and beach, but this is only one side of the story. On the other hand, there is homework, hours of work and a lack of free time. Welcome to graduate student life!

Being a graduate student means reading a couple hundred pages a week, living in the library, learning about Peru, Egypt, China and Venezuela from your friends, drinking coffee with your professor and doing lots of research. It also means finally learning to manage your time, since there is no other choice. But the rewarding feeling is to understand something after days of reading and researching. I call it the "Ahh" moment.

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SALES
SUPPORT
TETRA RECAR
LUND
SWEDEN



MSc STRATEGIC
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
JÖNKÖPING
INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS SCHOOL
SWEDEN



AUCA
CLASS OF 2015
KYRGYZSTAN



VALENTINA KHOMENKO

Those who know me have heard at least once about my passion for the food industry, entrepreneurship, and environmental sustainability and that is why I chose an internship at an agribusiness consulting firm (Washington, DC-2015).

After this great experience I pursued a master's degree in Entrepreneurship and Innovation (Strategic Entrepreneurship, two-year master's program scholarship at the Swedish Institute).

With my educational background and some professional experience, I decided that it would be ideal for me to get into a Graduate Trainee program to accelerate my career and get all necessary support. It was a very interesting journey full of never-ending online job searches, adjusting my CV, rewriting cover letters, taking hundreds of logical tests, doing self-recorded interviews, going through assessment tests with other shortlisted candidates competing for the same position, and so on. All these efforts paid off when I got a job offer from the company which was at the top of my list- Tetra Pak, a world leader in food processing and packaging.

Today, I am one of the Future Talents in the company working as Sales Support for Tetra Recart, which can be described as a startup within huge Tetra Pak. During the upcoming two years, I will have several rotations to other departments (could be marketing, communications, development and engineering, etc.) and to other countries since Tetra Pak is present all around the world.

U.S. EXPERIENCES OF CAPSTONE INTERNS



CAPSTONE INTERNSHIP FELLOWS VISITING THE WHITE HOUSE

The U.S. International Capstone Internship program is an opportunity for recent U.S.-CAEF graduates to immerse themselves in the global business network. The program is specifically designed to help these individuals explore career options, gain valuable skills and make professional contacts. Six select interns are currently participating in The Washington Center's postgraduate professional development program in Washington, D.C. The quotes below reflect the interns' first impressions and thoughts about their Capstone experience. ▶

U.S. EXPERIENCES OF CAPSTONE INTERNS

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**ZHAKSAT
BASSEN**

ATLAS CORPS

*“OVERALL,
THE FIRST
MONTH IN
WASHINGTON, DC
CHANGED
A LOT OF THINGS
IN MY LIFE.
I BECAME MORE
CONFIDENT
IN MY GOALS AND
IDENTIFIED AREAS
WHERE I WANT
TO DEVELOP.”*

The company is small and has only around 15 full-time employees. In the finance department, there are three of us: Financial Controller, Accounting Fellow and me, the Finance Intern. The perks of such small teams include active supervision, immediate feedback and challenging projects. From the first day of the internship my supervisor introduced me to the accounting software called “QuickBooks”.

It is a cloud-based accounting system which is very convenient for small businesses. Furthermore, I was assigned to work on reconciliation of credit card transactions. This task served me as an “icebreaker”, because I worked closely with top management of the company.

Moreover, I was assigned to work with revenue and accounts receivable transactions. I was involved in activities such as contracts review, check & cash deposits, bank statement reviews

and direct deposits processing. I learned a lot of things about contractual agreements and US-GAAP standards.

My direct supervisor Adrienne Jones, Financial Controller, is very helpful. She always shares her experience and provides useful feedback. She also asks my feedback on internal controls and policies as she knows about my auditing background. This exercise requires critical thinking and develops professional skepticism, which is required to become a successful auditor.

Also, my supervisor makes me attend staff and finance meetings. Such shadowing helps me gain knowledge about the company and gives a chance to observe how people do presentations and conduct discussions.



U.S. EXPERIENCES OF CAPSTONE INTERNS

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**ZHIBEK
KAMALBEK
KYZY**

ASHOKA CHANGEMAKERS

Ashoka Changemakers is part of the Global Ashoka non-profit organization. Ashoka supports the world's leading social entrepreneurs and mobilizes a global community to build an "everyone a changemaker" world.

When I first joined Ashoka, it felt like I was given a pair of track shoes for running a race.



"BEFORE THE CAPSTONE PROGRAM, I HADN'T THOUGHT THAT AN INTERNSHIP CAN MEET BOTH MY PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL INTERESTS. PROFESSIONALLY, I AM STRIVING TO WORK IN THE FIELD OF FINANCE AND BUSINESS, WHILE PERSONALLY I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT DEVELOPING LOCAL COMMUNITIES...."

"I AM VERY SATISFIED WITH MY EXPERIENCES AND MOTIVATED TO SET CLEAR AND ATTAINABLE CAREER GOALS BY THE END OF MY CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE."

I had to do a variety of tasks, including communication with entrepreneurs, vendors, calculating budget estimates and accounting tasks under short deadlines. I identified people who could benefit from Ashoka's events and connections and invited them to a networking event which was part of the American Express Emerging Leaders Bootcamp that took place on September 25-28, 2018 in New York City. The bootcamp gathered the nation's top innovators who address financial inequity and wellbeing in their businesses. Since this topic is very relevant to Central Asia, I was excited to join the bootcamp's organizing team and travel to New York....

I am learning hard skills like using new office software tools as well as soft transferrable skills such as communication, time-management, writing skills; and working in a team under tight deadlines. I believe that the skills and knowledge acquired at Ashoka will help me create an institution that will support entrepreneurs of Central Asia. Moreover, I have had a fascinating work experience with international colleagues, who work remotely from Indonesia, Chile, Brazil and France. I am planning on conducting informational interviews with them to get more insights on how they support entrepreneurs in their countries....



U.S. EXPERIENCES OF CAPSTONE INTERNS

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AZATBEK ISMAILOVGLOBAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
NETWORK (GEN)

I was fortunate to be invited to do an internship at Global Entrepreneurship Network. It is a global organization aimed at developing entrepreneurial ecosystems and it exists in 160 countries, including Kyrgyzstan. Every year, GEN holds Global Entrepreneurship Week, which brings young leaders and innovators from all over the world to exchange their ideas and experiences. Right now, I am working on building communication with GEN's affiliates in different countries and updating their web-page database with the local GEN representatives, so that people could easily reach out to them in case they need assistance. Also, I am actively assisting my supervisor on snapshotting the major events happening under GEN and writing a short report on them, which has improved my writing skills immensely.



Besides that, I am constantly working with GEN Kyrgyzstan to develop the effective entrepreneurial ecosystem to encourage the growth of start-ups and SMEs in our region, which challenges me to do deep research...

My internship site is located at 1776, one of the best co-working spaces in DC. The environment is informal, and there is no strong hierarchy. I found it wonderful that people can approach anybody with different questions and get full and constructive responses, which is very helpful for interns who usually need assistance, especially in the beginning. Each Friday, we have a TWC session on personal and professional growth. I really enjoy attending them as I get to meet people from different countries coming to do internships in Washington, DC. One of the main goals of the sessions is to teach us effective networking skills. Indeed, networking means a lot in business. So far, TWC sessions have taught me how to do informational interviews and write good formal letters. I have already used this knowledge in practice and it makes my internship even more productive.

"CAPSTONE INTERNSHIP HAS FULLY MET MY EXPECTATIONS, IF NOT EXCEEDED. WHILE WORKING IN A DIFFERENT SPHERE THAN FINANCE, I HAVE LEARNED A LOT ABOUT MYSELF AND FOUND MY DIFFERENT STRENGTHS. NOW, I BELIEVE THAT I AM FLEXIBLE AND CAN ADAPT TO DIFFERENT SITUATIONS, WHICH IS VERY ESSENTIAL FOR MY ENTREPRENEURIAL CAREER DOWN THE ROAD. AT THIS MOMENT, I AM EVEN MORE INSPIRED TO DEVELOP MYSELF, AND WILL SEEK ANY FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE MY PROFESSIONAL PATHWAY TO PERFORM NOT ONLY LOCAL, BUT GLOBAL CHANGES."

U.S. EXPERIENCES OF CAPSTONE INTERNS

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"MY INTERNSHIP HAS BEEN TEACHING USEFUL LESSONS. I NOTED TO MYSELF THAT WHEN I FOUND A COMPANY, I WILL BE VERY CLEAR ON DEADLINES FOR CERTAIN TASKS; I WILL ORGANIZE LITTLE TEAMBUILDING ACTIVITIES AND MAKE SURE TO REWARD EMPLOYEES FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE."



ALTYNAI MELISOVA

PAY YOUR TUITION FUNDS, INC.

Currently, I am interning at Pay Your Tuition (PYT) Funds, Inc., a startup company established in 2016 by Stacie Whisonant. Our main purpose is to help students who are not eligible for student loans to pay their tuition through grants, crowdfunding and fundraising. My role is to research fundraising opportunities, learn from and assist the tech team, represent the company at events, create social media content and perform other administrative tasks.

As an intern at PYT Funds, I was assigned a variety of tasks. During the first month, I discovered the following platforms: LiveChat, ShareAway, AirTable, VistaPrint, Cash App, Zoom and Grantstation. There is something new to explore every single day, so I do enjoy my internship.

In addition, a friendly atmosphere at Alley co-working space motivates me to wake up early and hurry to the office although I was allowed to work from home. Sometimes my tasks are

very small such as scanning, printing, buying items from Walmart and so on. However, the majority of the duties are interesting and my supervisor, Kari Golden, makes sure I am gaining useful experience. I believe Kari is both my supervisor and mentor since she is happy to answer my questions, address any concerns, and give support and advice... Teamwork, mutual support and communication are key values at PYT...

I am planning to run my own company in the educational field, thus, by interning at PYT Funds, I am gaining hands-on experience that will be beneficial to achieve my entrepreneurial goals. The internship is meeting my personal expectations- a friendly work environment, attending different events on behalf of the company, developing technical skills and making friends.

The most surprising thing is that interns at our company are very independent. We do not have to report every step to the supervisor; casual attire is welcomed and coffee or tea with snacks are provided by the Alley.

U.S. EXPERIENCES OF CAPSTONE INTERNS

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**JAHONGIR
RAHIMOV**

MANCHESTER TRADE LTD

Manchester Trade provides advisory services on trade policies to companies investing internationally. The company primarily focuses on the African continent due to an increase of investments in recent years. ... I mainly engage in accounting software called QuickBooks, which is used to keep track of business expenditures over multiple bank accounts for small and medium- sized businesses. In addition, I conduct a long-term project on China's Belt and Road Initiative, which is relevant to me as it is supposed to become a modern Silk route going through Tajikistan.

I attended several business events in the DC area which is helping me overcome social anxiety. Networking is one of the major soft skills that I wanted to learn and develop while in DC. It is important for both my professional and personal development.



Although the atmosphere at the internship site is casual, we are expected to wear business attire. I can always ask my supervisor (the president) to clarify the assignments and walk me through the tasks. The same applies to my peers- whenever one needs help others offer assistance. This work ethic matches my values. In my opinion, we have built a good relationship within the company, and we can use these connections in future.

"I AM LEARNING ABOUT TRADE BARRIERS FOR BUSINESSES GOING INTERNATIONAL. AS I WOULD LIKE TO DIVE INTO THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP SPHERE AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE, I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THESE POLICIES."

U.S. EXPERIENCES OF CAPSTONE INTERNS

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**ZULFIYA
URUNOVA**

STREET ENTREPRENEURS

Street Entrepreneurs is a non-profit inclusive, community-driven accelerator. It provides workshops, mentorship, talent-exchange and investment opportunities for the community. My main duty is to keep books of the company in order and in accordance with the U.S. requirements.

Although my academic background is in accounting, I am still learning U.S. accounting standards and tax requirements. Also, most of the funding for the organization is secured through grants and investors that require detailed budgeting, which I help to prepare for each grant separately. I also worked on creating an impact report for investors for the 32 workshops organized throughout the year. Sometimes I am involved in the development of

content for social media, preparation of pitch decks and overall marketing for the organization.

This internship has exceeded my expectations. Before the internship started I thought that I would be doing only accounting for the organization, but I am involved in all of the processes of the company. I can choose which project to work on, which allows me to get out of my comfort zone and learn new skills. First, I advanced my multitasking skills, because sometimes I can have several tasks at the same time. Further, I am developing my networking skills. For example, during the startup week, I had to look for new partners and investors. I am also learning more about marketing tools for social media and fundraising campaigns. During the first week I was



"MY LONG-TERM GOAL IS TO HAVE MY OWN BUSINESS OR A START-UP; THEREFORE, WORKING IN AN INCUBATOR THAT HELPS STARTUPS COMPLETELY FULFILLS MY GOALS."

given a task to prepare a pitch deck for the showcase. I did not feel comfortable at first, since it wasn't something I had learned to do, but now I realize that I should take more tasks like that to learn new skills and knowledge.

My internship site is a coworking space where I meet new people almost every day, and each one of them is working on exciting projects.

Watching their excitement about the work they do make me more productive at the workplace.... Work at a startup is usually very unstructured, and I was surprised that I can create processes and structure for some projects. I am learning about how to keep track of many things at the same time, how to make people like the project and invest in it and many other things that I will definitely need in the future."

FINANCIAL MARKETS QUALITY CONFERENCE

BY ZHIBEK KAMALBEK KYZY AND ALTYNAI MELISOVA



FINANCIAL MARKETS QUALITY CONFERENCE AT THE GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY IN WASHINGTON D.C

The Capstone Internship Program provides opportunities to engage in a plethora of networking and professional development events. Interns' placement in Washington DC in particular, allows fellows to meet and connect with influential professionals in their fields. This year's interns have taken full advantage of these opportunities.

On November 1, 2018 four Capstone International Internship fellows - **Altynai Melisova**, **Zhibek Kamalbek kyzy**, **Azatbek Ismailov** and **Jahongir Rahimov** attended the Financial Markets Quality Conference at the Georgetown University in Washington D.C. This business event convened top financial companies and organizations in the United States such as U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), NASDAQ, the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission and others. ►

FINANCIAL MARKETS QUALITY CONFERENCE

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PARTICIPANT FELLOWS SHARED THEIR IMPRESSIONS AND TAKEAWAYS FROM THE CONFERENCE:

“ Financial Markets Quality Conference 2018 happened to be one of the largest finance-related business conferences of the year. As a participant, I was excited to learn about the disruptive innovation trend in the financial industry from heads of NASDAQ, NYSE, and U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. The highlights also included meeting with the principal of financial innovation at KPMG U.S., who invited us for a company tour in NYC headquarters. ”

JAHONGIR RAHIMOV



THOMAS WITTMAN, VICE PRESIDENT OF NASDAQ



“ The agenda of the event looked very appealing to me as I saw presidents and CEOs of impactful government and financial institutions. I found very interesting the speech of the Nasdaq and NYSE top management. They introduced the current trends at the stock market and challenges public companies are facing. The discussion was interactive since participants could ask questions or offer ideas as solutions to problems. The main takeaway for me was that we could adopt it in Kyrgyzstan - companies and people simply do not know what our financial regulators work on, thus, I believe the close interaction between entrepreneurs and government officials would enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Kyrgyz Republic. ”

AZATBEK ISMAILOV

FINANCIAL MARKETS QUALITY CONFERENCE

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“ Washington D.C. is an amazing space to network with people from different industries, and even to take a picture with Stacey Cunningham, President of New York Stock Exchange; or Thomas Wittman, Vice President of Nasdaq. Zhibek and I were impressed by the fact that Stacey Cunningham is the first female president in the history of NYSE, and hopefully not the last one.

In addition, lunch in Washington D.C. is not all about eating since it is a perfect time to conduct an informational interview. Using this great tactic at the conference, I randomly picked a table with



unfamiliar faces and started conversation. I was lucky to talk to Mr. Thomas Clark, who turned out to be a Senior Manager at BlackRock - one of the world's largest investment management corporation. He shared that he had been hunted by the BlackRock recruiting team, and recently left his job at General Electric. Mr. Clark advised me to be brave and pursue big goals! ”

**ALTYNAI
MELISOVA**

“ Being a supporter of gender equality at the workplace, I was absolutely amazed meeting with the current President of the NYSE, Stacey Cunningham. She is the first female to serve as a president since the establishment of stock market in the U.S. During her panel discussion, she advised the student participants like us and told to never be afraid of striving forward. Seeing the faces of people whom

we read about in news and finance books felt just powerful and motivating.

During the lunch and networking time, I was able to meet with the representative of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Hans Heidle, who serves as a Financial Economist. His career advancement history helped me to understand the variety of career opportunities we can take on using our business-related knowledge. Overall, I was very happy to have a chance to attend such a great conference at Georgetown University. ”

**ZHIBEK
KAMALBEK KYZY**

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