

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.



STEVE SHEA WITH SENIORS ASYLGUL KENZHEBAEVA (LEFT) & MALIKA IBRAGIMOVA (RIGHT)

REMEMBERING STEVE SHEA

BY ADEL SULTANBEKOVA

We were deeply saddened by Steve Shea's passing on March 4, 2015.

Steve Shea, one of the founders of U.S.-CAEF, will be remembered for his deeds. Indeed, a person's true wealth is the good he or she does in the world. Steve did this through changing the lives of many young people. He believed in us and opened the doors to the bright future making our dreams come true. This person with an open heart and kind soul will also be like the light, which will always lead us on our paths and guide us through hardships. Like the father of U.S.-CAEF family he was the man who inspired the hearts of many fellows. We were truly blessed to have him in our lives and for the incredible opportunities he opened for us.

We received over eighty notes from our alumni and students. Due to space limitations, we decided to include only two quotes that show the enormous warmth, affection, appreciation, and respect that our fellows felt for Steve:

"Mr. Steven Shea was one of those rare people who expressed genuine interest and care in the lives of other people. I remember him asking questions about our personal and professional lives, giving valuable advice, sharing his life experience, laughing at our jokes... He will always remain in my heart as a perfect example of how the life should be lived."

TANGULU DIUSHAKHMATOVA
CLASS OF 2011
AUDIT ASSOCIATE
KPMG, BISHKEK

"It is by looking at Mr. Shea, I understood how the actions of a single person can make the world better; it is by knowing him you get inspired to implement ideas that can affect tens, hundreds, and thousands of people... The loss of this wonderful person does not cease the results of his hard work, and in fact finds continuation in the actions of others, who had huge love and respect towards him..."

ARYSTAN MOLDABEKOV
CLASS OF 2011
HEAD OF GENERAL ACCOUNTING
CAPITAL BANK, ALMATY

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ADEL SULTANBEKOVA

Adel Sultanbekova is an AUCA junior in the Business Administration department. She is also a FLEX alumna and a participant of AUCA-Norwegian University of Life Sciences exchange program. She is passionate about volunteering, travel-

AUCA FELLOWS PARTICIPATE IN WORLD BUSINESS DIALOGUE

IN COLOGNE, GERMANY



AUCA FELLOWS IN COLOGNE, GERMANY

On March 12-13, four U.S.-CAEF Fellows—sophomore **Adel Sultanbekova**, and seniors **Valentina Khomenko**, **Amantur Tynybekov** and **Asylgul Kenzhebaeva** – attended the World Business Dialogue in Cologne, Germany, which is one of the largest international student-run business conventions in the world. The trip was sponsored by AUCA's Student Intellectual Life Committee (SILC) grant. Junior Adel Sultanbekova shared her story with us:

"This year's topic 'Power to the People: Redefining Interdependencies in a Trembling World' attracted 250 students from 60 countries, and 45 prominent speakers. The WBD 2015 focused on changing power structures between today's world players. The conference had three main panels: Employer vs. Employee, Politics vs. Economy and Business vs. Customer. The program also included discussions of such topics as the power of hidden champions, micro-entrepreneurs, corporate responsibility, sustainability, robots, digital transformation, global leader-

ship, innovation culture, and customer engagement. The former Prime Minister of the Netherlands, representatives of the German government and top managers of BMW Group, Ford, Yandex, Bayer, Henkel, Detecon International, Ernst & Young, Simon-Kucher & Partners, and Boston Consulting Group gave interesting and inspiring presentations. In addition, we had interesting tours of Ford Motor and Microsoft.

Overall, WBD is a unique opportunity to approach representatives of the global economy and to establish contact with motivated fellow students from around the world. It is also a great chance to learn new skills from workshops; gather new inspiration from talks and panel discussions; meet well-known company representatives and leaders of tomorrow; and analyze and discuss current innovations, social trends, new business models and other important topics in today's economy. This event has greatly broadened my vision and showed me new heights to strive for."

ing, psychology and outdoor activities. Her dream is to travel around the world, meet people and get a little glimpse into their interesting and unique cultures. Her goal is to live life to the fullest, build lifelong connections with people across the globe, and become a successful business leader. She believes that dreams come true if a person does everything to reach them. outdoor activities. Her dream is to travel around the world, meet people and get a little glimpse into their interesting and unique cultures. Her goal is to live life to the fullest, build lifelong connections with people across the globe, and become a successful business leader. She believes that dreams come true if a person does everything to reach them.



KIMEP FELLOWS COME FIRST IN CHANGELLENGE

CUP KAZAKHSTAN 2015

BY ZARRINA YUNUSZODA & JEMAL AGAYEVA



ZARRINA YUNUSZODA WITH HER TEAMMATES

ZARRINA: Every year big companies in Kazakhstan give students a unique opportunity to test their abilities to develop innovative solutions to real-world business issues through business case competitions. This year Changellenge Cup Kazakhstan in partnership with Mars Inc., Sberbank and Ernst and Young organized another interesting business competition. Nine hundred students from 34 universities of 15 cities formed 225 teams and applied for the competition. Only 10 teams from the Russian section and 10 teams from the English section were invited to the finals, where students presented their solutions in front of the judges, managers of leading companies. This year, my team came first in the English section and became the champion of Changellenge Cup Kazakhstan 2015.

It was a long and challenging road to the success. The main factor that contributed to it was the teamwork. We managed to communicate effectively with each other, and build strong interpersonal relationships. We also had a very positive attitude during the whole time, which is another key to our success.

Participating in Changellenge provided me with numerous benefits-- I developed my analytical, presentation and teamwork skills; it was also a good opportunity to compete with the brightest minds of Kazakhstan and explore my capabilities; in addition, I received job and internship offers.

Overall, it was an unforgettable experience and gave me memories that will last forever. I encourage all students to participate in similar business case competitions.

JEMAL: Participation in Changellenge is a great opportunity to be heard by top managers of different companies. You can provide suggestions and solutions to specific issues which can be applicable in the real world.

I was honored to be one of the winners of Changellenge Cup Kazakhstan 2015 in the Russian section of the case competition. Together with my team we had a brilliant chance to present our business solutions to Sberbank. We were able to offer interesting financial, marketing and management strategies for implementation of Sberbank's mobile banking.

This accomplishment once more proved that KIMEP University is the top school in Kazakhstan. KIMEP students won 4 out of 6 prizes—two in the Russian and two in the English sections. I am proud to be a student of this world class university! This proves that teaching critical thinking and analytical reasoning has real-world applications.



JEMAL AGAYEVA



JEMAL AGAYEVA (LEFT)

FOUR FELLOWS AMONG BRIGHTEST LEADERS OF KYGRYZSTAN



U.S.-CAEF FELLOWS WITH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

A group of young Kyrgyz professionals from leading international companies came up with the idea of creating a club, “Pro KG”, to empower a young generation of leaders. One of the recent projects of the club is a leadership program for the young people aged 19-24. Through harsh competition, out of 300 applicants, 18 of the brightest young people who showed great leadership potential, were selected to participate in the program.

The leadership program consisted of two parts. During the first part, participants were engaged in a 3-day intensive interactive training sessions and discussions in the Chunkurchak valley. In the second part, each participant had five meetings with an assigned mentor. Participants were matched with mentors according to their career interests.

Of the 18 selected young leaders, four were U.S.-CAEF fellows: **Adel Sultanbekova**, **Bakhrom Tursunov**, **Asel Kaldybaeva** and **Anisa Atalova**. The fellows shared their feedback from the event:

Asel Kaldybaeva: “These days were unforgettable. Presentations and the advice from speakers made

us think about our future goals and spheres we want to focus on. I also find it very useful to have individual mentors. I’m happy and thankful for being selected to this program.”

Adel Sultanbekova: “The ProKG leadership school was a life changing event for me. Although the school lasted only for three days, its intensive program was enough to rethink my life values, goals and future career plans. The seminars were focused on fundamental life principles, personal growth, centers of life interests, roles and goals, life roadmap and its implementation. I am truly grateful for such an opportunity to meet with incredible students and professionals who kindly shared their knowledge and experience with me. It was very pleasant to meet like-minded people. At the moment I am trying to “invest” more in myself and work on applying the received knowledge. All in all, the school gave a great motivation for my personal and professional growth.”

Bakhrom Tursunov: “I did like this program. I met so many active guys from other universities. I liked the organization of the program. Currently, my mentor is helping me a lot!”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



ANISA ATALOVA

Anisa Atalova is a Business Administration junior. Her biggest dream is to promote alternative energy sources and sustainable agriculture around the world.

FELLOWS LEARN ABOUT USAID’S ASSISTANCE TO CENTRAL ASIA

U.S.-CAEF and KIMEP University organized a meeting with Aler Grubbs from USAID who made a presentation about USAID’s assistance to Central Asia.

Aler Grubbs is the director of the Regional Strategy & Program Office in USAID/Central Asia, based in Almaty, Kazakhstan. She oversees strategic plan-



ning, project design, budget planning, outreach and communications, short-term exchange programs, environmental compliance, and many other functions for USAID's regional mission to Central Asia. Aler served previously in USAID missions to South Sudan, Bosnia, Pakistan, Egypt, and has also worked on USAID programs across the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America.

In her presentation Aler talked about three phases of the USAID's involvement in Central Asia, U.S. strategic priorities in Central Asia, and the new strategies for 2015-2019. At the end of the presentation, Aler had a discussion with our fellows about the main challenges facing Central Asia, and ways the countries of Central Asia can improve coordination on shared challenges. She also asked students about their goals and ideas for the future of Central Asia.

Below are some of the quotes that reflect fellows' feedback about the event:

Jemal Agayeva, Turkmenistan 2011: "The USAID presentation was very informative and interactive. I was glad to learn about their implemented projects, specifically in the region. Also, it was inspiring to hear my peers' opinions about the future of our neighboring countries."

Aknur Tassybekova, Kazakhstan 2013: "I have learned about some world problems and how they are being solved and what USAID is doing to address them. It was so motivating that I do want to go and do something more than I am doing now. I have realized that a lot of things which I take for granted are a dream for others, such things as clean water or access to education and medical treatment, etc. It was really amazing."

Galiya Kemelbaieva, Kazakhstan 2014: "It was beneficial for me because I had an opportunity to learn the opinions and thoughts of peer students from neighboring countries about Central Asia's current conditions. Also it was inspirational for me because I could see that there are many more things we can do and must do not only for our country but for all 'stan' countries. And we are not alone in this journey."

Zarrina Mulloboeva, Tajikistan 2013: "For me it was a very interesting presentation and discussion about USAID and challenges in the region. It is very useful to know the long-term strategies of USAID and our governments in the future, so we can contribute to the development of the region."



ALER GRUBBS



FELLOWS ASKING QUESTIONS AT THE MEETING



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

MEET NEW ALUMNI OFFICER AIDANA ABRAKHMANOVA

Talgat Kadirov, Vice-President for Professional Development of the U.S.-CAEF Alumni Association, resigned from his post due to personal reasons in March, 2015. **Aidana Abrakhmanova**, KIMEP Class of 2012, accepted an offer from the alumni leadership team to fill in this position on April 6.

In the passage below Aidana tells about herself and what she would like to do in this new role. Let's welcome Aidana!

"I graduated from KIMEP in 2012 majoring in Accounting and minoring in Marketing. Fortunately, I found the job where I could fully apply the knowl-



AIDANA ABRAKHMANOVA

edge received both from KIMEP and internship experiences throughout my studies. Currently, I am working for Procter & Gamble as finance manager responsible for market strategy and planning as well as distributor/customer operations.

My employment career started right after my 1st year in KIMEP with various internship experiences in different areas: accounting, banking, administration and FMCG. Thanks to these opportunities, I under-

stood what I'd like my professional life to look like. That's why I joined P&G after graduation; I have been working there ever since. Because my major responsibility in the Alumni Association is to develop the U.S.-CAEF fellows from the professional standpoint, I will try to share as much experience and knowledge for their successful employment after university as much as possible." -- **Aidana Abrakhmanova**

SNAPSHOT OF SUCCESS: KHURSHEDMO FOLLOWS HER DREAMS

BY YELENA VOROBEY, PRESIDENT OF U.S.-CAEF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

"After graduation, I plan to go back to Tajikistan and help develop my home country with my knowledge of the business sphere. For the first two years, I plan to work in the field of marketing and management and hope to develop my own business to expand production in my home country." - KHURSHEDMO, GRADUATION BOOK 2013

Skimming through the pictures on Facebook, a familiar face surrounded by exotic palms caught my attention. It turned out to be my fellow and friend, Khurshedmo Jonmamadova. The last time I saw her was two years ago, when she was a senior at AUCA and we were working on one of the AIESEC projects together. Moved by the memories, I wrote to her and was even more surprised by the success she has achieved. Now, Khurshedmo, who is happily married, finds time to travel, work as a marketing professional at LLC "Masita" in Dushanbe, and run her own small business called "Izyum" - a bakery in Khorog, Tajikistan.

On the question about how she came up with the idea, she says "I have always had a sweet tooth, so starting a business in that sphere was easy and intuitive. I already knew what equipment and materials I needed and what I wanted to offer." Originally, she started the business with her relatives, who still support her in every way. The bakery offers a variety of sweet pastry, cakes, local sweets as well as different kinds of bread. Khurshedmo's business has been in



operation for two years now and currently she has five full-time employees. In November 2014, Khurshedmo received a business development grant from the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, has been supporting the economic and social rebuilding of Tajikistan since 1995) and the American Chamber of Commerce in Tajikistan. The number of customers is ever-growing, with some people already being loyal to her products.

I cannot help being proud of Khurshedmo. By looking at her, I see the results and benefits of the U.S.-CAEF program. I wish her the best of luck with her business and every other endeavor.

REFLECTIONS AFTER COLLEGE

BY DINARA ATANTAYEVA, KIMEP CLASS OF 2013

I came to realize that the company where you start your career is extremely important in terms of shaping your values and growing professionally. It is vital to have someone around you who can be a role model, whose personal qualities and career achievements inspire you to work harder and be creative, and who has done something you used to think was impossible. I am very lucky to work in such environment.

Human capital is the key driver of any entity. This is what I was taught at KIMEP but did not fully under-

stand it back then. Only now I understand the true value of effective interaction in the workplace and building professional relationships. While studying at KIMEP, I considered the communication courses supplementary and tried to focus more on such major disciplines as accounting and finance. But now, I am 100% sure that communication skills are crucial for one's career success. Often we find ourselves in a situation where we need to resolve a problem. You might ask people around and expect them to solve the problem for you. But this never happens. I learned that the best way is to go to your boss and

not only to tell him about the problem but to show some possible solutions you have come up with. This way you can receive a prompt and clear answer.

This is how I understand the importance of communication skills now. It is a tool that helps you overcome everyday challenges at work. I strongly advise all current U.S.- CAEF fellows to pay a lot of attention to communication courses, especially to such topics as time management, business memo writing, business email correspondence, and presentation skills. Believe me-- your efforts will pay off. I hope you find my tips helpful.

It happened so that two of us, Temur Utegenov (KIMEP Class of 2012) and I, work in the same company, Tengizchevroil, in remote Atyrau. We try to support each other as we are both from one big U.S.-CAEF family. We often talk about those wonderful years of study at KIMEP full of happiness and

support that the U.S.-CAEF team provided. We are always happy to learn about amazing achievements and successes of U.S.- CAEF fellows and alumni. In this issue of the newsletter Timur would also like to share his story after graduation:



TEMUR UTEGENOV & DINARA ATANTAYEVA

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U.S.- CAEF is one of the best things that happened to me.
Without it I wouldn't have studied at the coolest academy.
So many young talents got this chance.
U.S.-CAEF made lives advance
With some finance at first glance.
But what really helped is coordinators' supportive guidance.

After my KIMEP graduation, as walk of life continuation,
I started working in Tengizshevroil, to try my best in the industry of oil.
I liked the job in Accounts Payable and Project Finance.

My assistance made processes more advanced.
It is nice to work with professional management
To get guidance and motivating encouragement.

I am delighted to work with Dinara--our dear fellow.
Two CAEF fellows at TCO--indication that we grow.
I also noticed very friendly environment
This makes my job a complete enjoyment.
I was the winner of Finance Football Cup 2013
These weekly football games changed my daily routine.

However, my top achievement of last few years
Is becoming head of family, unlike my fellow peers.
Last year my wife brought to the world my son
It feels like I have at home another sun,
The sun that warms my heart and motivates me
To be an ideal father.

My sincere gratitude to U.S.-CAEF fellows, coordinators and all stakeholders.
It surely you who helped me reach these borders.
I miss you all, and soon hope to see you all.

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