

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

## CELEBRATING ZEBRA COFFEE'S 1ST ANNIVERSARY

AIZHARKYN SHARES HER BUSINESS SUCCESS STORY ON PAGE 8



AIZHARKYN BURKANOVA, KYRGYZ REPUBLIC



JENNET GURBANMAMEDOVA, TURKMENISTAN

## U.S.-CAEF FELLOW REPRESENTED CENTRAL ASIA AT THE 40TH INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TODAY CONFERENCE IN NY CITY

ON PAGE 2

### IN THIS ISSUE ▼

#### LEARNING BEYOND CAMPUS

Felows share their stories about professional development events | page 1

#### FELLOWS' STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES

page 4

#### DIVERSITY WEEK AT AUCA

page 5

#### ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

page 6

#### NEW ALUMNI LEADERSHIP TEAM

#### AIZHARKYN'S SUCCESSFUL VENTURE

#### ALUMNI UPDATES

## LEARNING BEYOND CAMPUS

### YOUTH SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: INSPIRING SOLUTIONS

BY ADEL SULTANBEKOVA, AUCA



ADEL RECEIVING CERTIFICATE FROM JASA.KG

Together with two sophomore fellows - Asel Kaldybaeva and Rakhat Kubanychbekova - I had a unique opportunity to participate in the project Youth Social Entrepreneurship, organized by the Association of Social Entrepreneurs and the International Youth Foundation program Jasa.kg.

The project was funded by USAID and the Soros Foundation. The program included workshops on fundamentals of writing business plans, drafting organizational and financial plans; motivational meetings with successful social entrepreneurs, businessmen and potential investors; and seminars on

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



ADEL SULTANBEKOVA

Adel 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, traveling, psychology and



different types of leaderships and social innovation. At the end of the project, participants took part in a business contest. My partner and I became winners and received a voucher for our project aimed at helping unemployed women earn a living by making ecologically friendly toys. After the event I had an opportunity to join Young Social Entrepreneurs Club. The club regularly organizes different meetings to help

participants on their projects and generate new business ideas. I believe this will be very useful for my future business projects.

Overall, the program inspired me to exercise my leadership potential and learn more about entrepreneurship. I strongly encourage our U.S.-CAEF fellows to apply for this truly amazing program.

*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.*

## BUSINESS TODAY CONFERENCE IN NYC

BY JENNET GURBANMAMMEDOVA, KIMEP UNIVERSITY

I was very excited to be selected to participate in the 40th International Business Today Conference. Business Today is a conference organized by Princeton students to create a dialogue between students and business leaders. This year the conference took place in New York City on November 23rd - 25th, 2014 and hosted almost 130 students from all corners of the world. I was the only participant from Central Asia.

With inspiring keynote speeches, seminars (both on-site and at corporate headquarters), the International Conference delivered an incredible experience. This year's theme was "Morality in Business." The speakers talked about the compatibility of business and morality given the conditions of the 21st century. Keynote speakers included: Paul Fribourg, Chairman & CEO of the Continental Grain Company; Stephen A. Schwarzman, Chairman & CEO of the Blackstone Group; Mark Thompson, CEO & President of the New York Times Company; Jeffrey Immelt, Chairman & CEO of the General Electric; Steve Forbes, Editor-in-Chief of the Forbes Media; Kevin McKnight, Chief Sustainability Officer of the Alcoa; and many others. In addition, we had a case study competition organized by Deloitte Consulting.



I am so glad I had a chance to be a part of this great event. Everyone I met was awesome. The interaction of current business leaders and young curious minds was really inspiring. I learned so much during this short time and I truly believe that the conference was only the beginning that will lead to long lasting friendships and business connections.

## INTERNSHIP AT THE U.S. CONSULATE

BY UMEDJON KURBONALI, KIMEP UNIVERSITY



I am excited to write to you about my first internship at Commercial Services section of the U.S. Consulate in Almaty. It was a great experience that helped me grow and develop. I started it on October 1, 2015 as a Trade Intern. I helped senior specialists plan and implement events. I was able to work with some of the best professionals in their fields and with a group of young and very enthusiastic interns. This experience helped me improve my communication, organizational, planning, and team work skills. I also learned to manage my free time better. Overall, I am very happy and satisfied with how I spent my four months there, and I would definitely advise you, guys, to try it out too!



## A FIRST-HAND LOOK AT CCBB & KUMTOR

BY GULKAIYR TASHIEVA, AUCA



AUCA FELLOWS AT KUMTOR MINING SITE

If you ask students what their favorite events are, I believe most will say “field trips!” Recently we had two amazing events associated with professional development.

The first site visit took place in December and was initiated and organized by our senior fellows. Twenty U.S.-CAEF students visited one of the global brand production plants - Coca-Cola Bishkek Bottlers (CCBB). CCBB is one of the leading investments in the Kyrgyz economy.

Before the trip, we had many questions such as: What is the atmosphere in the company? How do they make beverages? What are the job prospects with this company?

During the site visit, fellows learned interesting facts and useful information that you cannot find online. Aijana Djumalieva, head of the Public Affairs and Communications Department, made a presentation about the history of the Coca-Cola Company, told us about some myths and stereotypes associated with Coca-Cola and answered our questions. The most enjoyable part was the tour around the factory. We actually had an opportunity to visit the manufacture zone and observe how popular beverages are produced in Bishkek.

The second trip was to the Kumtor mining site in November. Again this trip was organized by seniors and our new coordinator, Aliia Suranova. Kumtor is the largest investment project in Kyrgyz Republic. This second highest gold deposit in the world is situated in the southern region of the Central Tien-Shan at an altitude of 4,000 meters (14,000 ft.) above sea level in a permafrost zone. The deposit is located 350 kilometers from Bishkek, so it took 6 hours for us to get there. During the visit, students learned about the process of extraction and production of gold. The group visited the quarry, gold processing plant, residential

camp, and Lake Petrov. The company’s specialists provided general information about the production process and answered all our questions.

“For an entire semester at AUCA I took a course on investment law, [during] which we discussed in great detail Kumtor, as an example of the largest investment project in the Kyrgyz Republic. A trip to the mine has become the most exciting and rewarding visit during my academic life. I am impressed by the scale of the enterprise and its contribution to the economy of my country. I’m glad we had an opportunity to see the production process with our own eyes,” senior Nasiba Nurmatova said about the trip.

We are grateful to CCBB and Kumtor staff for their time and hospitality. Such trips are important for our fellows because they learn about local businesses and see industries in action; they also establish important business contacts and learn about potential career paths and job perspectives.



AUCA FELLOWS AT COCA-COLA BISHKEK BOTTLERS

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



GULKAIYR TASHIEVA

*I am from Osh region, Kyrgyzstan. While studying in high school in my lovely village Toloikon, I applied and was accepted to New Generation Academy (NGA), AUCA’s preparatory program. I was able to boost my English language skills and math which helped me pass my AUCA exams and become a finalist of the U.S.-CAEF program. I am so grateful to U.S.-CAEF for giving me an opportunity to study at AUCA. At present, I am a sophomore in the Business Administration department. For one of my elective courses I chose Chinese (my 4th language) because in the future I want to create a business partnership with China and my home town.*



# FELLOWS' STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES

## NORWAY: NORWEGIAN UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES

BY ANISA ATALOVA, AUCA

My exchange semester at Norwegian University of Life Sciences in Ås, Norway in fall 2014 was an amazing opportunity to experience a completely different culture. It was extremely useful to study economics courses from the perspective of a powerful and stable economy because it gave ideas for sustainable development of our region.

Besides from studies, I experienced Norway through volunteering at the University, travelling and meeting a lot of Norwegians and international students. Seeing a completely different life and system of education, I became more mature and independent.



## SWEDEN: LUND UNIVERSITY

BY YERASSYL TOLEUGAZINOV, KIMEP UNIVERSITY

I spent my fall 2014 semester at Lund University in Sweden through the Erasmus Mundus Undergraduate Mobility Program. Lund University is one of the biggest universities in Scandinavia with over 40,000 students and a wide variety of programs to study. It is ranked as the best university in Europe. Part of its success is due to guest lectures and site visits to companies that complement the classroom learning.

Life in Lund evolves very much around the university. The Swedish people are very friendly and I felt very welcome and appreciated, and made many friends. I am very happy with my experience and can recommend Lund to anyone thinking about a study abroad program.



## HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

BY NAZERKE ZARLYKHANOVA, KIMEP UNIVERSITY



During my exchange semester at Hong Kong Baptist University in fall 2014 I focused not only on my studies but also on making my student life abroad as bright as possible. As a result, I have gained valuable experience and unforgettable memories.

To begin with, I participated in the Model United Nations (MUN) Leadership Program, and won the Best Delegate title. During the three-month program, I acquired much knowledge about international politics that I would not have been able to obtain elsewhere.

In addition, I received the Cultural Experience Award 2014 and \$2,000 for the project that I implemented in my host university. The aim of the project was to teach Russian language and share my knowledge about the post-Soviet countries with Chinese students. Later I became a cultural ambassador of



Kazakhstan and made cultural presentations in the local schools.

I was also able to expand my knowledge about the Chinese culture through learning Putonghua language, taking Tai Chi courses, and getting involved in student organizations including Business

Management Society, Wofoo Leaders Network and Mountaineering Association.

If you ever have a chance to participate in a study abroad program, definitely do it. Especially, if there is an opportunity to experience Hong Kong - the most developed city in Asia!

## TURKEY: AKDENIZ UNIVERSITY

BY JEMAL AGAYEVA, KIMEP UNIVERSITY

When I was awarded a Mevlana scholarship to study at Akdeniz University in Antalya, Turkey, I was very excited to absorb a new culture with rich history and traditions. To some extent, I expected Turkey to be very similar to Turkmenistan. But, no, it was different! Before arriving I was not even considering the challenges I might face in my host country.

The first barrier for me was the language and local mentality, so my first days were a struggle. This pushed me to learn Turkish (my seventh language) very quickly. This helped me delve in the Turkish culture and make new friends. In addition, I enrolled in seven courses, which were all taught in Turkish and I completed them all successfully. To get the most from this experience, I decided to combine courses on history and culture with business courses.

I am happy with my experience, which taught me to accept challenges. Without it I would definitely be quite different.



## DIVERSITY WEEK AT AUCA

BY ASEL KALDYBAEVA, AUCA



AUCA FELLOWS PARTICIPATING IN DIVERSITY WEEK



It would be interesting to know what an AUCA student would remember most about the university in 20 years. As for me, surely it would be Diversity Week! Actually, many AUCA students might feel the same way. This is the week that makes your child-

hood dreams come true. This is the week when you can show your creativity and become part of a unique delegation. AUCA hosts students and professors from over 30 countries with diverse backgrounds and interests. Diversity Week is a celebration of those

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



ASEL KALDYBAEVA

*I'm a sophomore in the Business Administration department of AUCA. Originally, I am from Teploklyuchenka village of Issyk-Kul region. In 2012, I became a finalist of the New Generation Academy at AUCA, which became one of the first important steps towards my future. Now, I'm glad to be part of AUCA and the U.S.-CAEF program. Studying at AUCA is challenging, but very interesting. I can spend the whole day on campus and not notice how it's already evening.*



differences through music, dance, food, writing, storytelling, and other events. Throughout the week all delegations do their best to demonstrate the best values of a particular culture.

Guess which day is one of the most anticipated ones? Of course, the Food Day. Have you ever been in a café offering many choices from different cuisines--Kyrgyz, Japanese, Uighur, Afghan etc.? That's what the Food Day is like. Another popular day is the final concert when each delegation shows what they have been rehearsing for five hours just in five minutes. These short performances show the power of unity, passion, joy and friendship. This final performance clearly demonstrates the unique and diverse spirit of AUCA. The concert is so popular among students that it doesn't need any advertisement. As usual, the hall was overcrowded this year again.

Another reason why I like Diversity Week is because practically every U.S.-CAEF fellow participates in it. This year, our fellows Adel Sultanbekova, Aigerim Al-

mazova, and Jamilya Klycheva and I were in the same group-- the Indian delegation. We had a lot fun together and became even closer after the event.



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

### MEET NEW ALUMNI LEADERSHIP TEAM

After two years of service, the first alumni council passed its duties onto a new leadership team. The first alumni officers should be highly commended for laying the Association's foundations, creating its strategic plan to support the U.S.-CAEF mission and organizing events to benefit both alumni and current student fellows. The newly elected members are eager to continue the traditions set by their predecessors and look forward to fostering the U.S.-CAEF spirit further and contributing to the economic prosperity of Central Asia. To better serve the mission of U.S.-CAEF, the alumni council has reorganized and changed several positions. One of the most significant changes was the introduction of the position of the Vice-President for Professional Development.

The new leadership team represents both AUCA and KIMEP University:



**YELENA VOROBAY**  
PRESIDENT | CAPSTONE INTERN | UNITED PLANNING ORGANIZATION

I graduated from AUCA in 2014 with a bachelor's degree in Economics. In the same year, I was chosen as a U.S.-CAEF Capstone Fellow and spent a semester interning in Washington, DC as a Business Research Analyst at United Planning Organization. Through the U.S.-CAEF program I have gained a solid basis for my career and interests, strong sense of purpose and confidence in my abilities to change myself and contribute to the development of Central Asian community. I am honored to be able to give back to the program through serving as the Association's President. Together with the new team of alumni officers, I plan to conduct a series of events on leadership, communication, project planning, and reporting. Fellows find alumni stories very inspiring and I would be honored to help alumni share them.



**IGNAT KIM**  
TREASURER | HEAD OF FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT | BISHKEK BRANCH OF MANAS AIRPORT

I am a 2014 AUCA alumnus with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and International Business Law. I've been working at Manas International Airport since my graduation from AUCA, and was recently promoted to head of the financial department of the airport's Bishkek branch. Thanks to the U.S.-CAEF fellowship, I keep achieving great results. And I am more than happy to be elected as the treasurer of the U.S.-CAEF Alumni Association. Through my involvement in the association I would like to show my gratefulness to the U.S.-CAEF family. I'll do my best to maintain accurate records and prepare annual statements of the association's accounts, and set up systems to deal with the association's finances.





### TALGAT KADIROV

VICE-PRESIDENT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (KIMEP UNIVERSITY) | ASSURANCE | ERNST & YOUNG

I can be considered as the oldest and busiest VP on the team. I am a representative of the pioneer cohort and graduated from KIMEP in 2011. I was also one of the pioneers of the Capstone internship program in Washington, DC in 2011. In 2013 I started my career at Ernst and Young in Astana, but later moved to Almaty. Currently I have a senior level position in Assurance and work mostly with the audit in oil and gas sector. My responsibilities in the Alumni Association include developing links and connections for our alumni and fellows in the professional field. I am happy to support the team with my career experience and I hope it will be to the benefit of the Association.



### KARINA KUSSAINOVA

VICE-PRESIDENT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (AUCA) | BUSINESS COACH | AMITY CONSULTING

I graduated from the Business Administration department of AUCA with a minor in Psychology. Right now I am working at Amity Consulting where we provide different trainings like peer coaching, leadership trainings, life purpose coaching, marriage consultations and general coaching. The reason why I decided to run for Vice President for Professional Development is that my current job is related to career coaching. I love my job and do my best to learn from what I do and I believe that I will enjoy sharing what I have learned with U.S.-CAEF fellows and alumni. I see that our alumni are not very connected with current fellows. I believe we should try to change it. And we could change it by developing them professionally altogether.



### MADINA DAMIR KYZY

VICE-PRESIDENT FOR MEMBERSHIP, OUTREACH & SOCIAL ACTIVITIES (AUCA) | ASSISTANT AUDITOR | KPMG

I am a 2014 AUCA alumna. I graduated with a major in Business Administration and minor in Psychology. Currently, I am working as Assistant Auditor at KPMG Bishkek LLC. I have been always interested in financial sector and fraud investigation, thus for me working as an auditor is truly a dream job, where I get to meet professionals and learn valuable insights into many spheres. I feel honored working in such a global company as KPMG, and I understand that without U.S.-CAEF this would not have been possible - thanks to the student-fellowship program I was able to attend one of the best universities in the region and to receive invaluable knowledge.

I feel proud being a U.S.-CAEF alumna, and therefore being elected as Vice-President for Membership and Outreach of the U.S.-CAEF Alumni Association is a great honor for me. My main responsibilities are event-planning and coordination and I will really try to make them fun and interesting for you. I believe that we are all one big family, and I want to ensure that we always stay in touch and help not only our alumni but our current fellows as well. In the end, we were once in your shoes, so we definitely know how to help - we are always open to your questions, thoughts and comments.



### MALIKA PULOTOVA

VICE-PRESIDENT FOR MEMBERSHIP, OUTREACH & SOCIAL ACTIVITIES (KIMEP UNIVERSITY) | CAPSTONE INTERN | VOICE OF AMERICA

I am a U.S.-CAEF Alumni 2014. After graduating from KIMEP University with a major in Marketing, I was honored to become a Capstone International Internship Program finalist. As part of this program, I interned in the Horn of Africa Service of Voice of America, the biggest international broadcasting organization in the world. I was proud to work on the service's digital product, improve brand recognition and build audience among young people from the Horn of Africa. At the moment I am looking for a job and hope that I will be able to contribute to the development of marketing in Kazakhstan.

I am very happy to join the Alumni Association and serve as VP for Membership, Outreach and Social Activities for KIMEP University alumni. I am a people-oriented person and I truly believe in our fellows. U.S.-CAEF became my second family, and I would like to find ways for all fellows to stay connected with each other. In my position, I plan to propose and organize Alumni reunion events and arrange more meetings where current U.S.-CAEF fellows and alumni may share their experiences and knowledge.



# CELEBRATING ZEBRA COFFEE'S FIRST ANNIVERSARY

## INTERVIEW WITH AIZHARKYN BURKANOVA

AUCA/CLASS OF 2014 | CO-OWNER OF ZEBRA COFFEE | ASSISTANT TO CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER (CIO), AUCA



AIZHARKYN BURKANOVA (2ND RIGHT) NEXT TO ANDREW WACHTEL, AUCA PRESIDENT

BY SEZIM BEKSULTANOVA

**SEZIM:** What ignited the spark to start a new business venture? How did this idea come to you?

**AIZHARKYN:** When I decided to study Business Administration at AUCA, I already knew that I wanted to run my own business. When I was on a study abroad program, my friend invited me to a coffee house for breakfast. I enjoyed the atmosphere in that place. So a business idea came to my mind to open a coffee shop. Upon my return to Bishkek, I did some research, and started working on my business plan. However, since I still needed financial support, I could not launch my own business right away. And then Jalil and I were lucky to meet Simon Peter Na-deem, an AUCA student who owned Zebra Coffee. He was thinking about selling his business. Jalil and I started to work hard on auditing the financial condition and sustainability of Zebra Coffee so that we could present a strong business plan to our investors. They examined the detailed analysis and calculations, and soon we were able to sign an agreement with them. Finally, we obtained all documents and became official owners of Zebra Coffee on February 28, 2014. Soon we will celebrate our first anniversary.

**SEZIM:** Could you please tell us more about your business?

**AIZHARKYN:** First of all, we have delicious coffee. As an alumnus of AUCA, I know how students spend their time in the library. We used to stay at library from early mornings till nights. And coffee helps to stay awake. The original idea was to serve snacks and coffee. Then we noticed that students also like tea with milk. So now we serve fizzy drinks and flavored tea as well.

**SEZIM:** What form of business organization did you choose for Zebra Coffee? Do you have employees? How many? What are the biggest challenges?

**AIZHARKYN:** It is Limited Liability Company. LLC is very common in Kyrgyzstan and suitable for small

businesses. Currently, we have 5 employees--students who want to earn some money.

High employee turnover is the biggest challenge. Usually, we employ students, who after working for a couple of months leave. So we need to be flexible and quickly find replacements. Another issue is finding reliable suppliers who bring fresh snacks on time. Also I find it difficult to keep a tab on coffee consumption, milk, etc.

**SEZIM:** What plans do you have for your business next year, five or ten years from now?

**AIZHARKYN:** Originally, there was only one Zebra coffee shop in the AUCA library. Then we decided to expand our business and opened another coffee shop on the 3rd floor. In a year we want to develop a Zebra coffee network in other universities such as Alatau-Ataturk University and the Kyrgyz State University. Slavic University is already eager to see our coffee on their campus. Now that we know our customers' tastes, we are also planning to open our own bakery and serve fresh and good quality snacks.

**SEZIM:** What skills are required in your position? How is your AUCA education helping you? What advice would you give to college students who want to become entrepreneurs?

**AIZHARKYN:** Actually, the work is equally distributed between my partner and me. I do accounting. Jalil deals with suppliers. We both are involved in employment of new staff. Thanks to our professors and U.S.-CAEF professional development events, I gained good communication skills, that are now essential.

My advice for students is to go volunteering because this will help them develop their communication skills. Believe in your dreams because one day they might come true. Don't forget to study hard and work hard, and when you meet obstacles never give up.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



SEZIM BEKSULTANOVA

*I am an AUCA senior majoring in Business Administration. My strengths are positive attitude and belief in myself. I try to engage in activities that allow me to communicate with different people outside of my immediate environment, learn from them and expand my vision beyond my comfort zone. Therefore, last year I decided to teach English & Turkish languages at the educational center "The Best Future". The experience taught me to be responsible and patient. In my free time, I read psychology books, cook, make scrapbooks, swim and go the gym.*







ELENA SOBOLEVA

**ELENA SOBOLEVA**

AUCA | CLASS OF 2011

Elena is currently enrolled in the MBA program of Florida Atlantic University and works at HonorLock LLC, Delray Beach, Florida, a startup that she had co-founded last year. "My American friend and I founded this company in April 2014 after we won second place in the Florida Atlantic University Business Plan Competition in April 2014 and received \$13,000 in cash to launch our project on development and distribution of the computer technologies that detect students' cheating during online exams. If anyone is interested in this competition, the information can be found at: <http://business.fau.edu/centers/adams-center/business-plan-competition/index.aspx#.U2CRDq1dX6k>. Now we are nominated for a place in Florida Business Incubator "Tech Runway" and several financial investments from the state," Elena recently wrote.

**ARYSTAN MOLDABEKOV**

KIMEP UNIVERSITY | CLASS OF 2011

Arystan became the Head of General Accounting in the Accounting and Reporting Department of Capital Bank Kazakhstan. Prior to his current position, Arystan worked at Ernst & Young and BTA Bank.

**XENIA KURMAYEVA**

KIMEP UNIVERSITY | CLASS OF 2012

After completing her master's degree in Applied Finance and Banking in the United Arab Emirates, Xenia was employed by the supply chain division of L'Oreal FMCG at Chalhoub Group in Dubai, UAE.



**AIDANA ABDRAKHMANOVA**

KIMEP UNIVERSITY | CLASS OF 2012

Aidana, who currently works as a financial analyst at Procter & Gamble, spent six months in the Moscow branch of the company to share her experience and recently returned to Almaty. She found the experience quite challenging but very interesting and useful for her professional development.

**NAZOKAT OMURALIEVA**

AUCA, CLASS OF 2014

Nazokat has been hired as an accounting analyst by GE Global Operations in Budapest, Hungary where she is planning to stay for a few years with her husband who is employed by Prism Education and Cultural Foundation.

**ORALBEK SEYTMANOV**

KIMEP UNIVERSITY | CLASS OF 2011

Oralbek recently created his own ebusiness, FaSol Management Company LLP after working at LG and Sony Electronics as an account manager and marketing & sales manager for over three years. The new company provides catering services to local businesses. His team takes online orders and delivers food to clients from the best food suppliers in Almaty. In the future, Oralbek would like to expand his business and start to prepare food. Here is the website of his company [www.zaedu.kz](http://www.zaedu.kz).



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