

FEBRUARY 2017 | ISSUE #19

# NEWSLETTER

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.







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# **KANAT OSMONOV**

AUCA junior Kanat Osmonov became head of the Financial Committee of the AUCA Senate after an electoral victory over other opponents. Kanat is the first U.S.-CAEF fellow to be elected to the AUCA student government. In addition, Kanat is in charge of the Youth Social Entrepreneurship Program, a U.S.-CAEF student organization founded by the program alumni to support local communities.

"The results of the election show that many students believe in me and I have earned their trust. I believe that the true success will come when I implement my promises to students," -Kanat.



#### **BUNYOD ABDUKARIMOV**

"I was elected Vice-President of Finance of the KIMEP student government. The election took a lot of time and effort. However, I managed to develop stronger networking and negotiation skills through this experience. When I found out that I won, I felt overjoyed with my accomplishment; however, the most important outcome was the realization that active involvement in life and overcoming challenges are crucial for my personal growth. As Vice-President of Finance I am in charge of the budget committee, which consists of four independent student members and four student government members. The committee is responsible for the fair distribution of student funds to student organizations."



#### **MEERIM MOLDALIEVA**

"I became Vice President of Finance Department of AIESEC (an international student organization) in Kyrgyzstan. Although I am not a professional accountant yet, I was able to successfully apply basic accounting technics and improve the accounting system of the organization.

Participation in AIESEC's European Congress in Armenia on October 8-12, 2016 boosted my professional development further. The conference became a great platform for the exchange of information and multicultural experience. Using the knowledge acquired during the conference, my peers and I have developed a new online tool that helps us monitor customer registration and application processes in a more efficient way. Another important outcome was the creation of the partnership with our peers in Italy, Germany and Rome. The conference also opened new opportunities for me – I was offered internships in Poland and Turkey."



#### **AZATBEK ISMAILOV**

"Currently, I am a member of the AUCA Case Club management team. The AUCA Case Club is a place where active and hard-working students gather together to solve different business cases related to mergers and acquisitions, market estimation, market penetration, strategies for new products, and others. Recently, we have signed a partnership agreement with BizExpert, a research and consulting company, which will help us improve the quality of our services. Next semester, we are planning to hold a case championship among AUCA students. The organization is especially popular among U.S.-CAEF fellows - currently, 12 fellows are active members of the club. As a result of running the club, I have improved my leadership, management and communication skills. Moreover, working regularly on solving business cases has improved my analytical and critical thinking. My goals are winning international competitions and raising the case club to a new level."



# AZIM TILEKOV

"I was part of the organizing team for Tourism and Travel Hackathon 2016, sponsored by KG Labs. KG Labs is a public foundation promoting a startup ecosystem in the Kyrgyz Republic. During the Hackathon, participating teams work together on developing innovative products in just 54 hours; they then present their ideas to the jury, which selects the winner. The topic of the Hackathon this year was tourism because this sector is developing quite well in Kyrgyzstan. One of the areas that the industry needs to work on is IT solutions.

Therefore, participants were asked to provide interesting and applicable IT ideas and projects for the tourism industry. I was responsible for logistics and helping mentors. It was a great chance to expand my professional network and learn about current trends in the tourism industry."

# GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

#### ALTERNATIVE INVSETMENT SUMMIT IN SEATTLE

BY KARIMKHON BUKHADUROV

I am a 4th year KIMEP University student, majoring in Finance. I took an academic leave of absence in AY 2016-17 to participate in an internship program through E2 based in Seattle.

Recently, I joined Seattle Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Student Society. The organization is a union of like-minded students striving to earn CFA certification. On November 14th, I represented Seattle CFA Student Society at the 5th Annual Alternative Investments Summit: Outlook and Opportunities in the Energy and Credit Market, held in Seattle. The event was organized by the Seattle Alternative Investment Association and sponsored by PricewaterhouseCoopers, Moss-Adams, RBC Global Asset Management and Silver Creek. It brought more than 300 investment, asset management, and finance professionals from all over the United States.

The keynote speaker of the event was Robert Sinnott, chairman of Kayne Anderson Capital Advisors, a leading alternative investment firm across energy, real estate, credit and specialty growth capital. The summit covered hot topics regarding investments in oil and gas, energy and other alternative resources, forecasts and trends for 2017, demand and supply of oil and gas in global market, and price volatility.



The summit was very helpful and insightful for me as it indicated the status quo of energy market, its potential and the shift of investments towards alternative energy in global market. Moreover, studying at KIMEP and living in Kazakhstan, an oil and gas export-oriented country, the summit made me understand the challenges Kazakhstan has been facing due to the oil price drop, but more importantly, what Kazakhstan can potentially do to increase its presence in the oil and gas market and maintain sustainable profitability.

#### **BUSINESS TODAY CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK CITY**

BY SHAHLO JONMAMADOVA

It was a great pleasure for me to represent Central Asia at the 42nd International Business Today Conference. The conference is organized by Princeton University students and aims to create a dynamic forum for influential business leaders to interact with undergraduate students from campuses worldwide as well as to educate leaders of tomorrow. The conference took place in New York City on November 20-22 and brought together students from 70 universities from 35 countries across the globe. I was the only representative from Central Asia.

The theme of this year's conference was "The Rise of Millennial Generation: Bridging the Gap." Some of the keynote speakers included Ed Tilly, CEO of Chicago Board Options Exchange, which is the main competitor of NASDAQ and NYSE; Mark Fleming, Chief Economist of First American; George Witchell, former chairman of The Walt Disney Company; Kees Kruythoff, CEO of Unilever North America; Michael Fucci, Chairman of Deloitte; Dennis Hickey, CFO of Colgate-Palmolive; Carla Serrano, CEO of Publicis New York; and Alan Murray, chief content officer and editor of FORTUNE magazine. In addition, we had a case study competition organized by the Deloitte consulting team, during which we had to decide the state where we would launch our business.

It was a truly unbelievable opportunity to spend these three days with so many bright individuals. The event was well organized and exceeded my expectations. The speeches were really inspiring. These were the three days that generated ideas of how to continue to expand my professional qualifications and make valuable business contacts.



#### **VISITING OSCE SECRETARIAT IN VIENNA**

BY HAKNAZAR HALLYGYLYJOV



My study tour to OSCE Secretariat in Vienna was part of the Central Asian Youth Network (CAYN) project. CAYN is a conference based program for selected students from five Central Asian countries, Afghanistan and Mongolia. It is organized and financed by the OSCE office in Astana, Kazakhstan. Each year after completion of the CAYN conferences, the OSCE office in Astana selects one student from each Central Asian country for the study tour.

During the tour, I attended a session of the OSCE Permanent Council and learned about the work of various units of the OSCE Secretariat. I had an opportunity to meet Anna-Katharina Deininger, the Special Representative of Germany's OSCE Chairmanship on Youth and Security, and discuss political and security issues in Central Asia with the members of the delegations from Austria, the Russian Federation and the United States. The project gave me fresh ideas about what I want to achieve in my professional career.

# LEARNING THROUGH PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE



#### AIZHAN KERIMBEK KYZY

"I started working as assistant in the PR office of AUCA in August. The experience helped me understand that any job has so called "minor" tasks that in reality are very important - actually, your success depends on these tasks. My responsibilities include writing articles, coordinating volunteers, greeting guests, negotiating with partners and managing the AUCA store. The latter turned out to be the most interesting and challenging. The PR office became in charge of the store only recently. The store did not have any records about its activities. We have completely reorganized the store, and created a data base that allows us to track all expenses and manage all activities of the shop. AUCA store has truly become a lab for testing my theoretical knowledge."



KASIET MAMBETKUL KYZY

"In-mid November, I started my internship in the accounting department of NTS TV. The internship helped me realize the difference between studying and working. It requires more responsibility and good time management. However, as I have volunteered for many events in the past, the skills I have gained and experience I have got are helping me now to handle different issues. It is far more interesting to learn a subject when you can practice it. However, the most important thing is meeting new people and communicating with employees."



**BUNYOD ABDUKARIMOV** 

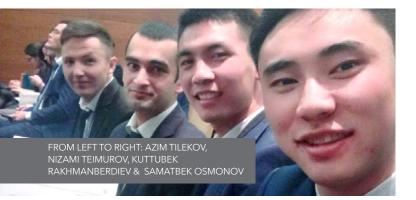
"Recently, I started my internship at the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Kazakhstan. My current responsibilities include recruiting new AmCham members. I am also responsible for administrative aspects of the advocacy program, which requires me to take regular business trips to Astana. The program is aimed at creating a better environment for investors in Kazakhstan. "



# RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

#### CHANGELLENGE

BY KUTTUBEK RAKHMANBERDIEV



For the first time in the history of AUCA, our team-- Azim Tilekov, Samatbek Osmonov, recent AUCA graduate, Nizami Teimurov and I-- was selected to participate in the final stage of the International Changellenge Case competition. We were proud to be one of the 15 teams chosen from among 250 teams representing leading universities of Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to compete for the case cup. Not only have we strengthened our case solving skills, but we also expanded our network through meeting professionals from different companies, including Mars, Ernst and Young and Leroy Merlin, who provided invaluable feedback on our presentations. We were lucky to receive special certificates from E & Y that would allow us to skip the testing stage of the application process, should we decide to seek employment with the company.

All cases were very interesting. For example, we solved the case of DIY hypermarket Leroy Merlin. The company is planning to open its first store in Almaty. We analyzed the Kazakhstani retail market and developed a viable strategy for the company. While doing research, we acquired a lot of information on creating and promoting DIY businesses. We even started thinking about the possibility of opening a similar business in Kyrgyzstan. Another exciting case was about Wrigley, the holding that unites prominent chewing gum brands such as Orbit, Eclipse and Starburst. Our task was to come up with ways to improve the sales of gum. As chewing products are considered as impulse goods and are located at check-outs, we offered to print out the Orbit logo on shopping bags to remind people about the product before leaving the store.

Summing up, our trip to Almaty expanded our horizon about global business world and gave huge inspiration to work harder and move forward.

#### TOP TALENTS CASE COMPETITION

BY ZULFIYA URUNOVA



In December, Dana Kussain and I participated in the Top Talents case competition organized by AIESEC, an international student organization, and came in first. Top Talents is a three-week educational project for students who would like to test their theoretical knowledge in practice by solving unique business cases with such leading companies as MARS, United Nations Organization, Caravan Beverage Group, Chocolife, and Head Hunter. First, students attend workshops to learn necessary skills and tools to succeed in solving cases. Winners receive internship offers from the companies and different gifts from sponsors.

Thirty students selected to compete in the challenge were divided into five teams representing different universities. Our team received a case from Mars - we were asked to develop strategies for three directions of the company, namely, chocolate, pet care and Wrigley (chewing gum). Given the extent of work and short timeframe, the case seemed to be impossible at first. However, we decided to divide our responsibilities, so that each person would be responsible for a certain direction. It made our work much easier and more productive. Another challenge was the presentation itself. We had to present all our strategies in just 15 minutes. However, we managed to do it as well, and even received compliments on our public speaking skills from the judges.

Overall, this case competition was one of the most useful things of the fall semester because we had an opportunity to use our knowledge in practice, and we met many talented students and representatives of companies that helped organize Top Talents.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

#### **XPRESS YOURSELF WORKSHOP**

BY ANGELINA RUBIS



On November 26, I organized the Xpress Yourself workshop for a group of young people, ages 16-25, in Ust-Kamenogorsk, with the help of the FLEX alumni grant. The workshop consisted of several sessions on team-building, writing a business plan, funding, and pitch presentation. Each session was followed by practical tasks to encourage people to act. By the end of the day, each team had a rough draft of a potential business model.

I think that by educating 10 people you give a chance for 10 potential enterprises, instead of just one that you can start yourself. This is the main reason why I decided to organize the workshop. The workshop helped me improve my knowledge and communication skills. When you speak to an audience, you need to make yourself clear. And you can do it only if you understand everything clearly yourself. The experience also helped me realize how project management can be engaging as it gives you a chance to express yourself through the development of the program agenda, logo, posters, and every other important detail.

#### LITTLE GRANDMASTERS CLUB

BY ANISA ATALOVA, AUCA CLASS OF 2016

AUCA freshmen fellows, **Uulzhan Aitnazarova** and **Shaislam Shabiev**, initiated a project aimed to break barriers between healthy children and kids with Down Syndrome through playing chess. The fellows are planning to organize their first tournament soon.

"We wanted to make our chess lessons interactive; therefore, we integrated story-telling and games into the teaching process. The aim of the project is to develop children's mental abilities, logical reasoning and love for chess from a young age. Also, we wanted to give children with disabilities the same opportunities to fully open their potential," Uulzhan noted.

"In addition, I am also planning to hold a chess game at AUCA in which I will be playing multiple opponents at the same time. The purpose of the game is to promote chess on campus," Shaislam said of his future plans.



#### SENIOR FRIENDS REACHING OUT TO CHILDREN

BY SAIRA DUISHONBEKOVA



I am a member of Senior Friends, an AUCA club that organizes charitable events. On October 8-9, we carried out a project in the village of Myrza-Aca, in the Osh region. This project was different from previous ones—we visited a boarding school, not an orphanage this time I was responsible for finding sponsors and coordinating the work of NGA students. As a result of our efforts, Senior Friends managed to collect and donate about 200 items of clothing and 37,400 soms (\$540) to students.

In addition, members of the club made presentations about educational opportunities such as the Access Microscholarship, FLEX and NGA. I gave a presentation about U.S.-CAEF. It was a pleasure for me to answer the questions of the students interested in the program.

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

# **U.S.-CAEF HONORS OUTGOING & WELCOMES NEW ALUMNI COUNCIL**

Recently, the second Alumni Council (Council) passed its duties onto a new team. Over the past two years, the members of the outgoing team led by **President Yelena Vorobey** refined the Alumni Association's strategic plan and significantly increased its activities, engaging alumni and current Fellows in a wide range of activities to promote the U.S.-CAEF mission. The leadership team's most significant accomplishments were:





INCREASED

ALUMNI

ENGAGEMENT BY

20%

#### **COMMUNICATION & ALUMNI OUTREACH**

Alumni engagement through active presence on social media has increased by 150%. Facebook, in particular, became a true platform for sharing information on educational, career development and job opportunities.

In addition to the leadership teams in the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan, the Association has elected local officers for Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to strengthen ties with the alumni in these countries to promote the Foundation's mission. throughout the regions of Central Asia

Alumni also established connections with local embassies and businesses, which opened new channels for professional development opportunities.



#### BRANDING

In April 2016, the Association created and adopted a logo designed to highlight its connection to U.S.-CAEF while also identifying it as a discrete organization.

#### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Karina Kussainova (AUCA Class of 2014), Vice-President for Professional Development, spearheaded the creation of the Youth Social Entrepreneurship Project (YSEP) in May 2016, in Bishkek. Currently, the organization has its official logo and Facebook page. Twenty-four sophomore and freshmen fellows are involved in YSEP's community outreach activities, which include tutoring children and organizing fund-raising events in support of a local orphanage.

Amina Iqbolzoda (KIMEP Class of 2015), Alumni officer in Tajikistan, organized Innovate for Change, a social entrepreneurship workshop for youth, in partnership with Tcell and Sheraton Hotel on August 1-12, 2016, in Dushanbe. Participants reported that the workshop changed their views about the job market and business environment in Tajikistan, and helped them learn about future career opportunities that they did not know existed in their native country.

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & STRENGTHENING BONDS WITHIN U.S.-CAEF COMMUNITY

To better serve the mission of U.S.-CAEF, the Council introduced the position of Vice-President for Professional Development, which signaled an important new priority for the Association: to assist alumni and current fellows in developing their careers, creating new businesses and becoming fully integrated within the larger business community.

Over the past two years, the Council members organized 20 professional development workshops and tailored training programs, in addition to several teambuilding, networking and charitable events. As a result, Alumni engagement in U.S.-CAEF activities increased by 120%.

## **MEET THE NEW ALUMNI LEADERSHIP TEAM**

The newly elected members of the Alumni Council are eager to continue the traditions set by their predecessors and look forward to strengthening U.S.-CAEF spirit further.



I graduated from AUCA in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. While at AUCA, I created my own startup, a cosmetics shop called "Let's Makeup," which is currently operating well. In fall 2016, I had a life-changing opportunity to have an internship through the U.S.-CAEF International Capstone Program at the U.S. Small Business Administration in Washington, DC.

The U.S.-CAEF program became the most pivotal part of my life, which gave me an opportunity to receive the best-quality education, to accelerate my professional development and to become part of the U.S.-CAEF family – a group of brilliant like-minded young business leaders from all over Central Asia.

As the new leadership team, we are extremely privileged and excited to further serve the U.S.-CAEF community and carry on the amazing work of the previous Alumni Council.



#### AIZHARKYN BURKANOVA

Vice President for Professional Development Senior Project Manager, Beeline Kyrgyzstan I graduated from the Business Administration department of AUCA in 2014. During my senior year, I co-founded Zebra Coffee. The following year, upon my graduation, I co-founded Blue Box Canteen Coffee shop, and worked as Associate Vice President for Business Intelligence at AUCA. Currently, I am Senior Project Manager at Beeline Kyrgyzstan.

I am always happy to have an opportunity to give back to my alma-ma=ter and my community. I feel that joining the alumni leadership team is a chance to fully express my potential and contribute to U.S.-CAEF. In my position as VP for Professional Development, I would like to help fellows and alumni expand their business network, promote their professional development through individual and group sessions, and help fellows find internships in leading companies as well as promising start-ups in Central Asia.



I graduated from AUCA in 2016 with a major in Business Administration. Upon graduation, I was honored to participate in the Capstone International Internship Program. As part of the program, I interned at PrepFactory, a venture-backed, education technology startup based at the 1776 business incubator. I also volunteered for the U.S.-Kyrgyzstan Business Council, a Washington DC-based trade association aimed at advancing commercial and investment ties between the United States of America and the Kyrgyz Republic, where I served as a communications and operations lead. U.S.-CAEF granted me many precious opportunities; I am now genuinely proud to be a U.S.-CAEF alumna, and I am happy to join the Alumni Association. As a treasurer, I will strive to do my best to maintain records of the association's finances as well as to contribute to its development. I am looking forward to working with other Alumni Council members and supporting my big U.S.- CAEF family.



I graduated from the American University of Central Asia in 2014 with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. Currently, I am working as a business research analyst at Telegei Invest, a local private investment fund. As part of the team, I am responsible for conducting market research on several investment projects in the tourism industry of Kyrgyzstan.

To be elected as the Vice-President for Outreach is an honor and a great opportunity for me to contribute to the newly organized Alumni Association, which so far has been well performing its mission of becoming an alumni network with strong ties and commitment to the U.S.-CAEF vision. I believe the Association will evolve into a self-sustained professional network of a new generation of exceptional young leaders from Central Asian countries who will be able to (a) initiate and implement social/educational projects on a greater scale, and (b) promote principles of free market in the region through mentorship and consulting. With this vision in mind, I will do my best to strengthen the U.S.-CAEF spirit among both current and prospective alumni.



I am a U.S.-CAEF alumna of 2016. I graduated from KIMEP University with a major in Marketing. Through my studies at the university, I learned a very useful skill: to do a lot of independent work. At the moment I am Food and Beverage Administrative Assistant at Sheraton Dushanbe Hotel. Because I did some other research on marketing and social media, my manager put me in charge of some marketing activities such as event organization and developing new ideas for the marketing plan of the hotel restaurant and bars. I owe this to U.S.-CAEF, first of all, because I was given an opportunity to get my education in the field I am passionate about. Secondly, I owe it to KIMEP University for its diverse community, multinational surrounding and highly qualified instructors. Tight deadlines and numerous projects at KIMEP University taught me to improve my time management skills and now I find it very useful.

In January 2017, I was elected Alumni Officer for Tajikistan. I am honored to serve to the U.S.-CAEF community. I want to bring in new changes and improvements. I will do everything to the best of my ability to organize useful and fun events for the U.S. - CAEF alumni fellows in Tajikistan.

# Intervention of the second sec

I graduated from KIMEP University in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in Accounting. I have been working at ES Diyarcom since my graduation from KIMEP and was recently promoted to head of financial department. At the same time, I am chief accountant at Bozatli Kagit-Temizlik Ürünleri, a paper manufacturing company in Ashgabat.

I never thought that I would become an accountant when I was a child, but I love my job and do my best to learn more, and I believe that I will enjoy sharing my experience with people. Thanks to the U.S.-CAEF fellowship, I keep achieving my goals, plans and more. Through my involvement in the association, I would like to show my gratitude to the U.S.-CAEF family and do my best as VP for Regional Networks (Turkmenistan).



I want to express my gratitude to U.S.-CAEF through serving as Vice-President for Professional Development in Kazakhstan. As a fresh graduate of KIMEP University, I would like to immerse myself in the U.S.-CAEF Alumni Association and bring both fresh and positive changes. In my opinion, professional development has to start from university. I started my professional development after sophomore year as an intern in the Human Resources Department in PetroKazakhstan oil company back in my native Kyzylorda. During my junior year, I combined my studies and work as an Administrative Assistant to the Chair of Economics Department at KIMEP. In summer 2015, I interned in the Finance and Economics Department in the Ministry of National Economy in Astana. During my senior year, I worked in the President's Office as an Administrative Assistant.

Upon graduation, I was employed as Specialist of Corporate Insurance and Reinsurance by Kazakhmys in Almaty. I have also tested myself as sales manager in a start-up. Now, I am working in the organizing committee of Winter Universiade 2017 in Almaty. One thing I want to say to both students and alumni is: never be afraid of change and challenges.



I am a KIMEP alumna of 2012. After graduating from KIMEP University with a degree in Finance, I worked at Kaspi Bank as a customer behavior analyst. Now, I am an entrepreneur and run a manufacturing company. As a Professional Consultant, I would like to promote entrepreneurship among U.S.-CAEF fellows. I believe that U.S.- CAEF students are highly capable of creating companies and new jobs.



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I graduated from KIMEP University in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. After my graduation, I spent a semester in Washington, DC interning in the marketing department of Studio Theatre through the U.S.-CAEF Capstone program. I am extremely thankful to the U.S.-CAEF Board and American Councils for helping Central Asian youth to obtain a business degree at KIMEP and AUCA Universities. I decided to join the Alumni Council to express my sincere gratitude to the program and to the administrative staff. As a VP for Outreach, I will do my best for the beneficial growth of the alumni association.

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