

# NEWSLETTER

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**ABOUT THE PROGRAM:** U.S.-Central Asia Education Foundation (U.S.-CAEF) Enterprise Student Fellowship Program is an undergraduate business education scholarship program for academically gifted students sponsored by the U.S.-Central Asia Education Foundation and 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.

## FIRST STEPS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### AUCA SOPHOMORES OPEN BARBERSHOP

On January 8, AUCA sophomores **Maksat Alybaev** and **Ibrakhim Akhmedov** opened a modern barbershop, called Rexar, in Bishkek. Within a short time, Rexar has gained popularity among young people, especially AUCA students, who receive a special discount. In an interview with junior **Meerim Zhanybek kyzy**, Maksat shared his success story.



MAKSAT (LEFT) AND IBRAKHIM (RIGHT)

“The idea of starting a business came to us when we were freshmen. After some discussions, Ibrakhim and I decided to open a business in the service sector. Since we were inexperienced and did not have a lot of money, we started to read books and watch business videos. At the beginning of our sophomore year, we wrote a detailed business plan, made a thorough business analysis and offered our project to several investors. One of them agreed to invest his money into our business. We put a lot of effort into our business, and we managed to open “Rexar” on January 8, 2019. Currently, we have four employees in our barbershop.

Of course, we faced many difficulties as we began our business such as plumbing issues and usage agreements. As a result of this experience, we have significantly improved our leadership skills, gained real life experience and learned to motivate people. Moreover, it provided a great opportunity to use all accounting and other general skills we learned at the university in real life.

We understand that it is just the beginning of our journey, and we will always learn and try to do more. Even though it is very interesting to do business, be engaged in different extracurricular activities and participate in volunteering projects, we always try to focus on our education and future goals. We hope to become successful businessmen and great leaders in the future, contribute to the development of our country and serve as positive examples for young people.”

## LEARNING TO LEAD THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

### AUCA STUDENT SENATE

Two U.S.-CAEF juniors won elections for the AUCA Student Senate in November. **Sezim Zhenishbekova**, who had the highest number of votes among all candidates, became Vice Chairman and **Olga Pykhova**, who came 5th in the race, became Head of the Financial Committee.



In addition to her duties in the Senate, Sezim also serves as President of the AUCA Case Club. “Learning to solve business cases and participating in case competitions can greatly expand one’s knowledge of business, open numerous opportunities and assist in preparing for career advancement. It helps to apply theoretical knowledge and develop analytical skills that can be used not only in the professional sphere, but also in everyday life. With this type of passion, I became President of AUCA Case Club in the fall semester. Together with my U.S.-CAEF teammates, **Farzona Haydarova**, **Sevara Tadzhibaeva**, **Olga Pykhova** and **Atai Amanatov**, we provide a platform for club members to understand the intricacies of modern businesses and develop effective teamwork, leadership, public speaking, and presentation skills. Throughout the fall semester, we coordinated guest speakers, practical sessions, and a mini “Crack the Case Championship,” where four students were selected to represent AUCA in the CBS Case Competition 2019 at Copenhagen Business School. Currently, we are actively preparing for other international case championships and our own Case Cup,” shared Sezim.

## LEARNING TO LEAD THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED



**Daniyar Abdiev**  
(senior)



**Meerim Zhanybek kyzy**  
(junior)



**Olga Pykhova**  
(junior)



**Atobek Rahimshoev**  
(junior)



**Suhailo Mamadniyozova**  
(junior)



**Farzona Khaidarova**  
(junior)



**Zhanna Marchenko**  
(junior)



**Nurshoola Aibek kyzy**  
(sophomore)

## WARC TUTORS

AUCA's Writing and Academic Resource Center (WARC) encourages direct interaction between students and promotes active learning through its peer tutoring. Every year, WARC hires students who have successfully demonstrated proficiency in their course material and are willing to share their knowledge with other students. WARC tutors are selected on a competitive basis. Candidates are required to submit an application that includes two letters of recommendation, a copy of their transcript and a 600-word essay. Shortlisted applicants are interviewed by the WARC director and the WARC coordinator. ►

**8** **OF THE**  
**WARC TUTORS**  
**ARE U.S.-CAEF**  
**FELLOWS**

**30%**

## LEARNING TO LEAD THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED

The Fellows tutor their peers at AUCA in a wide range of courses, including Financial and Managerial Accounting, Academic Writing, Linear Algebra and Analytical Geometry, Mathematical Analysis, Theory of Probabilities and Mathematical Statistics, Finance and Research Methods, Math for Business and Economics and Data Analysis.

The Fellows find the experience fulfilling and useful, as tutoring also helps to reinforce their own learning. The comfortable and open atmosphere during the sessions fosters interaction between tutors and tutees, which allows for the exchange of ideas, the development of more supportive relationships, and the advancement of communication and leadership skills.

This environment ultimately leads to higher achievement and greater productivity in terms of learning outcomes.



*"I truly enjoy my work at the WARC helping my tutees with accounting. Each session, I discover new aspects of business accounting for myself. It has been a great place to improve my communication and analytical skills, which are very important as I want to be a consultant and data analyst in the future. It is also a superb opportunity to build a strong work ethic,"*

**-Meerim Zhanybek kyzy**

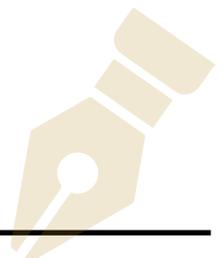
*"Every time I enter WARC, I encounter something unique and challenging: a new tutee, a different approach, limited time and unique areas of concern make me excited and curious,"*

**-Atobek Rahimshoev**

Olga Pykhova finds her experience with WARC rewarding, as she feels that she is doing something beneficial for her university community. She has also greatly benefited from this experience.

*"WARC gives me the chance to think outside the box. It is such a wonderful feeling noticing when my tutees come up with new great ideas. I truly love being a tutor because with every session, I get to learn about new ideas and opinions. The WARC is a perfect place to master my leadership, communication and critical thinking skills,"*

**-Olga Pykhova**



## LEARNING TO LEAD THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED

**LEADERSHIP PROGRAM WITH YOUTH COUNCILS C5+1**

BY FARZONA KHAIDAROVA

Facing new opportunities, meeting new people and getting out of one's comfort zone are all very challenging, but they are also very crucial to professional development. I constantly try to explore new opportunities and areas for development.



In October, I became a member of the Youth Councils C5+1 (Central Asia 5 + U.S.) community. This program is financed by the U.S. Embassy and is aimed at involving youth in the development of Central Asia. During the first days, I attended the Leadership Academy in Kara-Bulak.

There, we learned to write project proposals, prepare accurate financial records for projects and to work on efficient promotion of youth projects.

During the two days, we presented our ideas, wrote a project proposal, and helped with budgeting, and now we are implementing that project. This experience was very useful, as prior to this experience I was unfamiliar with conducting and leading projects.

Several other U.S.-CAEF Fellows also participated in this community workshop. These were two great days for us to bond again and meet new people.

**DEBATE DEBUT**

BY ISLAMBEK ASHYRALIEV



People define success in different ways. Personally, I count every step forward as part of my success story. On December 2, the AUCA Debate Club organized "Newbie Cup 2018." Many students took part in the event. For me, it was especially interesting because it was my first debate tournament.

My team came in third place. I felt very proud and happy that I had opened a door to the new world of debate. After everyone received their certificates, it was time to announce the best speaker of the "Newbie Cup." I suddenly heard my name in the midst of applause. First, I did not believe it because I had not expected to receive such a high award at my first competition. Then I went to the stage and received my medal.

This small success that I achieved inspired me to go further and conquer new heights. I believe that it is just the beginning, and I am ready for whatever obstacle life gives me. I am ready to move forward and taste the new flavors of success.

## FRESHMEN SPOTLIGHT

Fellows' freshman year is pivotal in determining the kind of experience they will have in college. Fall 2018 was a busy, eventful semester for many first-year U.S.-CAEF students. Participating in various events helped them bond with their university peers, discover professional development and networking opportunities, as well as realize that they live in a larger community than their universities and how important it is to reach out to communities outside their campuses. It is clear that the students' mentors, older U.S.-CAEF Fellows, have played a crucial role in the freshmen transitioning smoothly to university life and becoming active members of the larger community. The quotes below reflect the Fellows' thoughts about their experiences.



**AVINA ABYTAEVA**

"I was selected as Coordinator of the NGA Mentorship Program in the beginning of the fall semester. I am responsible for organizing TOEFL, and Academic Writing and Math sessions for NGA students. This is a great position for me because I was an NGA student myself; therefore, I know which problems the current students struggle with most."



**AIANA RYSBEKOVA**

"Since October, I have been interning at two creative and innovative organizations. At Lingua Foundation, sponsored by U.S. Department of State, I am involved in writing a project aimed at conducting a camp for 40 students from Kyrgyzstan. If we are successful, we will receive a grant to implement the project. This camp will teach ambitious youth to be open to entrepreneurship. During the camp, students will meet with successful local start-ups, solve cases and learn to create their own business plans. Through this experience, I am learning to write projects and gaining new skills in finance, budgeting and preparing financial reports. At Gazprom, I help Aselya Abykeeva, Head of PR and Media Relations, with social media posts for her TV project called "Praktikum" on the RTV channel. This is a great responsibility, as their page has more than 40,000 followers. This experience helped me improve my skills in digital marketing, which is crucial for my future career in business."



## FRESHMEN SPOTLIGHT

CONTINUED



AIGUL SAPAROVA

“On December 6, my mentor **Sezim Zhenishbekova**, another U.S.-CAEF junior **Farzona Khaidarova**, and I had a great opportunity to volunteer at the annual Gala Dinner & Awards Ceremony organized by AmCham Kyrgyzstan. I met many prominent businesspeople and held very inspiring conversations with them. I gained new knowledge about the firms in Kyrgyzstan, including those that I had not heard of before, and now I am looking for a company in which I would like to intern.

In November, I organized the “Go Leaders!” camp for 20 teenagers from my town of Kerben, which was funded by the Central Asia FLEX-Ability Workshop 2018. This project aimed to boost students’ teambuilding and leadership skills, along with their understanding of the importance of mental health. The workshops, presentations and games we organized had a great impact on the participants. Recently, we were pleased to learn that two of the participants have implemented their own projects based on what they learned at the camp, and have created the first ever volunteer club in Kerben.”



KAIRAT TAGAEV

“I organized my first social project that was funded by the Central Asian FLEX-Ability Workshop. “The Big Brother” project primarily aimed to help orphanages outside of Bishkek that do not receive enough support from the government. I chose the Tokmok orphanage for this project. The great team of volunteers helped me organize lectures on self-development, English lessons, and team-building activities. The American football national team of Kyrgyzstan provided a master class for the children. It was a great way to teach kids about the importance of education, promote a healthy lifestyle and share American culture. We also donated school stationery to the orphanage. It was a great experience that taught me how to negotiate with people, work with money, solve problems, and be a team leader.”



ZEVARKHON MAMADJONOVA

“On November 15-16, I took part in the first Model European Union conference held at KIMEP University. Model European Union (MEU) is an interactive simulation of the European Union policy-making process, bringing together young people to learn decision-making and communication skills in the context of topics shaping the European Union. There were delegates, chairs and co-chairs who took part in debates and discussions. I was a delegate for Austria in the European Parliament Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. As a delegate of Austria, I participated in debates promoting my projects to improve the environment in both EU member states and Central Asia. Through participating in MEU, I had a chance to improve my communication and leadership skills as well as effective teamwork abilities. Moreover, this conference enabled us to define and analyze global issues and make our own contribution towards their improvement.”



## HONING PROFESSIONAL SKILLS



### WELTWEITWANDERN ACADEMY

BY DIDORALI ANOYATBEKOV

On November 25- December 1, I participated in Weltweitwandern Academy. Weltweitwandern is one of the leading travel companies in the German-speaking market. For almost two decades, the company has been actively involved in developing sustainable tourism through its tours in various destinations. Since 2016, Weltweitwandern started operating in Tajikistan where I worked as a tour guide for the summer season.

Participating in the Academy for tour guides was an unforgettable experience. Tour guides from 30 countries attended the academy. We developed our skills on first aid and rescue management, guiding techniques, group dynamics and learned more about sustainability and trends in tourism.

Besides the official trainings and talking with international experts in tourism, interacting with guides from different countries had a great impact on me. Taking part in such events is a huge step towards achieving my goal of developing Tajikistan's tourism industry.

### EUROBAK MARKETING & PR UNIVERSITY OF PRACTICE

BY NIGORA BURHONOVA AND NILUFAR UMAROVA

From September 27 to December 6, two KIMEP Fellows took part in European Business Association of Kazakhstan (EUROBAK) Marketing and PR University of Practice. The association's main goal is to be an intermediary between employers and potential future employees. The program offered lectures and meetings with managers from JTI, Philip Morris, Mars, EY, Takeda, K-cell, and other leading companies. The speakers shared with the audience how they solved real cases related to marketing and PR issues. Nigora and Nilufar share their feedback below.



#### NIGORA BURHONOVA:

*Since I studied marketing during my exchange semester, I became very interested in this field, so I decided to minor in marketing. For me, EUROBAK was a great opportunity to put the knowledge I gained from marketing courses into practice. As a part of the program, we were tasked to form a group and solve a business case, the solution of which would help a real company. The guest speakers provided a lot of useful advice and tips on how, in this age of technological advancement, companies can maintain positive relationships with customers and position themselves in the market.*



#### NILUFAR UMAROVA:

*I was amazed by the openness of guest speakers and their detailed descriptions of many cases we discussed within the program curricula. The most interesting part of the lectures for me was when the company representatives shared with us how they coped with challenges. By the end of the program, as a group, we created our own outline of the ways to solve the case that was based on the lectures. Overall, aside from the insights and ideas I acquired from the lectures, EUROBAK gave us a great chance to expand my network through conversations with the speakers and work on the case with students from different universities in Almaty.*



## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

U.S.-CAEF Fellows recognize the need to bring a global perspective to the economy of the Central Asian region. Therefore, they use every opportunity to enrich their knowledge and experience through participation in various international events and exchange programs.

### STUDY ABROAD



## UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

KREMS, AUSTRIA

BY NAZIRAKHON KHOLTURAEVA  
ERNST MACH SCHOLAR

“During this exchange, I had the opportunity to learn from remarkable professors and study with both undergraduate and graduate students. Even though it was a bit challenging to take high-level courses, it was interesting because we worked on real business cases. For instance, we worked on a case to understand the reason why Amazon decided to acquire Whole Foods.

In Austria people mostly speak German; therefore, it was challenging to understand people in the beginning of the semester. However, I like to think of a challenge as an opportunity. I had the opportunity to improve my German skills from 0 to A2 level by the end of the semester.”

## UPPSALA UNIVERSITY

UPPSALA, SWEDEN

GAVKHARKHON MAMADZHANOVA  
ERASMUS SCHOLAR

“Sweden is an amazing country with a developed economy, free education options for European Union citizens and beautiful nature. One major difference between KIMEP and Uppsala University is the structure of extracurricular activities: at KIMEP we join clubs, and at Uppsala we join nations. Nations are quite large, with their own buildings and hired workers. These entities organize different activities for students. Another significant difference is the grading system. Each KIMEP course follows the same grading system, whereas there is a unique grading system for each course at Uppsala. Finally, by virtue of my student status, I qualify for discounts for almost everything, as it is quite expensive to live in Sweden.”



## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

CONTINUED

## IESEG SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

LILLE, FRANCE



SHAISLAM SHABIEV

“We have taken several master’s-level courses, which was one of the greatest advantages of the semester. We were also privileged to experience of studying in a fully international environment. Apart from studies, we were able to enjoy the culture of France and a vibrant student life.”



ZHLYDYZ APYSHOVA

“The most stimulating part of studying at IESEG School of Management was that I learned the techniques of effective management. Solving real business cases in almost every class strengthened my analytical and critical thinking skills. Moreover, I frequently practiced and developed my presentation and public speaking skills. I truly appreciate the valuable knowledge I gained from the qualified professors.”



UULZHAN AITNAZAROVA

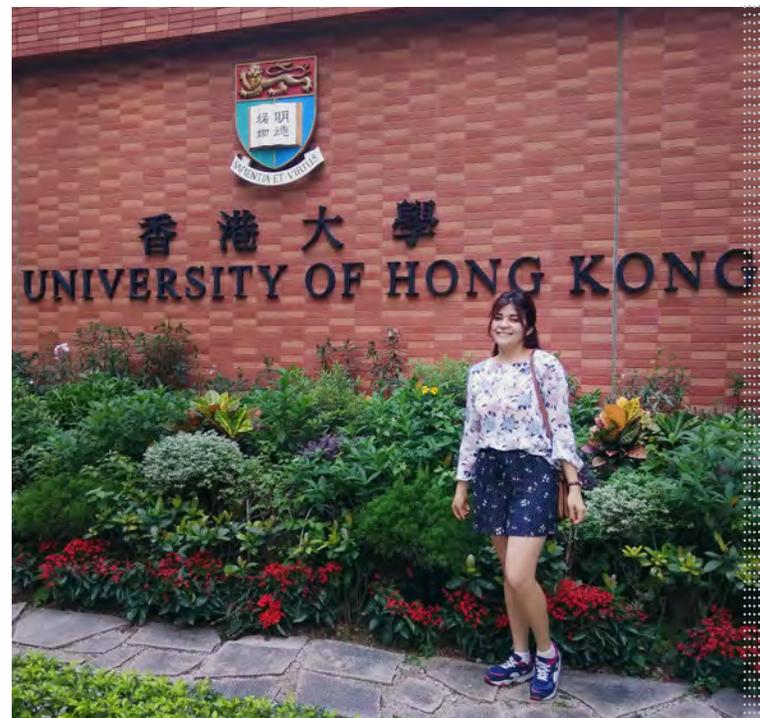
“Studying at IESEG School of Management is very different from studying at AUCA. Taking fourteen different courses from different professors and combining one-week intensive courses with extensive ones, I improved my adaptability and prioritizing skills. I enjoyed that professors often use real-life business cases in explaining topics, which makes you interested in the global business world even more. Surrounded by international professors and students, I started looking at things differently. If before I thought that sharing your culture is the most important part of cross-cultural communication, now I believe that understanding different cultures is truly vital, because culture can greatly affect business practices.”

## THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

HONG KONG, SAR, CHINA

SEVARA TADZHIBAEVA

“One of the best opportunities I had in Hong Kong was participating in Hackathon. I used to think that a hackathon only concerned IT students. However, Hackathon turned out to be a mixture of business, IT, design and many other fields. I was lucky to be part of a team of students with different backgrounds. We were given one sleepless night to do a project about mental disorders among school children. First, we brainstormed our ideas and conducted analysis from a business point of view, asking such questions as who will pay for the service, software, cost and benefit analysis, and what impact it would have on the existing issue. In one night, I learned so much about mental health issues and their impact on society. The experience also boosted my IT skills to a new level. By the next morning, we were able to create an almost fully functional app for online mental health consultation, and presented it to the potential investors. It was a huge success for us, as we received third place among 10 teams. During the process, I had the feeling that I was creating my own startup. I realized how important it is to participate in such events, as they prepare us for the real business world. I will find myself in many situations where I will have to be quick and innovative in making decisions. This is what Hackathon prepares us for.”



## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

CONTINUED

**44<sup>TH</sup> BUSINESS TODAY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN NYC**

BY NIGORA BURHONOVA (IMAGE: RIGHT)

On November 18-20, I attended the 44th Business Today International Conference at Grand Hyatt New York City, USA, which gathered 133 students from 34 countries and 73 universities. I was honored to be selected from a pool of more than 4,000 applicants to represent Central Asia at the conference.



The purpose of the conference is to give undergraduate students an opportunity to directly interact with CEOs of many powerful corporations, in order to bridge the gap between undergraduates and top executives. I was honored to listen to speeches from influential executives like Steve Forbes, Chairman and Editor-in-Chief of Forbes; Wendy Kopp, CEO of Teach for All; Mala Sharma, VP of Adobe; and many others, who attended this year's conference and presented their vision for "the future of work": the conference theme. The conference consisted of panels about Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, and diversity in workplace. Offsite seminars with companies such as Mitsubishi, IBM, MDC Ventures and the Wall Street Journal provided unique networking opportunities. I was fortunate enough to attend the Mitsubishi Corporation seminar

and meet with the CEO, where I learned that Mitsubishi specializes not only in machinery, but other different spheres such as energy, metals, chemicals and even food. We also had executive seminars with leadership from companies like Breitling, Schwartzman Scholars, Moody's Analytics and National Geographic.

I was delighted to meet and network with the brightest students from around the globe, who are all striving to change the world for the better and discuss our generation's important issues. Those three days gave me a wonderful opportunity to interact with accomplished students and executives, expand my network and learn about the current trends in business. It was a truly amazing experience!

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### DREAM GIRL PROJECT

BY MEERIM ZHANYBEK KYZY



On November 10, I organized the social project “Dream Girl” in my hometown of Kochkor-Ata. As a participant of the Central-Asia FLEX-Ability Workshop, I received a grant in the amount of \$227 for the implementation of this project, which aims to empower young girls and develop their self-confidence. The idea of empowering young girls came to me a long time ago, after my exchange year in the United States. I realized that to develop Central Asia, we need to change the way we approach and educate girls. From young ages, our girls are traditionally told what to do, how to behave properly, what to say and what not to say, which has been shutting down girls’ ability to think outside the box and make decisions on their own.



Twenty-four high school girls from seven schools and five rural regions of the Zhalal-Abad district attended the workshop. The workshop included seminars on topics such as “How to Break the Stereotypes about Girls,” “Girls of Today and Ways to Success,” “Healthy Lifestyle,” “Decision Making,” and “SMART Goals.” This intensive workshop provided a great opportunity for young women and girls to develop their leadership, decision making, and critical thinking skills. By the end of the workshop, participants learned how to set goals, manage time, pursue healthy lifestyles, and significantly improved their decision-making and communication skills. Furthermore, I helped them identify their strengths, a skill that I learned from the U.S.-CAEF trainings. This helped the girls analyze their strong skills and choose their future professions.

### PROSKILLS COURSES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

BY OLGA PYKHOVA



In November, I launched the ProSkills educational courses that were aimed to help 10 high school students apply to universities. The project lasted for a month, and consisted of four classes, four guest lectures and a trip to an orphanage in Kara-Balta. As participation was not free of charge, I collected \$120 that I donated to one of the U.S.-CAEF Fellows.

By running these courses, I faced many challenges such as finding guest speakers, conducting classes, and creating a schedule. The guest speakers were representatives of OSCE Academy, ProKG Club, AUCA, and the Writing and Academic Resource Center (WARC). We taught participants how to write CVs, statements of purpose, and cover letters, and provided interview tips. The guest lecturers covered such topics as career planning, leadership, and self-discipline.

I was lucky enough to have three volunteers who helped me implement my vision. One of the volunteers was **Aiana Rysbekova**, my U.S.-CAEF mentee. One of the tasks assigned to participants was to organize a project with an orphanage in Kara-Balta. It was sponsored by American Councils and the Ministry of Transportation. Aiana managed the work with participants and guided them through all parts of the project. For participants, it was a unique experience of leadership and communication that they can add to their CVs. Aiana demonstrated high level of responsibility and management skills.

## ALUMNI REUNION: THIRD ANNUAL BLACK TIE EVENT



The Alumni Council held its last event, Black Tie, on December 1, 2018 at Jannat Hotel. Initiated by the Alumni Council in 2015, Black Tie has become the most popular and awaited event among the U.S.-CAEF Alumni and Fellows. The event was carried out by three Alumni Council members, Anisa Atalova, Adel Sultanbekova and Chyngyz Zhanybekov, and several current U.S.-CAEF Fellows: Bekzat Sadyrbaev, Nurzada Abdibalieva, Bakyt Mamytbekov, Meerim Moldalieva, Sezim Zhenishbekova, Meerim Zhanybek Kyzy and Kasiet Mambetkul Kyzy.



This year, the event took place on December 1, 2018 at Jannat Hotel, and was carried out by three Alumni Council members, Anisa Atalova, Adel Sultanbekova and Chyngyz Zhanybekov, and several current U.S.-CAEF Fellows: Bekzat Sadyrbaev, Nurzada Abdibalieva, Bakyt Mamytbekov, Meerim Moldalieva, Sezim Zhenishbekova, Meerim Zhanybek Kyzy and Kasiet Mambetkul Kyzy.

As in the previous year, the planning committee was able to bring several influential speakers to the event, including Maksat Ishenbaev, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Bai-Tushum Bank; Urmat Nasykulov, CEO and Managing Director of Change Fitness; Tilek Toktogaziev, Senior Manager & Founder at Agrohholding Jashyl Charba; Alana Gorodnyanskaya, Director of Alana Event Agency; and Daniyar Emilov, Founder of INFODAANA. Instead of traditional success stories, the speakers were asked to focus on their biggest failures. All five speakers shared several stories with the audience of missteps and blunders that they made

on their career paths. The speakers also spoke about how their perseverance allowed them to use their failures as opportunities to reflect, learn and grow. Their inspirational stories helped the Fellows and Alumni understand that failures are natural, and often inevitable in the path to any success story. They emphasized the importance of not walking away from their goals and giving up, but rather learning from these experiences, rising up from the setbacks and moving forward. Those in attendance at the event agreed that the highlight was hearing from the speakers and having an opportunity to network with professionals whom they would not have otherwise met.

Following the banquet, the attendees participated in games, contests and dancing and enjoyed bonding with and creating a further sense of community among other U.S.-CAEF Alumni and Fellows. Alumni Association members are delighted with the success of the Black Tie event and hope to continue the tradition for years to come.

## FAREWELL TO OUTGOING ALUMNI COUNCIL



BATIMA MYRZABEKOVA, VP FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Recently, the third Alumni Council (Council) passed its duties on to a new team. Over the past two years, the members of the outgoing team, led by President **Anisa Atalova**, 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. During these two years, a total of 13 alumni served as officers of the Council, some were able to serve for the entire period while others had to step down earlier due to demanding careers or family commitments. We would like to express our sincerest gratitude to each officer for their dedication and contribution to the U.S.-CAEF Alumni Association during the time of major changes in their professional and personal lives. Here are the names of the members of the outgoing Council members: ►

ANISA ATALOVA  
 ADEL SULTANBEKOVA  
 CHYNGYZ ZHANYBEKOV  
 AYZHARKYN BURKANOVA  
 BATIMA MYRZABEKOVA  
 AIIDA BAGYTZHANOVA  
 FIRUZA HASANOVA  
 AYNA ANNAORAZOVA  
 IRINA ABASOVA  
 AZIZA AKYLOVA  
 ZHAMILIA KLYCHEVA  
 YULIYA DAVYDENKO  
 SITORA SHAGAMBAYEVA

## FAREWELL TO OUTGOING ALUMNI COUNCIL

CONTINUED

**REMARKS BY ANISA ATALOVA,  
PRESIDENT OF THE OUTGOING  
ALUMNI COUNCIL**

Two years of service for the U.S.-CAEF Alumni Council gave me a clear understanding that the U.S.-CAEF program is the best scholarship program that has ever existed. First of all, due to its impeccable management by its Board of Directors and American Councils, Fellows have the best possible conditions and support in order to excel in their pursuit of a world class business education. Therefore, after graduation, our Alumni have a natural desire to give back to the community that gave us so much. We can give back in many ways - by volunteering for our Alumni Association, initiating and organizing events for other alumni and mentoring and guiding younger Alumni/Fellows.

Due to a very competitive selection process for the program, our Fellows, and later Alumni, become not only exceptional business professionals, but also socially responsible people with ambitions and a desire to contribute to the development of their communities. Therefore, it is extremely important for Alumni to stay connected and create synergies to achieve more together. Attending Alumni meetings, staying connected on social media and letting other Alumni know what you are doing by sending your updates or stories is very vital for our success.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to our Alumni Council members, who bravely served these past two years by trying their best to organize both formal and informal meetings, guest lectures and professional trainings. We encourage others to attend and stay involved. My best hope is that we, alumni, will keep our U.S.-CAEF family close and will not only become the business leaders of Central Asia, as the U.S.-CAEF program founders envisioned, but also will be able to create our own scholarship program for younger generations.



## 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 the U.S.-CAEF spirit further.

### NEW ALUMNI OFFICERS



#### ZHIBEK KAMALBEK KYZY

President of the AUCA Chapter  
Audit Assistant, KPMG Bishkek  
AUCA Class of 2018

I graduated from AUCA with a major in Finance and Accounting in 2018. During my tenure at AUCA, I was actively involved in the activities of the U.S.-CAEF Program, was part of the U.S.-CAEF Student Association and served as VP for Finance of the Youth Social Entrepreneurship Project. In my final year, I was chosen as a finalist of the 2018 Capstone Internship Program, where I had an amazing experience at Ashoka Global in Washington, DC. Currently, I work at KPMG in Kyrgyzstan as an audit assistant. I am excited to be joining the Alumni Council. During my term, I would like to engage alumni and fellows in networking and other activities that would benefit all and bring them closer.



#### AZATBEK ISMAILOV

Vice President for Outreach  
AUCA Class of 2018

I graduated from AUCA in 2018 with a major in business administration and concentration in finance and audit. During my student life, I was actively involved in such university clubs as Debate Club, ENACTUS, Case Club and others. After completing my bachelor's degree, I had a chance to spend my fall semester in Washington, DC interning at a nonprofit organization called Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN) through the Capstone Internship Program. I have gained valuable experience, and am excited to share it with the U.S.-CAEF fellows. As Vice President for Outreach for the Alumni Council, I would like to involve as many Fellows and Alumni in various events, meetings and workshops in order to strengthen ties and promote the U.S.-CAEF Program.



#### ZULFIYA URUNOVA

President of the KIMEP Chapter  
KIMEP University Class of 2018

The reason why I accepted the position of President of the Alumni Association is that for me, U.S.-CAEF is not just a scholarship that paid my tuition, but the program that changed my life and helped me find friends and a new family. By taking this responsibility, I want to express my gratitude and give back to the program.

After graduating from KIMEP University in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in Accounting and Audit, I was honored to intern in Washington, DC through the Capstone Internship Program. I interned at Street Entrepreneurs, a startup that helps entrepreneurs and small businesses by providing trainings and mentorship and assisting in raising capital. During the Capstone internship, I learned more about the operations of U.S.-CAEF and American Councils and realized that I wanted to contribute to their work. I am excited to start working both with alumni and current fellows. Together with my team, I will do my best to make this year productive and enjoyable for all.

## MEET THE NEW ALUMNI LEADERSHIP TEAM

CONTINUED

**JAHONGIR RAHIMOV**

Vice President for Outreach  
Financial Consultant, KPMG  
KIMEP Class of 2018

I graduated from KIMEP University with a degree in Corporate Finance. After graduation, I took part in the Capstone Internship Program, where I interned at Manchester Trade in Washington, DC. Currently, I work as financial consultant at KPMG in Almaty. During my studies at KIMEP, I served as Vice President for Finance and in my senior year as President of the U.S.-CAEF Student Association.

I always tried to make the association feel like family, so that we would become closer to each other. I would like to continue that tradition now in the role of the Vice President for Outreach of the Alumni Association. I firmly believe that U.S.-CAEF does not end once we receive our diplomas. The connections that we've made throughout these years is a huge asset, which we should cherish and develop further.

**GULIZA ALMAZBEK KYZY**

VP for Professional Development  
Marketing Specialist,  
Coca-Cola Bishkek Bottlers  
AUCA Class of 2018

I graduated from AUCA in 2018 with a major in business administration and minor in international and comparative politics. During my studies at AUCA, I was an active student and participated in different educational and social projects. In 2016, together with other U.S.-CAEF Fellows, I organized an educational project called "MegaMozgia" in the Talas region. This project confirmed my belief that investing in education is priceless; therefore, I want to continue helping young people in Kyrgyzstan. Driven by this goal, I completed ProKG's Leadership Program. Using the knowledge and the network of business leaders whom I met during the program, I am motivated to organize more community service projects. In my role as Vice President for Professional Development, I would like to organize different trainings and networking events that can help our alumni and fellows grow professionally.

**AMINA IQBOLZODA**

VP for Professional Development  
Associate Banker, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development  
KIMEP Class of 2015

I am pleased to re-join the Alumni Association in my new role as Vice President for Professional Development in Kazakhstan. Previously, I served our alumni community in Tajikistan and was responsible for regional outreach and social activities in 2016.

I graduated from KIMEP University in 2015 with a major in finance and minor in accounting. I was privileged to be selected to the Capstone Internship Program, which gave me the opportunity to work as a financial analyst for IZAR Capital, a small middle market merchant bank in Washington, DC. Upon my return to my home country, Tajikistan, I was employed as financial analyst by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Recently, I was transferred to the company's Almaty office where I was offered the position of associate banker. I have always been interested in banking, so this transition made me even more passionate about my job. I am happy to support the team with my work experience and help alumni enhance their professional growth.

## MEET THE NEW ALUMNI LEADERSHIP TEAM

CONTINUED

**ANISA HOJIEVA**

Alumni Coordinator in Tajikistan  
Marketing Specialist, Coca-Cola, Tajikistan  
Instructor, Study with US, American Councils  
AUCA Class of 2017

Greetings to the U.S.-CAEF family! I am honored to greet you all and introduce myself to those who do not know me. My name is Anisa Hojieva, I graduated from AUCA in 2017. It has been almost a year since I started working as a marketing specialist at Coca-Cola Tajikistan. I am responsible for all projects and activities related to sparkling drinks like Coke, Sprite and Fanta. Life at the company is very intense: you work a lot, but you also learn a lot.

I also have another passion in life that I will never give up: education. I am privileged to be part of the project funded by the US Department of State called Study with US. The project aims at enhancing participants' competency to apply, matriculate, and achieve academic success at the U.S. colleges and other academic institutions. I work closely with a group of students, develop curriculum and provide instructions in key college preparatory areas, including standardized tests, academic writing, critical thinking, and developing of soft skills.

**BAHTIYAR JALIOV**

Alumni Coordinator in Turkmenistan  
Founder and Executive Producer,  
Tribalands Company  
KIMEP Class of 2014

I graduated from KIMEP University in 2014 with a major in business economics and a minor in computer applications. After my graduation, I won an Erasmus scholarship to pursue a master's degree in management of European affairs at University of Lille, France, which also allowed me to take part in the immersion program in Brussels, Belgium.

In 2016, I was involved in the Executive Committee of the 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games (AIMAG) as Program Management Office (PMO) Coordinator. Around that same time, I founded a mobile applications development company, Tribalands. In 2017, together with my team, we launched our first flagship product in Google Play.

Currently, I am working as Executive Producer at Tribalands in Ashgabat. As Alumni Coordinator for Turkmenistan, I want to cultivate the U.S.-CAEF family values further.

**NOW IT'S YOUR TURN, ALUMNI COUNCIL 2019!**

OUTGOING ALUMNI COUNCIL MEMBERS: ANISA ATALOVA, CHYNGYZ ZHANYBEKOV AND ADEL SULTANBEKOVA

## MEET THE NEW ALUMNI LEADERSHIP TEAM

CONTINUED

### STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORS



#### MOLDIR KUSSAINOVA

Co-founder and CEO, FOXOUT  
KIMEP Class of 2012

I graduated from KIMEP in 2012 with a major in finance. After graduating from KIMEP, I started my career in the consumer goods industry for 5 years at two leading FMCG companies in the world, Henkel and Beiersdorf. In 2017, I decided to pursue my passion for entrepreneurship, so I launched a successful business on Amazon.com. By the end of 2017, I founded an IT startup called FOXOUT.KZ. I raised a seed round investment totaling \$140,000 from Singapore Venture Capital.

In 2018, I applied to Y Combinator Startup School, and my startup was admitted to SUS 2018. We successfully graduated from the school in November 2018. Y Combinator is the largest and one of the most prestigious seed accelerators in the world. It is highly competitive and has an acceptance rate of 1,5%. I served as Vice President for Outreach and Social Activities of the U.S.-CAEF Alumni Association in 2012- 13. I am genuinely happy to be invited to the Council as Strategic Development Advisor this year. I would like to share my experience both from the corporate industry and the startup sphere to inspire current Fellows to follow their passion. Life is too short not to follow your dream, so let's make the most out of it!



#### KARINA KUSSAINOVA

Entrepreneur, BedSet and InJoy Studio  
AUCA Class of 2014

After five years since my graduation from AUCA, I have finally tapped into my life purpose- to ignite a passion among young people and help them live a full life. Previously, I tried myself in different areas – I worked as a coach and trainer, founded my bed linen business, worked in the consulting industry in the apparel sector, opened a small shop, and of course, I am still carrying a role of a mother and wife.

My wealth of life experience pushes me to share it with the younger generation and help them define their paths. Therefore, I am joining the U.S.-CAEF Alumni Council as Strategic Development Advisor. I am looking forward to meeting with Fellows and Alumni personally and in groups to encourage, motivate and share my personal experience with them.

## ALUMNI STORIES

## THE JOHN SMITH TRUST FELLOWSHIP

BY NILUFAR MATYAKUBOVA, KIMEP CLASS OF 2013, ECONOMIC ASSISTANT, US EMBASSY, ASHGABAT

2018 was very eventful for me- I changed my job, traveled almost every month, participated in the John Smith Trust Fellowship program in November and got married! The John Smith Trust, as stated on their website, “seeks to promote good governance, social justice and the rule of law by nurturing a new generation of leaders committed to making a difference in their countries and societies.”



During the four weeks of the program we traveled to Edinburgh, Dundee, York, London, Cornwall, Essex, etc. and met with outstanding businessmen, politicians, NGO workers, policemen, and researchers who had a lot of experience in their areas of work, which they shared enthusiastically and passionately. Among those people were Sergey Guriev, Chief Economist at EBRD, and Lord Green, a British politician and former Minister of State for Trade and Investment and former Group Chairman of HSBC Holdings. Moreover, we also visited the Eden Project, a popular attraction in Cornwall, UK.

The program was very extensive and unique. It gave me the opportunity to develop my leadership skills, make fruitful connections and find potential mentors. As one of the areas that interest me is digital marketing, I was excited to meet with Jamie Coleman, Co-founder of CodeBase, the UK's largest technology incubator. He gave me valuable advice on my career and tips on how to improve in the area of digital marketing.

## ALUMNI STORIES

CONTINUED

## HELPING WITH STARTUP INVESTOR PITCH

BY ZULFIYA URUNOVA, KIMEP CLASS OF 2018

During my Capstone internship in Washington, DC, I worked at Street Entrepreneurs, a nonprofit organization that creates access to social and economic capital through educational programming and mentorship. Since it was a startup with a very small team, I was pleasantly surprised with the level of responsibility and workload given to interns. I felt like a real member of the company, leading projects and taking full responsibility for them.



One of the best parts of my internship was the organization of the StreetPitch competition, where seven founders from the DMV (District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia) area pitched to a panel of judges, angel investors and community partners. It was also live-streamed, so attendees and viewers could make direct investments into the startups through equity crowdfunding campaigns, product purchases or in-kind contributions. The event was physically attended by over 150 people while the online presence exceeded 1 million viewers.

During the organization of StreetPitch, I consulted two of the participants with the preparation of their financial projections. I learned how to create financial projections at KIMEP University, but the fact that investments partially depended on the projections put a lot of pressure on me. After the showcase, I was happy to find out that they received the highest investments in their projects. Working on this event helped me advance my project management, communication, and stress-resistance skills. In addition, it was a great opportunity for networking.



## ALUMNI STORIES

CONTINUED

**CHYNARA ERKULOVA WINS A SCHWARZMAN SCHOLARSHIP**

BY ANISA ATALOVA, AUCA CLASS OF 2016

**Chynara Erkulova** of Kyrgyzstan, KIMEP Class of 2016, has received a prestigious Schwarzman Scholarship to study at Tsinghua University, Beijing in fall 2019.



## SCHWARZMAN SCHOLARS

With an acceptance rate of 3.7%, Schwarzman Scholars is an extremely competitive scholarship program, designed to help students develop their leadership skills and professional networks, expand their understanding of the world and create a growing network of global leaders for the future.

The students were handpicked by a distinguished group of interviewers, including Lionel Barber, Editor of the Financial Times, and Brian Mulroney, Former Prime Minister of Canada. About 40% of the scholars come from the U.S., and many of them are graduates of such prestigious institutions as Harvard, Yale, Stanford, and Brown University. Chynara became the only representative of Kyrgyzstan and one of just three recipients from Central Asia among 147 finalists.

*“My degree is called Master’s in Global Affairs with specialization in Business and Economics. The career services and the network of partners that the program offers is incredible,”*

- Chynara.

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## ALUMNI STORIES

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CONTINUED

### REACHING OUT TO UZBEK YOUTH IN OSH

BY ANISA ATALOVA, AUCA CLASS OF 2016

**Nazokat Alimova** (AUCA Class of 2014) is currently implementing an educational project for youth called Boshqacha (translated as “Different”) in her native hometown of Osh. Although she is far away from her country, Nazokat was able to run the project remotely with the help of her friend for several months already. After acquiring a Green Card in 2017, Nazokat moved to Houston, Texas where she lives with her husband and daughter and works as an accountant at Riyad Bank.

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Boshqacha aims to help children from the Uzbek minority or other disadvantaged groups who have limited access to opportunities. The project provides scholarships to students to study English at Taylor School, a private institution known for high quality education. Currently, the project supports ten youth and is sponsored by a local businessman in Osh. Nazokat is planning to register as an NGO soon, so that she can start applying for grants. The project’s website is currently in Uzbek ([www.boshqacha.org](http://www.boshqacha.org)). Kyrgyz, and Russian, and English will be added soon. “The U.S.-CAEF Fellowship changed many lives for the better, including mine. Coming from a less advantaged background, I was able to get a quality education from a top university in Central Asia and improve my life for the better. Now it is time for alumni like me to give back to our communities and continue the U.S.-CAEF spirit. Therefore, my friend and I came up with the project Boshqacha. The main goal of the project is to select highly motivated high school students from poor families in Osh and award scholarships for quality English language courses. We will also help high school students apply for colleges and other scholarship opportunities. Our goal is to help students receive a quality education, change their lives for the better, and contribute to the development of their country. We want to help students live a different, better life and hope that they will also help others to create a better life in the future,” shared Nazokat.



## ALUMNI PORTRAITS

**BAKHROM TURSUNOV**

BY ANISA ATALOVA, AUCA CLASS OF 2016

Bakhrom is a passionate professional with big dreams of transforming the cinematography and production fields in Kyrgyzstan. Bakhrom started his career in his first year at AUCA, filming and photographing every AUCA event, leading the AUCA TV team and building one of the most popular e-shows in Central Asia, 'Snova Dvoe.' 'Snova Dvoe' has almost 90,000 active followers on Instagram and 173,000 subscribers on YouTube, which places it as one of the top YouTube channels in Kyrgyzstan. The project has incredible potential, and Bakhrom is a true leader of the project.



In addition to 'Snova Dvoe,' Bakhrom founded the digital agency, "Mark Twain," right after his graduation and was also invited to stay at AUCA as a publications coordinator and a managing director of AUCA TV. His agency offers various marketing and production services.

Bakhrom is constantly engaged in several projects, travels extensively, and is an extremely hard-working

person. Currently, Bakhrom is traveling around the U.S. with his team, making a documentary about ten Silicon Valley startups. The project is sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek.

The AUCA U.S.-CAEF community relied much on his production and photography skills, and he is always in our mind when any help is needed.

**SAMAT NURTOLEUOV**

BY YERASSYL TOLEUGAZINOV, KIMEP CLASS OF 2016

After his graduation from KIMEP, Samat started his career at the JSC Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund and dedicated himself to supporting entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan. While working at the Fund, Samat was responsible for monitoring financial support and assisting local entrepreneurs with their business plans. ▶

KIMEP UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2016**SAMAT  
NURTOLEUOV**Senior Manager  
Social Entrepreneurship  
Corporation

 U.S.-CAEF  
ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION  
LEADING THROUGH BUSINESS

## ALUMNI PORTRAITS

CONTINUED

Using his university knowledge, Samat provided effective consulting services to numerous businesses throughout the country, which subsequently received financial support from the Fund. Due to his positive attitude and excellent performance, Samat was offered the position of Senior Manager at the Atyrau Social Entrepreneurship Corporation, where he is currently responsible for investment relations and helps increase the investment appeal of small and medium businesses in the region. Samat has proven his commitment to the development

of entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan while showing outstanding professional accomplishment. This alone makes him highly qualified for this Award.

In addition to his main responsibilities at his current position, Samat is actively involved in the digitalization of data, which helps increase the whole organization's productivity and efficiency. The practices he learned at his previous position and his academic experiences help him to develop innovative ideas.

### ASKAR SAPARBEKOV

BY CHYNGYZ ZHANYBEKOV, AUCA CLASS OF 2014

Askar says his life goal is to become a leading marketer who will assist businesses in developing and implementing marketing strategies.

After graduating from KIMEP University, Askar continued his endeavors by finishing military trainings and working for the consulting company "Grant Thornton" as an advisory specialist. He participated in various projects in due diligence and forensic investigation. This experience provided him with an understanding of the corporate sector and business processes. He was later employed by Carlsberg Kazakhstan, where he worked as Trade Marketing Specialist. Within one year, he was promoted to the Junior Brand Manager position. Two years later, he received an offer from another company to the position of Brand Manager at RG Brands. Most recently, Askar worked at Henkel Central Asia

and Caucasus, where he served as Key Account Manager and was responsible for markets in Astana, Karaganda, and Shymkent.

Askar was awarded a Bolashak scholarship to study at the Strathclyde Business School, Glasgow, UK, and he is currently pursuing a master's degree in international marketing. Strathclyde Business School is ranked in the top 10 in the UK and top 15 in Europe. The marketing department is ranked number 2 in the UK.

Askar is passionate about adding value to society and contributing to its development. Being a master's student, he tries to help undergraduate students.

He engages with students and class representatives and represents their views to the university staff.

Askar remains an active member of the U.S.-CAEF community, and has taken part in several panel discussions with current U.S.-CAEF students.



## ALUMNI PORTRAITS

CONTINUED

**ARAILYM ZHAKSYLYK**

BY CHYNGYZ ZHANYBEKOV, AUCA CLASS OF 2014

After graduating from KIMEP University in 2012 with a double major in marketing and finance, Arailym worked for Ernst & Young in Almaty. The following year, driven by her passion for marketing, Arailym decided to continue her career in the marketing department of Bank Home Credit, one of the biggest retail banks in Kazakhstan. In 2016, she was promoted to the Deputy Head of Marketing Communication Unit, which Arailym said was a challenging experience that motivated her to develop her business management skills further.



After receiving a Bolashak Scholarship in 2018, Arailym enrolled in the Marketing Management Master's Degree program at Australian National University (ANU) which is ranked 1st in Australia and 24th in the world by the 2019 QS World University Rankings. Within the first year of her studies at ANU, Arailym took part in business case competitions organized by PwC and Global Microfinance Organization and fared well against her peers. She was placed in the top 10 among 100 participants of the PwC competition, and became a runner-up in the contest held by Global Microfinance Organization. In recognition of her commitment to excellence, Arailym was selected to take part in the MomentuM professional development program at ANU. This flagship program allows eligible students to partner with a mentor selected from local companies to support and encourage their professional development, and offers them a series of workshops, networking sessions, and opportunities to take industry-led trainings.

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