

THE NEW STAR

independent student newspaper

Issue 3

April 8, 2020



Spring, as we know, is the period of awakesness, the mild breath of air filled with freshness of trees' blossoms and flowers. That is the first season and start of Persian calendar which is named Nowruz as a call for the new start of the year. In Persian and Turkic world, Nowruz is celebrated on March 21st and the meaning comes from Now - Ruz (New Day). Nowruz has a great significance in Central Asia as it has become a part of the cultural identity of this region. We should appreciate and share the spirit of Nowruz and let's follow the vibe of welcoming Spring!

Anisa Zulfova
ICP119

Art from: Pinterest

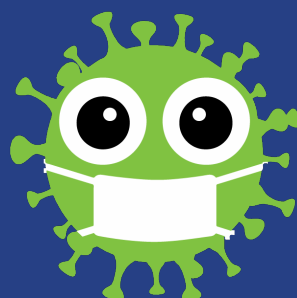
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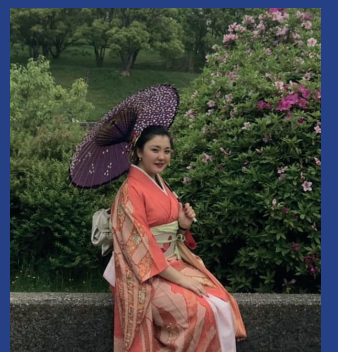
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Unexpected Phenomenon for AUCA Professors and Students (First week experience of distance learning)

The coronavirus outbreak or COVID-19 has forced schools around the globe to promote distance education practice. Meanwhile, the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) was among those colleges to adopt an online and distance learning approach. Most probably, it is the first time that students and professors at AUCA are experiencing the transition to online studying. Hence, it is confusing to understand whether they are finding it difficult and how professors are feeling. Deniz Nazarova, a sophomore from the Software Engineering department, stated that “talking and sharing opinion becomes problematic in such a detached e-environment.”

Malika Saparova, a sophomore from Environmental Management discipline, claimed that she feels much more hesitant to ask questions or raise a discussion compared to a classroom. Apparently, students find a great difference between the distance education and conventional classroom. Professor Nicholas Walmsley pointed out that distance teaching will feel like less of a social process and more of an individual process. Students are isolated at home with no access to interact with professors and friends directly. More than that, the issues of professors’ grading and teaching philosophies are not yet covered. Adopting to this method might be a bit difficult, but possible to do by time.

Khiradmand Sheraliev
ICP 118

photo from: AUCA
facebook page



Prof: Ilker Corut

Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Anthropology

Ilker is assistant professor of the Sociology Department of AUCA since 2017. He earned his bachelor’s degree in management in Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. However, when studying management, he started to dream about having an academic career in social sciences, being inspired by the critical intellectual environment of Boğaziçi University. In 2003, he started his master’s study in Ataturk Institute for Modern Turkish History, which is the leading research centers of Turkey. Having earned his master’s degree, he started

In August 2017 I came to Bishkek as a fellow of Global Teaching Fellowship Program of CEU and started to teach in the Sociology Department.”

Ilker thinks that “AUCA is one of the most prestigious academic institutions of the Central Asia.” He adds: “I think our department is obviously one of the best departments of AUCA; my department colleagues are all very skilled and have a very strong command of their research fields. Also, as I can clearly see in the impressive performance of our students in my classes, our students are very smart and eager to learn.”

Ilker is happy with his life in Bishkek: “It did not take a long time to realize that my worries about Bishkek are groundless.” He is complaining of not having enough free time to explore natural beauties of Kyrgyzstan. Apart from his full-time work in AUCA, he is currently editing a book for Routledge, working over his doctoral dissertation to turn it into a book manuscript, and trying to make some publications.

As for his future plans, he would like to keep teaching at AUCA and is determined to deepen his sociological understanding of Central Asia. To conclude with Ilker’s words: “AUCA has provided me with academic freedom and comfortable intellectual environment. Frankly, I feel indebted to AUCA. So long as I keep teaching at AUCA, I will do my best to put my input into AUCA’s efforts to be one of the leading universities of Asia.”

Bermet Mamyrova
LAS 117

his doctoral study in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology of CEU.

The point of departure of his story leading him to AUCA is not immediately linked to his prior research interests. It rather pertains to the existing authoritarian political climate of Turkey: “I had some disagreements with the ruling party over the way they managed Kurdish question. That is why I struggled to have a position in Turkish universities.

Feeling depressed? Annoyed? Lonely?

Do not worry! AUCA Psychologists are here to help you.

Every person faces difficulties and each has alternative way of sharing their problems. Some share with parents /friends while others keep those painful feelings deep inside. Even worst, sometimes our unshared thoughts bring us to sort of depression, isolation, and “suicide mood”. A lot of AUCA students were also noticed under unstable mental control, where some openly shared suicide ideas from personal issues to studies that literally cause stress.

Any solution?

Fortunately, AUCA has professional psychologists with wonderful experiences who are ready to support students.



Art from: Pinterest

Diana Pokhilko (Диана Похилько) says that every student should visit psychologists to be sure about their own stabilities. Miss Diana works only part time at AUCA, but all her sessions are booked regularly.

“I have 6 hours per week to work in AUCA. On Mondays, sometimes I am registering more students than needed to be.

The reason follows a lot of demand from students’ side which I am very happy.”-mentioned by Dr. Pokhilko. Statistics say that during the period of January-July 2019, 46 people were registered to Counseling Service seeking psychological help including staff members. In 257 hours of counseling majority of clients had general problems either related to study, family, interpersonal relationships and more.

So why do I need to go to psychologist?

1. Sessions are totally free and students have no limited seats to attend. Our psychologists are available for both local and international students regarding any problem.

2. Any sort of issue/mental state/ depression/worry should be considered seriously. The head of Psychology department, Elena Kosterina says : “Each of us have right to use psychologist’s sessions. Not every university provides such opportunities. We accept the fact that people should always visit psychologist if they have serious problems. No, AUCA is seeking to support its students from having simple conversations with professionals to discussion of immense problem that torments them.”

3. Any problem/name/session is highly confidential. No one will ever know whether student even visited psychologist if that problem brings her/him negative psychological effects. Moreover, if psychology considers the fact that a student studies, attend classes or not procrastinate but has state of depression, AUCA psychologists can help her/him to improve grades by special cases if needed.

4. AUCA announces its new psychologist Aida Parpieva, who is only Russian speaker in comparison to Diana. Miss Aida is also high qualified psychologist with brilliant experiences and one who is ready to help .

P.S. Don’t be afraid to attend psychologist’s sessions for any shameful reason. AUCA cares. If you feel that help is needed, you are more than welcome to write cs@auca.kg /0552282277 or visit 415 to register.

Zuhro Azorabekova, JMC 118

Coronavirus or Corona Racist?

At the beginning when Corona virus became the news headlines everyone showed different attitudes toward eastern people. I was thinking why a virus should judge a society or a community and I came up with a new term CORONA RACIST. To me that was about inner fear of people which led those to show extremely negative attitudes toward people with Asian eye cut. As I read in many countries, people were running away from those, who look like Chinese or belong to any Asian culture as if they carry Coronavirus.

Indeed, forwarding invalid information in social Medias made the issue even worst. There were many reports mentioned in News, where Asian people could not enter restaurants, cafes, and hotels just because of their facial features. Unfortunately, same situation happened in our campus and I was witness. Some students attacked Lutuofula, a student from China, during his rehearsals for Diversity week on 30th of January.

There were more than hundred witnesses of that accident; however, most of them could not understand the reason of him screaming curse words in the middle of his performance. Later on that day, his stories with commentaries were posted on well-known Instagram page @AUCA_mememorbship. He responded that his reason for such behavior was an answer to those, who screamed “Coronavirus” addressing to him. The second story he shared on Instagram had the following powerful context: “Not all Chinese people around you carry Coronavirus, but the thing is that you have lots of viruses inside your brain”.



Later I decided to gather some AUCA students’ opinions about that case which they requested to be anonymous.

1. “Corona virus is not a defender of our personality. People should not be discriminated in any cases, whether it is a type of virus or anything else. Politeness and tolerance are exactly those things that most of human beings really need.”

2. “I think it was extremely inappropriate behavior. People who act similarly are narrow-minded and it is sad, because they are adults and should somehow understand such simple things.”

3. “Sometimes people can seriously hurt another person’s feelings, even if they don’t want to. This situation proved it. After all, if jokes are perceived acute and they can offend someone, then this is not just a joke. We often do not notice how one of our rash words resentment in another person. I think we should be more careful in our statements and be sure that they do not harm others”

4. “People worry about themselves, so they inflate the problem by not thinking about others and their feelings. People simply judge by appearance, and are guided by the words of others, without having their own opinion. If I were in his place, I would cry at all. In public, especially this is a weird act, because those people sink so low. People are like a herd, you see, even no one paid attention to this situation, thinking that this is just a joke, when it is not just a joke at all.”

Now, this virus have become worldwide and the only thing that we need to consider is to follow the World Health Organizations’ tips and not blame specific nationalities.

Stay at your homes and be healthy!

Ozayeva Nuray, JMC 119

Exchange Semester in Nippon, the land of the rising sun – Japan



Farkhunda Sadiqi is a senior student majoring in sociology and minoring in Human rights. She attended an exchange program during spring 2019 at Kansai University in Osaka.

She described her exchange semester in Japan as joyous, challenging yet remunerating experience. She learned to be more self-reliant and to give importance to planning ahead for academics and social engagements while respecting diverse cultures, religions and traditions. Hence, she experienced Japanese culture, lifestyle, food, traditional outfit, events, education system, and the natural environment very closely during the five months of her stay in Osaka. However, she faced a few obstacles as well, the communication was not always easy as English is not spoken by many Japanese and also it takes time to get used to Japanese food.

She found Japan and its noble culture very impressive, and she believes that every person needs to visit Japan at least once in their life. According to her Japanese people are the most courteous, considerate, kind, and polite people, she has ever met. Obeying the rules, respecting the culture and loving the nature, while being very efficiently managing time and respecting others are the most significant cultural traits of the Japanese, worthy of emulation.

International students whom she met in Kansai were coming from countries in

Asia, Africa, Europe, the US, Canada, and the Middle East. They represented their countries and their home universities inside the classrooms during discussions and also in cultural events organized by the Osaka University.

She described Bowing as most common greeting in Japanese culture and it is used for different purposes including respecting others, showing gratitude to others and apologizing. Usually, Japanese people do not eat while walking on the street, as they think it is disrespectful to the food. Sakura (cherry blossom) was identified as the unique season in Japan, which adds more beauty to the perfect landscape of it. It is a special season during which you will see everywhere people in colorful dresses, relaxing and scenery of joyous socializing and recording memories by taking pictures.

Kimono, the traditional outfit, designed for both men and women are unique in its own way and in different colors which is something beautiful but you cannot wear it without getting help from someone local. Usually, the kimono is worn by people during special events/rituals including tea ceremony which is called Matcha.

She feels blessed to experience a journey that was educational, friendly, competitive and adventurous, during her undergraduate life.

Parwin Faizi, SOC 116

Liana's experience in Stetson University

•Why did you choose Stetson University?

Back in 2019, I was confused between UCF and Stetson University. I wanted to choose one where Psychology was developed well and soon applied to Stetson.

•What is the difference between Stetson University and AUCA?

Firstly, the campus itself. I was always surrounded by students and had to study a lot. Moreover, we had a big gymnasium, pools, and more than 120 different Clubs. Secondly, the staff relationship in general to students. Each member of staff were so kind, especially international student's office. I also understood that students were really studying hard. Furthermore, when we had exams, our university had "quite hours" -where every student was able to focus on her/his studies deliberately 24/7 in very quite atmosphere.

•Did you face any challenges?

Actually, I am flexible and adapt quickly into new society. As, I already had experience studying in China for 1 year, I was not stressed in new environment.

•Was it hard to study at Stetson? What was your first impression? Most memorable part?

It is not hard if students do their assignments and study. My first impression was-shock. Everyone on the campus were so friendly. Everyone used to smile and I just fell in love with the university's view. My most memorable part of the whole semester was:

1. In Florida, there was a period of hurricane which lasted till November. Of course, everything was under control, but in September our university was closed for 1 week. Two options were provided, whether to get sheltered with other students in hall or to travel with my friends. I choose the second variant and together with

my friends we visited California. Moreover, after that I went to New Oreland and New York.

2. Every exchange student had opportunity to spend famous Thanksgiving Day with American family. I used this chance and had wonderful experience seeing real American culture.

•Any advice for those who want to apply?

Try to write short, strong, and purposeful motivation letter. You should know how to choose needed credits and definitely talk to your advisers. Don't be afraid to apply. You will not regret because being in different environment is immeasurable experience. Study hard and don't forget about the extracurricular activities. Exactly these activities will make you feel responsible and be highly appreciated by your future exchange university.

Zuhro Azorabekova, JMC 118

NGA AFGHAN STUDENTS' STORIES

Your first year here deserves a round of applause!

**Ekaterina Sanamiants,
Afghan students coordinator**

In the earliest morning of the 2nd February 2020 International dormitory of the American University of Central Asia accepted a community of NGA students from Afghanistan. Moving to another country always implies getting used to a new culture and changing life plans. Which challenges did the new NGA students face? Were they impressed by the new surrounding? Let NGA students – 2020 tell you the things you may have been wandering about.

LIFE STORIES: AFGHAN STUDENTS - 2020



After getting accepted to study at AUCA I was too excited to move to Bishkek. As the time of leaving was getting close and closer I was getting more and more nervous. I found it quite difficult to make myself ready to leave my country, family, and friends. I was sad about leaving my loved ones who are now miles away from me. I do express my gratitude to my family who all the time have supported me to have a better future.

Hakima Askary, NGA-2020



Moving to Bishkek is certainly the best thing that has ever happened to me. Before leaving Afghanistan, I had been worried of not being able to adjust to the new environment. While coming to Bishkek, I met my trip supervisor who introduced me to other students. During our trip, we were helping each other that resulted in a closer relationship bond between us. Because of these interactions, we got to know more about each others.

Qaderdan Zuhail, NGA-2020



When I came to Bishkek, I realized that Bishkek is very similar to Kabul. There are much common points. For example, Macrorayan and Shar-e-Naw in Kabul are like Macrorayan and Bishkek city. I liked AUCA since it matched my expectations. The best thing about AUCA is the ability to apply for exchange programs while, in contrary, AUAF (American University of Afghanistan) has the same standards except international exchanges.

Susan Azizi, NGA-2020

TIPS FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

The most important plan you should have for your first and second undergraduate years of study is to keep your GPA high. That will help you win exchange program scholarships very easily. So, the most important goal in my opinion is to go abroad and be back with new experiences to AUCA that professional aspiration would help AUCA students to widen their views and work harder to be even more successful.

Haroon Ehsan, ICP-2017

My warm welcome to all the new Afghan students at AUCA. Studying in a Liberal Art University like AUCA is a unique experience. Hereby, I suggest a set of advises which might benefit your studies at AUCA:

- Try not to integrate your personal life with academic life. That is to say, if you have personal issues, do not let them be excuses to stop you from doing the class works/assignments - have your personal space separate from your academic life.

- Be a responsible student: For me, a responsible student is one who take one's studies seriously. A responsible student, for example, emails the professor if he/she is about to be five minutes late into the class.

- Start doing the work as early as possible and avoid procrastination. This is a major problem that most of AUCA students suffer. Therefore, always try to start doing an assignment/class work as early as you can. The earlier you start an assignment the more time you will have for revision. Starting an assignment during the night/one day before the deadline will not allow you produce a substantial work.

Abdul Walid Azizi, ICP-2018

The new students from Afghanistan have made life in the dormitory even more interesting: we all now are able to make exchange of cultures and views on reality. My FYS classmate once said that when I got to know Afghan students better, I started to be extremely motivated with their methods of studies. Now I realize that he was right: they often stay awake till late night in dormitory's computer lab and read books, write assignments and make presentations. Nevertheless, the funniest thing is the way they greet us with awkward Привет!

Dina Mamadjanova, BBA-119

The US Travel Ban on Kyrgyzstan: optimistic view?



On the 31st of January 2020, the United States of America announced new visa-restrictions to the citizens of 6 countries including Myanmar, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Sudan, and Tanzania. Among these featured countries, there is a public and student body at the American University of Central Asia suspicion about Kyrgyzstan being listed despite its island of democratic image.

The Diplomat -The main problem of the Kyrgyz Republic relies on the fact that it does not issue electronic passports. It gives an incentive for illegal use of passports by extremists, criminals, and other people to obtain false Kyrgyz citizenship that was used to harm societies across the globe. The Ministry of Interior mentioned that in 2019 alone, the State Registration Service illegally issued 36 passports. So, what are the reactions of AUCA students and professors toward these challenges: US-immigration travel ban and Kyrgyzstan's biometric passport problem?

Nargiza M. (BA-department) during the interview claimed, "some citizens, who are in need of immigration visa, may heavily be affected by this decision". She brought out a case, which describes how certain people can be negatively influenced. One of her friends, after graduation from the Medical Academy, was planning to go to the US and start her career. She was giving her best effort to take the TOEFL IBT and AML exams. "But when she heard that the US put immigration visa restrictions on the Kyrgyz citizens, all of her plans, efforts, dreams, and visions were destroyed."

However, Akmaljon A. (ICP-department) presents a much positive influence of this decision, not only for Kyrgyzstan but also for the international community. During the interview, he mentioned that "new visa restrictions do not affect for the purposes of tourism, business, Work and Travel, and student exchange programs". He says that this new travel ban was enforced in order to make the Kyrgyz Government accountable in front of its citizens on providing secure passports by turning it into biometric passports that have chips. The US administration noted that "these countries will be given an opportunity to show specific improvements in their deficiencies within the next 180 days." (The Diplomat) Emil Dzhuraev (ICP-faculty) claimed, "this will be an additional stimulus, additional push for the Kyrgyz government to finally start doing something with the passport situation, with the security of Kyrgyzstani passports and to speed up the introduction of issuing biometric passports." Hence, it can improve national security and public safety both within Kyrgyzstan and abroad.

Apart from that, there is a confusion between students whether US immigrant visa restrictions can affect AUCA in any way. Emil Dzhuraev (ICP-faculty) stated: "I do not think it has anything to do with the university and even more than that the United States recently launched a new regional strategy for Central Asia. In that short document, actually, the American University of Central Asia is mentioned specifically by the name as one institution of interest that helps United States foreign policy interest in the region. So, I think Washington is very positively disposed to helping and supporting AUCA. Therefore, I do not think this visa restriction will have anything to do with AUCA."

Khirammand Sheraliev, ICP 118

Volleyball Tournament

AUCA Students actively participate in variety of programs hosted by the university. On 15th of February a Volleyball tournament was held in American University of Central Asia. Twelve teams took part in the competition: eight teams from AUCA, three from Technical School of Innovation and one from Bilimkana.

Freshman student, Uljan Bekturova, explained about the role of Volleyball in her life and studies. Uljan highlights that Volleyball is not just a hobby, but motivation for her to study better. During NGA year, Uljan entered the campus Volleyball team which was a bit challenging for her. Indeed, failures made her to work harder and hopefully, this year Uljan's team-Muras got

the first place in Volleyball tournament.

Some AUCA students do not understand the importance of obligatory sport hours and believe it should not be required. Students pursuing study need a healthy body and mind.

One of the advantages of liberal art university is about extra activities which let students to find their main interests. Sports help students to get out of stress during their studies and make them to be active throughout the day.

Congratulations to the winners of Volleyball tournament first place-Muras, second-Kiss my Ace and third-Hexagon.

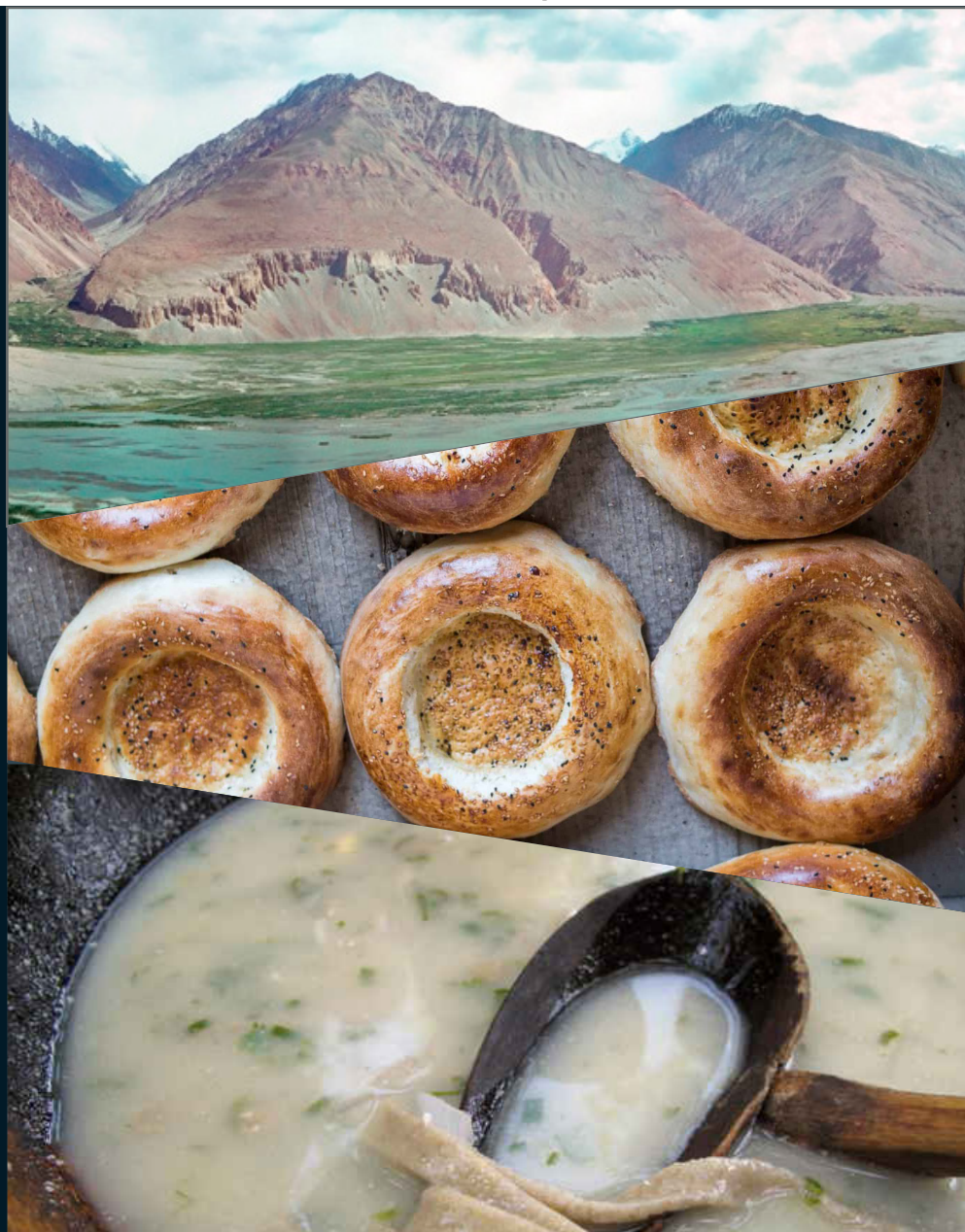
Zebo Rasulova, Eco-118

Pamir - The roof of the World

Pamir is one of the famous places located in Tajikistan. It is a mountains region and is known as the roof of the world. The Highway to Pamir is very beautiful, but at the same time dangerous. Every year Pamiri people celebrate different events. One of the most important Pamiri cultural heritage is Pamiri houses which is known as chid in Shugni language. The structure of these houses is unique and historical as its history goes to more than two and half thousand years ago.

Despite that Pamir also inherited a very wonderful handicraft which is made by woven and includes the Zoroastrians symbols in it. Pamiri people are proud of their traditions and try to show their pure culture to rest people. Traditional clothes and handmade stuffs are the most well-known colorful artistic symbols of Pamir. In addition, Bread is one of the main foods in Pamir and people there usually have it with their soups. There are some more examples of Pamiri traditional foods which are Rughankharvo, Noni Gartha, Qamochtarit, Osh, Ghuzkharvo, and Noshkukhpa . These foods are prepared from simple ingredients. Osh is one of the well-known noodle soup which is prepared in fifty varieties of ways. Another soup which is made from nuts called Ghozkhharvo and the other one with dried apricot called Noshkhukhpa. Likewise, there are many mulberry trees in Pamir which are saved as a wooden monument. There are a lot of interesting points to be mentioned about Pamir, so I recommend you to visit this beautiful traditional place whenever you visit Tajikistan.

Zuhaylo Zulfova
ICP 118



Photos from: pamir.com

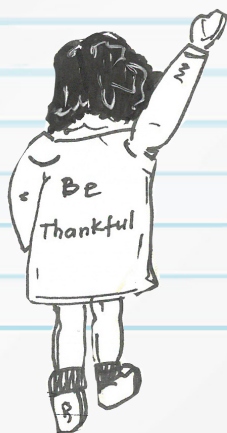
Students' Tales

Cold Tuesday

It was a cold morning. As usual, he was late for his classes. Depression and apathy made him exhausted. His mother had called his name more than five times, but he hadn't responded. He was angry at his mother, at his destiny, and at the weather.

He thought: "No one believes in my success. My mom behaves like I'm still a child."

He was waiting for the bus quietly, but his eyes were sleepy. Suddenly, he saw a little girl who was selling napkins.



She was cheaply dressed, with messy brown hair. He felt compassion toward that little girl. He took a few soms from his pocket and called the girl, gave her money, and felt happy. She smiled and gave him a pack of napkins.

Her eyes were full of kindness despite the cold weather, her cheap dress, and her job.

He wanted to say a few words, but the bus had already arrived.

He left the stop; however, his thoughts were still with that small girl and her nice smile.

"I love you, Mom!" – The only thing that he could write before he got off the bus.



Azimova Mehrangezkhon

NGA2019

Farewell kiss to Zarlasht Sarmast

I am not really sure if by the end of this article I will be able to put even a little bit of my feelings about the past five years at AUCA into words. I was not a person who would ever want to go to university. You see, I have been working with media ever since I was a little kid (6 years old to be exact); I have a lot of experience in media and communications not only in Afghanistan, but also other countries. Before coming to Kyrgyzstan I was working as the spokesperson and media officer for the International Committee of the Red Cross in Afghanistan.

I remember the first thing when I came to AUCA was not to only rely on education inside the classrooms, but also to do more and I think I took care of this goal of mine very well, of course with the support of AUCA staff and faculty members. My most memorable times at AUCA include: receiving the students' excellence award from the Students Life Office for 5 years continuously, being selected for the get engaged conference for 4 years, receiving the "Best Student Projects' Award" when I was an NGA student and of course being a member at Youth Council C5+1. The most fun I had was when I was organizing movie nights in my club the "AUCA Movie Club" and playing football in Women's' Football Club. I think I will miss these two things a bit more. I am not sure if I will come back to Bishkek after graduation but I am certain that AUCA and the beautiful people of AUCA will always remain in my heart.

Zarlasht Sarmast, ICP 116

Zarlasht Sarmast, a strong, powerful, disciplined, and committed girl. She is a friend who respects you, who is always loyal. We only discover who our good friends are in the times where we don't have things going our way, and I found Zarlasht by my side during both good

and bad days. She is the girl with the vision to bring positive, and long-lasting changes to her home country Afghanistan, and the world.

Maryam Ranjbar

ICP 116

Zarlasht is such a personality that her characteristics would not fit in this article, but let me say this to summarize. Zarlasht is the hardest working person I have ever seen. While everyone is dealing with arbitrary works, she would be thinking like what activity should I do? Which program should I apply? Or how I should not waste my time. Having a very aggressive personality, she can also be very polite and compassionate. If I had a chance to choose my daughter, I would definitely want her to have such a character like this. And I'm recommending to other friends who write articles about her, be careful! Because Zarlasht is an individual who will care about each of your words and make it a great obsession out of that. But most importantly, she is a perfect personality and great warrior for this world.

Emirhan Yavuz

Zarlasht was very active since her first days here in AUCA, she always stood for her rights and never gave up her obligations. At least as far as I know her. That's really important and I wish more students can learn this trait. She was really active in extracurricular life as the leader of clubs and head of diversity week delegations. I believe that she would use her strength in the best way to be useful for her motherland. I wish her good luck with senior thesis and success in her future life! You will be missed Zarlasht!

Bermet Ismailova

Student Life Officer



позиция авторов статей не всегда совпадает с позицией ред.коллегии в целом

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