

# NEW STAR

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## New E-Registration System at AUCA

A new electronic registration system at AUCA will be in effect approximately by spring 2010, replacing the paper-based registration for classes.

The new system will allow students to register for AUCA classes from anywhere, as long as the computer is connected to Internet. Even though e-registration eliminates standing in line outside of Registrar's Office, not every aspect of registration could be completed from a computer. Students will still have to see their advisors as well.

Sergey Sklyar, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, stated that the e-registration system is ready but it needs to be tested first.

"In the fall semester, a group of students will be asked to register online and the program will be tested. If the program works fine, then one year from now anyone will be able to register for classes online" he added.

According to the Reg-

istrar of the university, Marat Usupbekov, the university had initially planned to launch e-registration system in the 2005/2006 academic year. However, due to some technical issues, the plan did not work out, he added without clarifying the details of the problem.

"We currently accept study cards in hard copy and face a lot of problems during the registration period," he stated. "I think e-registration is a good idea," he added.

"I did not hear anything about the changes that are going to happen. I think that such changes in registration would be much better and comfortable for students as well as instructors and Registrar Office staff," Nasirova said.

She also added that there might be some kind of misunderstandings and students will still come for consultations or some problems may occur.

Bahtiyar KURAMBAEV and Altynai MYRZABEKOVA

## Student Dormitory should be ready in two years by 2010

University President Ellen Hurwitz said that the student dormitory should be ready to house students two years from now.

"Our hope is to finish the dormitory two years from now," she said.

She said that AUCA has substantial amount of funds available for the student dor-

mitory and the Administration and Board are now narrowing down the sites where to build the student housing.

AUCA is to spend over \$5 million to construct the long-awaited dormitory for students.

Bahtiyar KURAMBAEV /  
Altynai MYRZABEKOVA

## The university moves closer to becoming accredited, says AUCA President



The University is working hard to become accredited, president of AUCA Ellen Hurwitz says. AUCA is doing a lot of work with faculty, as well as Administration and Board, on putting plans to get the United States accreditation, she added.

AUCA is the first university in Kyrgyzstan to initiate the accreditation application process. Once accredited, the University will be recognized as a university that meets the standards for the United

States regional accreditations. Accreditation is based on a set of criteria including the quality and a variety of course and program offerings, student services, and admission, as well as registration services and other student learning support.

The multi-stage accreditation process requires a lot of time, effort, and financial resources. The first phase is to become a candidate for accreditation.

"We are doing a lot of work on academic and financial planning, admission, and general education planning, as well as all other related areas that will get us accredited. It is about doing what you say you will do. It is about the mission of the university," the president added.

According to Kabar National News agency, the university aspires to achieve candidacy status within two years. The two year candidacy planning process includes the design and preparation of an institutional self-study to analyze AUCA's compliance with the standards for accreditation and the development of compliance plans.

Bahtiyar KURAMBAEV and Altynai MYRZABEKOVA

Does New Star look like a real newspaper?

How Afghan Students Feel

Handbook for Online Dating

## DEAN OF STUDENTS COLUMN

### Смотри в «Кодекс прав, обязанностей и правил поведения студентов АУЦА» и думай.



Любой свод законов не может охватить всё и вся. В том числе и наш Студенческий Кодекс. Как один из авторов этого документа, могу сказать, что мы старались учесть всё, что актуально для нашего университета и для той страны, где он находится.

Наверняка он не идеален, хотя в его создании, которое длилось 2 года, принимали участие и студенты, и преподаватели, и сотрудники.

Кодекс был выставлен на всеобщее обсуждение, прежде чем был принят.

И тем не менее, мы и сейчас призываем всех, кто неравнодушен к тому, по каким правилам живет университет, участвовать в его улучшении. Присыпайте свои поправки

к Кодексу, в о з м о ж н о , они будут приняты.

Все законы на земле улучшаются. Принимаются поправки даже к конституциям стран.

Нет никаких препятствий, чтобы прийти в участие в улучшении студенческого Кодекса.

В настоящее время на утверждении находятся несколько поправок относительно академической честности. И, мы надеемся, в следующем академическом году будет опубликована новая редакция кодекса.

Уважаемые студенты, преподаватели и сотрудники, участуйте в этой работе. Наверняка, у каждого из вас есть свое личное мнение по тому или иному пункту Кодекса.

**P.S.** Пользуясь случаем, хочу поблагодарить студента Программы журналистика Евгения Трапезникова, который предложил свои поправки к кодексу, которые ликвидируют некоторые противоречия в его статьях.

### The Film Festival

Student Intellectual Life Committee (SILC) head by Prof. Okon Akiba conducted Film Festival from February 16 to 20, 2009. Students of AUCA were given a chance to watch movies in Room #403 during one week with followed afterwards discussions.

Five movies that were shown to both AUCA students and outsiders were chosen by SILC representatives. They are Aidai Kozubekova, Anastasia Saparalieva, Jyllyz Kudaibergenova, Kaliman Bayalieva, Mirgul Karimova, and Victoria Orazova.

"We tried to pick a theme for the festival that helped us to narrow it down. Main things that we kept in mind social problems, such as political, gender, race and other issues," Okon Akiba said.

The film festival has chosen one theme of movies, which are all powerful and make a student stay till the end. The movies were carefully chosen to present real history, real problems, and simply true stories.

"The Great Debaters" is one movie which mainly carries all of the issues in one. Simple black high school craves their way to beat white guys.

Nadya Shorikova took part in the discussion of the movie and was amazed by the ideas that were presented in it.

"Word is power. Defending themselves with words and not fight, this brings real victory," Nadya Shorikova AS-106 said.

"We were thinking to pick movies that will be very uplifting. All of the movies do have that element in them," Okon Akiba said.

The process of putting the festival was very serious. Six girls on the SILC team made everything that was possible. Starting with persuasion of professors to participate in the discussions to creating and putting all the pieces together.

The Film Festival required certain financial assistance to get the project going. However, as Prof. Akiba pointed out the main thing was a commitment.

"This was all challenging, in terms of time, many other things to do. But these girls find the way out and managed to do their best," Okon Akiba said.

The organizers of the festival dedicated most of their time to organize this event. The

process had little problems, but they were able to manage them.

"We sometimes simply were discussing deals over the phone, as may be three of us were outside of the university. It was an interesting project," Mirgul Karimova said.

SILC students are all volunteers. They all study in the university mainly on third and forth years. All some point of studies they were all invited to be involved in just starting committee.

"They are all my students. Natural attraction, you just see that this one can do it, so you invite to participate," Okon Akiba stated with chuckle.

Okon Akiba took part in all of the discussion of the students.

"I am really satisfied with this project. We had problems, but when you see that you achieve them, it becomes even more joyful," Victoria Orazova said.

The Film Festival is not the only project that SILC organized. Projects such as UN-Module Crisis Game, Public lectures enlarge the list. Interesting guest speakers visit Public Lecture to share with knowledge with students. Crisis Game which will be taking place next month is a yearly project now. The same they are trying to do to the Film Festival

"We hope that other students will take an initiative to continue this interesting project next year, as most of us are graduating this year. It is fun and you gain a lot of organizational skills," Mirgul Karimova said.

Lida CHIKALOVA



## Does New Star look like a real newspaper?

Students at AUCA are always complaining about low quality and an unstable structure of the school newspaper New Star. Some students even think that New Star is not an independent newspaper because it does not publish student's critical article and views.

"Star editors have a kind of monopoly, publishing articles of the same people in every issue. The content of articles published are usually the same, positive and good stuff about AUCA. Maybe Student Senate or the administration pressures editors by censure, or editors are having problems with word 'independent,'" said Abdurahman Aripov, a second year Journalism student.

On the other hand, Nargiza Ryskulova, the editor of New Star, said that she thinks that there were not many cases that the Star did not publish a student's critical articles.

Evidently, there were only one or two cases. She said that sometimes the Star cannot publish the student's articles because of different reasons, for example some students' articles are not good enough to publish or the deadlines are not met.

Moreover she stated, "Some students are complaining that our newspaper does not publish their critical articles, but to tell you the truth, sometimes the deadline runs out and New Star does not have enough material to publish."

Alim Bayat, a freshman from the Anthropology department said that New Star is quite good

and an interesting newspaper for students. It is evident that it is an independent newspaper because they publish lots of critical articles about AUCA administration. There was a recent story about the dormitory, for example.

Regarding the structure of the New Star, Sam Tranum, an instructor from the Journalism department at AUCA, said that stable format and structure are not the most important things.

"The most important thing is that each week they should have an interesting story and get information to the reader," said Tranum.

In addition to this, Tranum has also said that this is a common complaint about all kinds of media, but that it is very important for editorial boards of newspapers to know what to publish. They cannot publish all articles and they should reject some articles because they are just not quite good enough to publish.

Nevertheless, John Couper, an instructor from the Journalism department at AUCA, said that he thinks New Star would benefit from having stable structure and people would know what to expect in Star. They should have enough material to do this.

"New Star editorial board should persuade audiences to write for them and share with them their opinions and ideas," said Couper.

Ryskulova agrees with students and the instructor. "We came up with this idea not long ago to make a stable structure for Star. We will divide the newspaper into different parts like club activ-

ities, student activities and so on," said Nargiza.

"If all the students and staff seriously look to the Star as a source of information then they should get involved and they should spend a little bit of their time to help it. Then Star will be a good and qualified newspaper," Meka Abdurhmanov.

Furthermore, Valery Hardin, a professor from the American studies department, at AUCA, said he thinks that Star editorial board should be in contact every time with reporters and audiences. After each publication, the Star reporter team should make an investigation and research within the university.

"What are the thoughts of students and instructors about articles and the structure of the paper? Today's big problem is that few people are writing stories for the Star, only a few people are working and helping this newspaper," said Hardin.

Hotak YAMA

**NEW STAR IS ALWAYS OPEN FOR IDEAS AND ARTICLES, ANY QUESTIONS CONSIDERING THE NEWSPAPER PLEASE E-MAIL TO [thestar@mail.auca.kg](mailto:thestar@mail.auca.kg)**

# Crisis in Journalism Department or Common Trend?

A strange atmosphere appeared last semester in the Department of Journalism. Both of the office workers, Marina Sivasheva and Damira officially left the territory of the Journalism Department. Not long before this happened, Alan Kubatiev and Aidai Kurmanalieva also left AUCA. A crucial person in the area of video production, Radik, has also decreased his appearance in AUCA. All of this raises the question: is this sort of issue occurring only in the Journalism Department? Or is it just the desire of the officials to leave that can happen in any department?

Along with some painful obstacles that students faced during class registration, there were also problematic periods related to the loss of instructors. In the middle of the semester, students were informed that Marina Sivasheva and Damira were planning to leave. But it did not affect the study process, meaning that classes did not stop. But AUCA Vice President Bermet Tursunkulova assuaged students in a recent meeting arranged with Journalism students. She said that even if the professors are leaving the university in the middle of the semester it does not

mean that they will not finish the courses, they will still have to fulfill semester contract. This concerns all professors in the university, unless there are solid reasons for leaving the university right away.

In addition to the tension that was prevalent in the Department of Journalism, AUCA and the world forever lost Maciej Chowaniok last semester. That was a huge loss for both AUCA and Kyrgyz National University.

Ludmila Sergienkova, a current teacher in American Studies Department, is sure that the issue of retiring professors is due to financial reasons. She said it is one of the main and obvious reasons for leaving the workplace in AUCA.

"Salary is important for everyone in this republic, so the financial factor is one of the most important factors that may force teachers leave in order to work somewhere else," Sergienkova said.

There is an evaluation system in AUCA that determines the salary of the teaching staff. It consists of qualification classification and an evaluation by students. The grading scale

for the teaching staff is classified into four categories: outstanding, good, fair, and unsatisfactory. The head of each department gets to decide which of these four groups to put teachers in. Students' electronic-based evaluations are also taken into consideration. Interestingly enough though, some teacher evaluations are absolutely not based on student evaluations, only on evaluations by the head of the department and university administration.

Another fact that concerns salary is that professors with western degrees are more welcomed and paid to match. In addition, if the teacher lectures the class in English, he or she also gets more than local professors get.

However, professors from the West are not focused on the level of income they receive here. John Couper from the Journalism Department says that he did not come to earn money. He rather came to travel and see the world, learn about the culture, meet new people, and to contribute something that would bring improvements Kyrgyzstan. Agreeing with Dr. Couper, his colleague Sam Tranum said that the salary in AUCA is low, but only for the

local teachers. They said they would lower their own salary if the amount lowered would be added to the salary of local professors.

In order to deal with the decrease of qualified professors, Dr. Couper proposed one idea. He says that the problem is not in the desire of the western professors to come and work in AUCA. It is not that they don't work for that amount of money. The problem is in the unawareness of AUCA. Simply speaking, western PhDs and other degree holders that would be pleased to help and work at AUCA truly do not know what AUCA is. So what he proposed is that we should undertake appropriate actions and decisions aimed at informing others about AUCA in a broader way.

The problem with the retirement of professors from the Journalism Department seems to be just another common problem connected with salary. It is now clear that this can happen in every workplace and this is not a trend in Journalism Department of AUCA.

**Akylbek BALTABAEV**

## How Afghan Students Feel At AUCA

The word discrimination is not well known for most of the AUCA environment. It is a negative stereotype, which is unacceptable at American education system. The majority of the staff at AUCA may never practice it and the majority of students may never feel it themselves, so if they hear about discrimination at AUCA, they will believe that it is just a sad fairytale and will ignore it. Unfortunately, our Afghan friends are often discriminated for some reasons by many local instructors and even the other students feel the discrimination towards Afghans.

Zohra, who is 20, is studying International and Comparative Politics. Before coming from Afghanistan, she expected some challenges and difficulties, as Kyrgyz social norms and values are different from those in Afghanistan. But she believed that in the AUCA community she would be confident.

"Discrimination was the last thing I expected. I never even thought that such issues might happen at AUCA." Zohra pointed out that some local instructors make life difficult for Afghan students. "They do not value diversity," said Zohra. She thinks that the reason might be the fact that Afghans are not Central Asian and they are more religious.

Even though culture and religion play a large role in Afghan society, and their values are different from those in Kyrgyzstan, Zohra looks very stylish. Her covering jeans, colored blouse and rich makeup make her very good-looking. Zohra pointed that the main point of wearing Hijab, the national dresses and headscarf, is that they feel comfortable covering themselves. Here, however, it is vice versa. If they wear Hijab or headscarf, everyone looks at them strangely, which is unpleasant.

Shaqaiq Farzam study ICP too. She likes Bishkek because, "it is more freedom here and the city is beautiful especially in

spring. At AUCA, Turkmens are friendly with Afghans and we have many Turkmen friends. Tajiks don't hang out with us often. They have more Kyrgyz and Russian friends," she added.

In one particular class, after submitting her assignment, Shaqaiq found out that her instructor gave her less point than to her Kyrgyz course mate who submitted the same assignment. The instructor's excuse was that Shaqaiq handwriting was not legible enough. However, the assignment was not meant to be graded on handwriting. "It was clear to read, but she gave a stupid excuse to cut down the grade," she added.

Shaqaiq feel discrimination towards Afghans not just at AUCA, but outside its territory as well. After getting robbed at Narodniy, Shaqaiq found the video, which filmed how a person at Narodniy stole her wallet from her pocket. She asked the police and security to find the thief, as they already got his face on the film. "They refused. They just laughed, because we are Afghan," Shaqaiq added.

Jahantab Faizi, an Afghan student from

the ICP Department found a good solution for some instructors who treat Afghan students in inappropriate ways. Once, Jahantab corrected her instructor for giving her a zero for the right answer. The instructor answer was, "You don't have the right to argue with instructors." Jahantab decided not to argue anymore. "I started to be quiet in class and I don't even ask questions, when I have so many of them, and do you know what? It really works!" she laughs. "Although the course should be taught in English, the instructor is explaining it in Russian. I don't understand it, but I am not asking questions. With some instructors, the quieter you are, the friendlier the relations you will have. And guess what? The higher grade you will get," pointed Jahantab.

Adiba Mateen studies in the Anthropology Department. She likes AUCA and has a good relationship with all her instructors. "One of my professor is very helpful. She even told me that "Ya tvoya vtoraya mama" and helps me both in my studying and in personal life too." But Adiba believes that there are exceptions as well. She pointed

that some classes are boring, because she doesn't understand instructors' explanation in Russian language and can't participate in discussions. "Almost every single class I am taking in English language, but some instructors start at Russian and when I am asking for English explanation, they reply in a rude way." After asking one of her instructor to explain the material in English, the instructor advised her to drop the course; however the course officially is in English according to AUCA handbook.

Naziha Ghamusar, an Afghan student from the American Studies Department once decided to complain to the administration about her composition instructor who was very rude to Naziha. The instructor asked Naziha to go back and to tell the administration that she was joking. Naziha refused. The result was a "D" for Composition class and no response from the administration.

A student from Tajikistan who did not want to tell her name confirmed that she noticed several times when some local professors discriminated Afghan students. "We were both cheated, but our professor abused my Afghan friend and yelled at her, and made a face that he did not think I noticed, but I did."

AUCA is a democratic institution and everyone has the same right despite his or her nationality, sex, religion, or race. According to the AUCA student handbook everyone should be treated equally, but the cases mentioned above show the discrimination against Afghan students at AUCA. Why Afghans but not others? Is it the matter of language? Can the lack of Russian language knowledge be a reason for so many disappointments, or is there something else behind it? Hopefully, the issue will be solved one day, as we are "one family at AUCA."

**Nina MUZAFFAROVA**



## St. Valentine's Day Celebrated in AUCA



On the eve of St. Valentine's Day, AUCA Student Senate held a few events to make the student mood more glorious and romantic.

According to the United States Greeting Card Association, approximately one billion Valentine's Day cards are sent every year. This day is celebrated through the world and is the largest world holiday after Christmas.

Valentine's Day or St. Valentine's Day is a holiday that is celebrated on February 14. On this day, people, especially young people,

show their love and sympathy to their loved ones. Traditionally, they send Valentine's cards, present flowers, toys, and souvenirs. Lovers write letters with love confessions as anonymous or "show their cards on the table."

Love and flirtation always accompanies college life. February 14 is a day to remember this again. Among difficult study and the daily routine, it is easy to forget about feelings and romantic appeal.

A big red mailbox at Bravo reminded students what day was coming up. Love was delivered to everybody through a specially organized post office for this event. It delivered valentines, presents, but also it saved a little heart.

All the money from the mail service will go for charity to help Amir, 3, who has in situ brain.

One more project was held to collect funds to help Amir. AUCA had not held a



beauty contest among girls for a long time. The beauty contest was held on February 13 at Seitek Center. It included a competition among 10 girls, plus dancing, singing, and acting items from other students.

As our young generation prefers an active lifestyle, students who do not want to share Valentine's Day in a calm and quiet way had the opportunity to go to the after-party. The party was organized especially for the students and by the students. The name of the party was "A Magical Night in Paris."

"It will be a magical night! We are planning to create the romantic atmosphere of Paris," predicted Maksim Poletaev, one of the party organizers.

The week preceding the holiday, students were seen getting cards, writing love confessions and generally celebrating. The lovers were seeking for the most charming valentines while singles waited to be with their friends and hoped to meet their destiny.

**Syrga MAMYTOVA**



## Mirror, mirror on the wall...

Ten girls rehearsed every day for a whole a month. Finally on February 13 the contest was finished. The jury made a choice. Who became the winner?

Before the announcement, here is some background information about the contest.

The first staging was a personal presentation. All of the girls showed themselves in different cocktail dresses in a single file. Every girl came to the microphone and spoke about herself. Some girls pleased jury with their unique presentations about themselves; some of them delighted the jury with their own poems.

The second appearance was business-lady I like the contest, and I was left a big impression style. All of the girls not sad about it, every prize was given fairly. Everything was clear, all gave her high scores

tunes. The main part of and we became friends with other for this homework. Girls not only Akjibek Almazbek kyz, Miss walked on the stage, but Sweetheart

they walked in a special order to make the show more interesting and gorgeous. Tatiana Martynova, a model of Kyrgyzstan, who was a jury member, choreographed this. At the end of the section, every

I'm very pleased with the contest. I held onto myself, and I opened myself to another side. Only one thing I did not like is that the jury gave me bad scores for my Spanish dance, while I think I did it great. But the main thing is my friends' support. I want to say thank you to every one who came.

Diana Takutdinova, Miss Fitness

testants needed to present a particular country and nation in the national costumes. The girls wore American, Ukrainian, Hawaiian, Indian, Arabian, Mongolian, Greek, Japanese, French costumes.

I liked it in general, except some things, like when I rehearsed, but the winner became Nargiza Metyakubova, Jibek Mo- munalieva.

She wore a Mongolian costume, and illustrated a Mongolian dance with background vocals, telling the history and description of Mongolians, and speaking of a girl, a warrior, who she presented. This

One of the jury was Tatiana Martynova, a model of Kyrgyzstan and Miss Bishkek. She said that the girl who took first place deserved it fairly.

"Her runway walk was great, and she has grace, and a pretty appearance. She especially showed herself in the homework competition, where the contestants went on the stage in different nations' costumes. She had a very interesting and unique performance," she said.

The last performance was runway walk in evening dresses. It is the most charming part of the contest. All of the girls were shining in their dresses; they looked like princesses going to the ball.

Every girl was unique and gorgeous, and feeling like real models.

On this beautiful note, I liked it in general, except some things, like when I rehearsed, but the winner became Nargiza Metyakubova, Jibek Mo- munalieva.

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Vice Miss AUCA was awarded to Nargiza Metyakubova, who also received a good prize from one jury, the photographer Viktor Polyanskiy, who gave her a free photo session for her portfolio. He said that Nargiza was the best.

And the winner of the Miss AUCA contest was Jibek Momunalieva.

Thus concluded the contest. The beauties all did a great job. All of the contestants won prizes and certificates.

Kseniya Minkova, the art manager of AUCA, said that the girl who took

first place deserved it fairly and objectively.

"I have the brightest impressions about the contest. I really like to perform and it was a great chance for me to go on stage and express myself. My purpose was not to win but to get the most wonderful impressions."

**Yana Veber, Miss Hollywood Smile**

"I'm pleased with the contest. I tried so hard to make girls rehearse, and to make a big, interesting concert for everyone. I think the contest next year will be even more fascinating," she said.

Natalia ANARBAEVA



# Right hand on the heart and no problem with the law

On December 25, 2008, President Kurmanbek Bakiev signed a new regulation, which says that citizens of Kyrgyzstan must "put the right hand on the left side of the breast while singing the national hymn."

Initiators of this law were deputies of Jogorku Kenesh Rasheed Tagaev and Aitybai Tagaev. This summer, Rasheed Tagaev was in the Olympic games and he saw that sportsmen and their fans of many countries put their right hand on the left side of their breasts when their hymn was sounding.

"After that I had an idea, which, I hope will help our citizens to raise their patriotic spirit," said Rasheed Tagaev, according to 24.kg.

This proposal met a lot of contests. But most of the deputies of our parliament supported it.

According to Ibragim Djunusov, who first maintained Tagaev's proposal, this rule will show how people respect their culture, country, and national symbol.

"Putting the hand "on the heart" signifies the proclamation of the citizens' esteem to commonwealth", Mr. Djunusov said, according to 24.kg.

This rule was also supported by Temir Sariev, deputy of Jogorku Kenesh. "According to Mr. Sariev, in many countries this regulation is an unwritten rule, but because of our low political culture, we have to accept such regulations. But we could use another method, for example, outstanding, famous, or authoritative peo-

ple of our country could show another people an example. And I think that a lot of people would follow it."

Another deputy of parliament, Kabai Karabekov, is not against this law, but he thinks that such an act as putting the hand to the heart during the hymn should not be compulsive. It should be more like a suggestion, not a regulation.

However, not everybody was satisfied by this new law.

"A hymn is the governmental attribute. However, what is the meaning of putting my hand on my heart? Will we become more patriotic? And why is it just one hand? Let's put both hands over the herat! Maybe then we'll become real patriots!" Isa Omurkulov said, the deputy of Kyrgyz parliament of the Social Democratic

Party, according to AKIpress.

Average citizens are campaigning against this new law.

According to Janna Karaeva, a doctor-psychotherapist, to oblige people by the rule is not the best way to raise patriotic spirit of the nation.

"I think if you really have respect for your country and you are really proud of it, your hand would unpremeditatedly be on or near your heart. And it would be heartfelt gesture," Janna said.

Also she added that she is against the mediated ideas of deputies, she is for real pride of our country.

Nina Myagkova, a retired economist, also does not agree with deputies of Jogorku Kenesh. "I don't understand what is our parliament doing. We have a lot of serious problems such as economic and political crisis, but our parliamentarians work on stupid and nonsensical things," Mrs. Myagkova said.

Our neighbors Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan already have this law in place. In Russia it is just the part of diplomatic ethic. So our parliamentarians are simply deciding to fit international standards.

**Julia KUDAIBERGENOVA**



## GET YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE AT AUCA

AUCA students can now obtain a driver's license at the University. Those who want to learn driving can attend classes starting on Feb. 16. The classes are administered and conducted by a driving school and will be held in the main building of AUCA. Thirty people have already signed up for the class.

In order to get a license, students should attend theoretical lectures three times a week for two and a half months. In addition, students will have to complete a 13-hour practical course of driving with an instructor. The theoretical course costs 5,500 soms and each hour of driving is approximately 105 soms.

At the end of the course, students will have to pass several examinations. The first exam will be at the driving school and the second one at the State Motor Vehicle Inspectorate. All students should pass a test on theoretical knowledge and then a practical exam with a vehicle inspector.

Lecturers seem to be quite experienced in their field. "It is not the first time

that we have offered such classes at the university. I am also teaching the same classes at Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University and Polytechnic Institute," said Akbar Berdibaev, an instructor of the Drivers' Union Driving School.

Students will have a chance not just to set their personal schedule effectively, but also to get practical knowledge of how to drive a car.

"It is very convenient: I do not go anywhere after my classes at the

university. The only problem is that the practical driving is at the driving school which is located on the other side of the city," said Leila Aidamirova, a junior of the European Studies department.

This is the third time that driving classes have been held at AUCA. In the opinion of the student coordinator Dilnura Khalilova, the previous classes were successful, and she hopes that this time the classes also will be useful to students.

"Driving school began with support from the Student Senate. Since the driving school started, 80 AUCA students have already passed the test for a driving license," said Khalilova.

Those who pass the final examination at the State Motor Vehicle Inspectorate will get a driving license. With this newly offered class, it is probable that in a few months the number of cars in front of the main building of AUCA might increase.



**Svetlana SUKHOPAROVA**  
picture by Konstantin Tiumentsev

# TRADE UNION AS ACCUMULATOR TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

**It is not about economy, politics, or international markets, it is about our professors**

The following account of the situation is based on a series of interviews with AUCA professors Otto Pohl, Lyudmila Konstants, and Sam Tranum.

Students recently heard rumors about professors' salaries, problems concerning the new ways of payment which decreased the already low teaching wages, and the disagreements with administration because of that earlier this fall. But it seemed to pass by and the problems appeared to be solved. However, the situation spread doubt among students about their professors being unprotected from these kinds of changes. Our professors are the people educating us, helping us graduate, and giving the most valuable things in a modern world: knowledge and experience. They cannot do it for less than what they have now. Also, it would be strange and even suspicious if every year's tuition fee increases while professors' salaries decrease. The university lost some highly professional teachers for different reasons, which we do not know, but higher salaries could keep those still left and attract new teachers. A professor who spent so much time and effort (obviously, money too) to receive education and experience and is trying to pass the gained knowledge to students should not be paid little money or feel uncomfortable in all senses in the workplace.

**The Trade Union** is an organization in AUCA which was initiated to protect professors' rights concerning salary, working conditions, representation of interests, and questions in the administration. It is a branch of the Union of Scholars & Educators of the Kyrgyz Republic.

#### Otto Pohl's Experience

"In this particular case, what sparked it off was a problem with regard to failed payment to local faculty and international faculty. A couple of months ago, one payday we did not receive full pay. I did not get my living allowance. They told me they did not see my new contract that I signed in May and that they were paying me according to the pay schedule of the old contract but not giving me the housing allowance, which was both in the old and the new contracts. So, I had to then go and get my copy of the contract and then they paid me. But if you have a union representing the interests of the workers, their contracts and rights, such problems won't come about in the first place."

International professors get living allowances, but some did not receive it for three months of 2008 until Otto Pohl talked to them about that problem.

Hearing about a formation of the Trade Union in AUCA was both good and bad news. The good news is that professors will have a united and legally protected by Kyrgyzstan's Republican

Trade Union. AUCA's President and the Administration hopefully will take this organisation into consideration and their interests will be heard "on top". The bad news is that the Trade Union did not appear because of nothing, it is the reaction to the situation, which is not friendly to professors and they feel the need for protection and representation of their interests. The best scenario will be that the Trade Union will have a productive and collaborative work with university administration and any problems will be foreseen and solved ahead of time.

#### Some Facts:

- Right now, about 40 professors (out of approximately 200) are members of AUCA Trade Union and most of them are of local faculty.
- This was the second attempt to organize a representation for professors and it was initiated by local faculty. The first time it did not work because, as some members say, they were worried about not having their contracts renewed and losing the jobs.
- Otto Pohl was chosen as a Chairman of AUCA Trade Union because he has an experience of being a member of an official union and is a native-English speaker.
- Lyudmila Konstants is a Deputy Chair; she has knowledge in economics, system of labor relations, and collective labor agreements.
- Leadership Committee members are John Couper, L.F. Sergeenkova, R. Kolukhanova (Treasurer), and B. Zhakypbek kyz (Secretary).

#### How do AUCA Professors Get Paid?

• There are two separate systems for paying salaries, one for international faculty and one for local faculty. The mechanics of the systems are absolutely different – international faculty get contracts with their salaries known beforehand; they also get substantial housing allowances. And international faculty gets paid more than local faculty, even if they have the same qualifications and do the same work. It does not make international faculty happy either, Sam Tranum, AUCA Trade Union member and international professor pointed out: "The university's policy of paying local and international faculty based on different salary scales is clear discrimination and should end immediately. Equal pay for equal work, I believe is an old slogan that might be applicable."

• Every year, all professors sign new labor contracts, but the local faculty never knows how much they will get paid until the first

payment, which is after 1.5 months of work. They sign contracts that have blank space where the amount of salary should be stated. This obviously goes against the Labor Code of Kyrgyz Republic.

• There are three evaluation criteria that constitute professors' salaries. It is a merit-based system which includes first the **students' evaluations** (let's face it, we as students all know that we evaluate professors subjectively and getting a bad grade for some is enough to dislike the person, therefore giving a bad "grade" in evaluation is like revenge). The second one is **administration's evaluation** (professors do not know the exact evaluation criteria, which distinguishes an excellent teacher from a good one for example, therefore it is subjective too; another factor is membership in different committees, which obviously does not influence the ability or quality of educating students, take Syllabus committee just to think about it). The third one is based on **research activity**, where again, no one really knows what research should be done or how much of it will earn them "merits".

• No examples of professors' real salaries or of real calculations of merit pay could be given, because the faculty is sworn to secrecy by a provision in the contracts; they can't tell anyone what their salaries are.

The whole concept of a merit-based payment, which, by the way, was rejected after an unsuccessful application in countries like Britain and U.S.A., seems to put professors in a position where they have to flatter everybody. What can make a student happier than an "easy A" as we call it? As Lyudmila Konstants noted, professors would not have to stress themselves trying to give students as much as possible to make them actually learn something and students too will be living easy lives. Additionally, the teaching staff has to consider administration's evaluation. Research activity is a good thing and has many benefits; on the other hand, it brings so called "commercialization" which is when a university has to do research all the time to keep financing flowing. It all comes to a situation which does not reflect the quality of education or learned knowledge and skills of students given by professors. Instead of evaluating the actual results, the present system relies on subjective opinions. The outcome might affect the position of AUCA as one of the top universities in Central Asia, because it will gradually come down to a satisfaction of people's opinions, not certain educational and professional criteria.

Meerim KUCHUKEEVA

## STUDENTS WITH SCHOLARSHIP MIGHT WORK AT THE CAMPUS FROM NOW ON

According to new University Service Program, in the future, some students may have to work for their scholarships.

The Board of Trustees has suggested the University to create a University Service Program, similar to the Federal Work and Study program in the United States. These types of programs provide scholarship students opportunities to gain work experience and supply universities with more workers.

According to Ellen Hurwitz, working on campus will be not only a contribution to the university but an opportunity to gain experience as well.

"When students receive scholarships, it means that we believe in you and we want you to succeed not only academically but also being a good member of the community," Hurwitz said.

As it stands, about 800 AUCA students receive scholarship from merit- and need-based financial aid programs. But there are now only seven students working under the University Service Program, which is in its experimental stage. In this pilot year, most of them work in the admissions and financial aid offices in exchange for a small part of their scholarship award. Students are invited when there is a need

for assistance. According to the initial arrangement working hours should not exceed 15 hours per week.

"I feel that I am doing something positive for the university," Karlygach Nurmanbetova, an AUCA student participating in the service program said. "It is my contribution to the university."

The Financial Aid Office is planning to increase the number of students in the University Service program in the coming years. Department Heads, Program Chairs, and Office Directors are being informed to encourage enthusiastic, motivated students who can help with administrative duties in their office or assist faculty in classes to apply.

However, not everyone is happy with the introduction of the service program. "Why do I have to work?" asked a third-year student who introduced himself

as Roma, but didn't want to give his last name.

"I deserved it [scholarship] by passing through a number of academic competitions in order to be awarded with full scholarship," he added.

However, the director of the Enrollment Development, Totu Shananova, considering the issue, said the service program will not be required for scholarship recipients, but rather it will be on a voluntary basis. It is a win proposition for the university and a student.

"Anyone can participate in the service program, regardless of the size of the scholarship he or she receives from the university," she said.

Gulnisa Asymova, an AUCA senior, thinks that there are positive and negative sides. Negative is that a student has to spend his or her time on Univer-

sity Service program. She also added that from the other hand it is an immediate step in order to get an accreditation not only in America but in community as well. It will foster in students the desire to attempt to change something and will give them the opportunity to see another side of life.

"Even if it seems bad for some students, I think that it is a good idea," Asymova said. "It will at least teach people to serve something."

However, according to Nargiza Ryskulova, AUCA student, such changes will scarcely be realized because the majority of AUCA students get scholarships. If everyone will do work in Service program, it will be difficult to organize it with such amount of the students.

University President Ellen Hurwitz said that the proposal needs more work and that the Academic Senate will be meeting with subcommittees in the coming months to discuss the policy and how to help students succeed at AUCA. The Financial Office will also assess this program and improve its procedures accordingly.

Bahtiyar KURAMBAEV  
and Altynai MYRZABEKKOVA



# Poetry



## Кто Я?

Кто я, сам в себе не разобрался,  
Божья тварь аль сатане угодье.  
Меж двух миров маячусь и живя,  
Дарю поклон и люблю себя.  
Не страшен мир мне этот.  
И даже Аббадон, тварь бездны,  
Апполион и демон Астарот  
Не бросят вызов мне,  
Узнав, что я владыка самому себе.  
Поклон великим мудрецам,  
Что, подняв взор, увидели,  
Как христиане своим мечом  
Невинных сброды резали.  
И я — отшельник и добра, и зла,  
Молюсь за вас, чинотожные угодья,  
Что бог и сатана — все вымасел.  
Не верьте вы в слова,  
Имейте веру при себе  
Иуважайте самого себя!

Сер Габриэль Шахиров

## Death

My life was perfect, till I met you.  
Believe, that day destroyed  
my moral view.  
That sunny day and lunar night  
Already broke my heart apart.  
I walked with you and felt self so...  
However, knew you would say: "No".  
This germ is eating all my heart,  
Like a vampire – victim's blood.  
Oh Gosh, so sad! And pain inside  
Rips by razor me part by part.  
It's better say: "Not live. Survive."  
And in the grotesque dark  
appears knife.  
I understood my life without her  
is futile.  
Satan came upon me and make  
with me a deal.  
By taking knife, so sharp and shine,  
Blood began to flow from the veins  
of mine.  
So scary! But at the moment  
– freedom.  
Blood, so much more.  
That is already done.  
Black clouds upon black sky,  
No man can fix me.  
"Mourners, cry, cry, cry!"  
At last, my soul took eternal rest,  
And I distinguished Freedom  
and Nirvana's fest.

Сер Габриэль Шахиров

\*\*\*

У асфальта пересохло горло.  
Деревья встали на голову  
И болтают ногами в небе.  
Я хотела купить  
мертвых подснежников,  
Но купила буханку живого хлеба,  
И он сопит, свернувшись у меня  
за пазухой.  
Не романтично?  
Зато чертовски вкусно!

Бенька

# Handbook for Online Dating

**Katya was happy...yesterday he finally invited her to café. They were communicating for a year online and she fell in love. Now, she was sitting at the table, scanning the café looking for her blond guy with blue eyes. Suddenly, she saw a fat bald-headed 35 year-old man smiling to her. He had yellow tulip, the obvious sign...**

It is not necessary to describe why Katya tried to find a reason to leave the café quickly, feeling completely mortified. The couple has never met again. But such stories are not rare. Internet acquaintances are still very popular and people often prefer to seek somebody on the "net" rather than visiting a theater or cinema. So, if you would ever like to join the number of "virtual seekers", I have some information, which will surely be useful to you. Being prepared for surprises will ease the bitter disappointment.

So, pay attention! Here are some prototypes of virtual lovers.

**"Romantic"**: In reality, he is not a romantic at all.

**Distinguishing features:** Frequently uses words like "baby", "darling", "honey", etc. Tries to show his popularity among women, demonstrates self-confidence.



**Picture:** Most often of himself, in different poses. Virtuoso in photoshop.

**Tragic reality:** Pimply boy, who has no communication with the opposite sex at all.

**"Macho"**: He knows everything about sex, has a lot of sexual skills, and offers to share his experience with everybody.

**Distinguishing features:** Speaks about sex all the time. No, speaks about nothing except sex.

**Picture:** 99% of all "experienced guys" are popular singers, actors, or just beautiful males from glamour magazines.

**Tragic reality:** Often has no sexual experience at all. A virgin dreaming to sin.

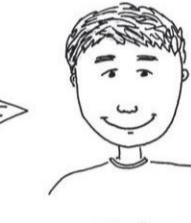


cartoons or computer personages.

**Tragic reality:** Does not feel free in the real world. The computer monitor is his necessary protection.

Padonak, macho, know-all, romantic. The Internet is full of people you can waste your time on. Personally, I prefer to get acquainted with the opposite sex outside of the WWW. However, I would like to add that sometimes men feel loneliness too, and maybe you will be lucky enough to find "him". And you may use the Internet too to become "Mis+ress" or "a wild black cat looking for her tiger".

Elena OSIPPOVA



## Achtung!

**"Padonak"**: He is pretty cool, but he is definitely not the man of your dream. No serious thoughts in his head. He is rich with Internet jokes, funny, and communicable.

**Distinguishing features:** A lot of grammar mistakes (deliberate, as a rule), cyber slang.

**Picture:** Does not hesitate to use his own picture, often with grimaces. Sometimes uses

# I Am Not A CIA Agent

honored a king, a country and Islam. I apologized to the class, but two weeks later I was invited to leave Saudi Arabia," he added.

Being a Christian, Mr. Rudolph believes that teaching the truth about Islam and Christianity is his responsibility, just as it is the responsibility of Muslim people. He is open to discussions about religion with anyone who is interested in a discussion.

"I have talked to many Muslims in Saudi Arabia and the USA and always asked them to give me convincing arguments and I will become a Muslim, if you can convince me," said Mr. Rudolph.

With that, Mr. Rudolph maintained he is not a missionary, showing that he keeps a neutral position in religion in open discussions. But still some students think that there are missionaries and CIA agents among AUCA professors.

"I think there are missionaries, and I can't say that there are no agents," said Ashyrov Nurguly, a student from Journalism department.

Four American professors at AUCA said in interviews that they have never worked on any agency based on spying or propagandizing along with changing students' worldview or ideology.

Still the reason for American professors' coming to Kyrgyzstan for a lower salary rather than in the US bothers many students.

"I get less salary here than in the US," said Sam Tranum from Journalism department. "But here I have a chance to see Central Asia, and travel all over Central Asia for lower prices. The living cost is less and I live here like in the US," he added.

"I don't trust Western professors. Central Asia has a lot of Americans and I think Central Asia is not conquered by any superpower country yet. And agents come to Central Asia in the appearance of professors to gather information through researches and different projects," said Anvar Iskanderov ECO-106 student.

According to Walter Rudolph, he came to Kyrgyzstan to meet his future wife and find a job. He was invited to work at AUCA and stayed here.

"My first reason for coming was curiosity and I was interested in countries after the Soviet Union fell," said John Couper, a professor from Journalism department. "I want to stay here for a long time because I think it is an interesting country," he added.

But some teachers are confused about why they came to Kyrgyzstan. "I don't know. To teach, to learn Russian, see the world," answered Sam Tranum for the question about his arrival to Kyrgyzstan.

Looking from a different angle at professors' life, it is easy to find why they choose this way of living.

A different culture and a cheaper life in Kyrgyzstan attracts more and more people from the West to our country, risking their own safety rather than being in the safety in their own home country.

Some students say they are not worried about whether their professors are spies or missionaries.

"I am very thankful that Western teachers risked coming to Central Asia and gave us a chance to feel the democracy and freedom of speech in our University," said a Psychology-107 student, Aslan. "And I don't think they are missionaries or agents," he added.

Still, whoever he is, a person will never risk saying he is an agent or missionary working undercover, masking as a professor.

The US embassy in Bishkek responded to an e-mail sent to them about spies and missionaries they know. Michel Rothantal from the US embassy in Bishkek wrote that he can't comment on questions, giving a link to official CIA web page.

Abdurahman ARIPOV

Rumors have been flying around AUCA about Western professors being spies and missionaries and it is worrying students and provoking misunderstandings between such professors and local students. A lack of information results in vicious rumors, causing irreversible damage with professors that only ends in students withdrawing from the class. Those students spread "truthful" gossips; they force others to believe them, all with an innocent look blaming professors for everything.

Various viewpoints and strange behavior complement the idea of professors being "not normal", associating it to their allegation to CIA and missionary organizations, believing that the professors are misconstruing viewpoints that are contradictory to local lifestyle, along with religion.

"Propaganda of Christianity along with handouts by Professor Walter Rudolph shows real examples of missionary-ness and the agenda of his stay in Bishkek," said the student who took his World Religion class and wanted to remain anonymous.

Some rumors that were heard were about Walter Rudolph's expulsion from Saudi Arabia due to an alleged offense toward Islam. This adds truthfulness to his belonging to propaganda of his own religion.

Some students have heard that Mr. Rudolph was expelled from Saudi Arabia for his dishonoring Islam during class. Some of them spread rumors about his implication to missionary organizations, spreading Christianity in Kyrgyzstan. Mr. Rudolph said these rumors were incorrect.

"I made a big cultural mistake. I had very bad cold. I had no handkerchief to blow my nose and I tried to make a joke by acting like I was going to blow my nose into Saudi real that had a picture of a king and words from the Koran," said Mr. Rudolph.

"Students reported me, saying that I had dis-

# The Old Square: In the Rhythm of mixture



Last year, an imaginative group of AUCA students initiated the musical band "The Old Square". A mixture of rock, jazz, blues, and also different improvisations make up the repertoire of this band. Seven AUCA students are members of the band.

The original "Old Square" came into being in 2008. Two AUCA freshmen students, Kurmangaliev Arman and Margarita Skochilo, under a strong desire to create something new and unusual, decided to combine their talents.

"We are the part of this university, our band belongs to it. That is how the name of our band was created," Margarita Skochilo explained. AUCA is full of diversity; in fact it thrives on it. And this band represents that mixture.

Originally "The Old Square" had three members, all guitarists: Arman, Maksim Kataev, Stanislav Karpov and one vocalist, Margarita Skochilo. Later the AUCA sophomores Ivan Mosyagin, a pianist, and Aleksey Boldyrev, a drummer, joined the band.

"The Old Square" is a young band, and their first performance took place at AUCA on the presentation of the evening, devoted to the new book by Nikolay Shulgin. The band performed, singing Shulgin's song, which has been rearranged in own way.

"The original version of the song did not fit the style we perform in, so we decided to

make it sound more dynamic and cheerful," Konstantin Tarasov, the back-vocalist of the band explained.

Tarasov came into the band not long ago, but the band's members consider him as their leader. He is always responsible for all organizational questions.

The seven band members gather in every Monday and Thursday in order to devise new songs, music, to rehearse old compositions, or just to bring them to perfection.

"The Old Square" members write songs and every musician has two or three songs of their own composition. "The Loneliness", written by the band's vocalist, Margarita, can be referred to the mixture of blues and jazz. Another song, written by the guitarist Stanislav Karpov, feels like rock music. The guys plan to perform with this song at the upcoming concert "Stream".

"What we perform is so diverse that sometimes we are afraid of it," Tarasov said.

"The Old Square" plans are to grow popularity in AUCA, and then later they are going to perform outside the University for the Bishkek citizens.

All members of the band are different, and their compositions are not alike anything. Perhaps, soon we will listen to the new genre of music, the genre of "The Old Square".

Aleksandra REVINA



## The sophomore of American Studies department, Hotak Yama, proposed new hymn for AUCA.

**The students come from many lands  
But breathe the same air  
They shape this world with their hands  
They want to learn together,  
And though they are not alike  
They hold the same dream  
They learn respect, do what they like  
In chorus sing this Hymn**

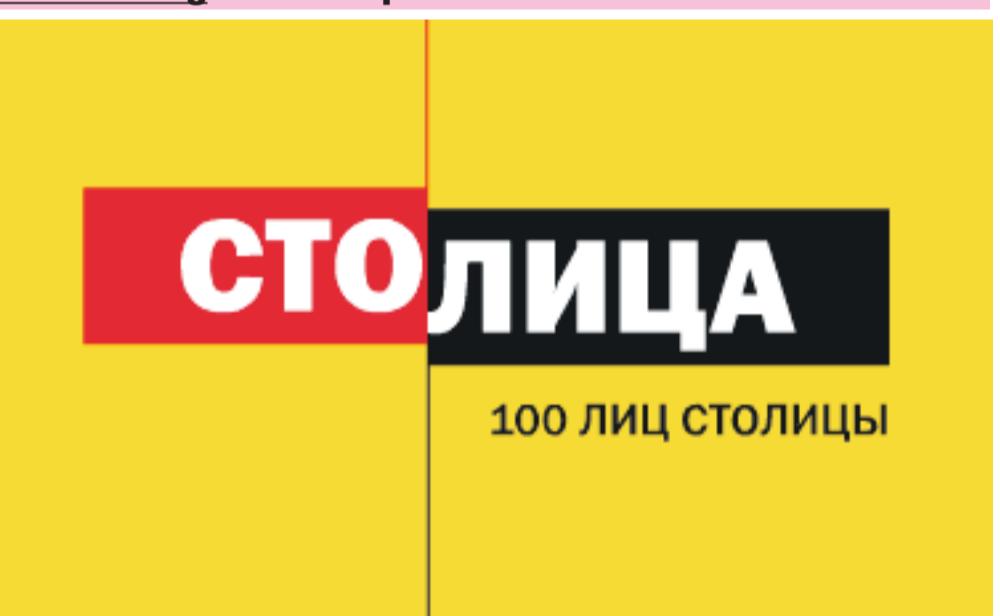
**AUCA, AUCA – the world of equal rights  
You've never heard, you've never seen this richness  
of the sights,  
AUCA, AUCA – the temple serving peace  
Please join us, be one of us and help us plant  
new seeds**

**We'll teach to think creatively  
To learn, not memorize  
Respect and work effectively  
And use your knowledge wise  
Let academic honesty and honor guide your way  
Make people all around the world say that's the AUCA.**

**AUCA, AUCA – the world of equal rights  
You've never heard, you've never seen this richness  
of the sights,  
AUCA, AUCA – the temple serving peace  
New students come, they join us, our numbers  
will increase.**

**Hotak Yama**

**The Student Coordinator and "New Star" is open for ideas  
and suggestions about Donkey Bridge Ceremony for Juniors. Contact us via e-mail [thestar@mail.auca.kg](mailto:thestar@mail.auca.kg) or [khalilova\\_d@mail.auca.kg](mailto:khalilova_d@mail.auca.kg). We are open for all innovations!**



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