

# THE NEW STAR

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Throughout the end date of March and beginning dates of April, the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) organized several events happening one after another. As a transfer student at the AUCA since Fall 2021, it is my first time at the campus to both attend classes in person and get involved in civic engagement activities. Activities led by AUCA inside the campus and beyond often immerse students in a fruitful academic life. Thus, having a chance to cherish the opportunities given by the university, I decided to use as many of them as possible by getting involved in social activities and programs. One of the unforgettable events I have ever participated in was the "Planting Tree at the Elm Grove" action that was held on March 31. The Elm Groove located in Bishkek, is well-known for being one of the oldest ecological parks in Central Asia since 1881. Inside this park, there's an area dedicated in honor of our university's student, Fatima Natasha Khalil. The majority of the AUCA students know about her story and her decent contribution to the development of the university. It was my honor and privilege to plant a tree in her garden, and I hope it is not my last visit to both planting trees at Fatima's garden and Elm Grove. On the next day, there was a Food Festival event, where a group of students representing different cultures' traditional cuisines welcomed both the president of the AUCA and participants of the event with warmth and hospitality. During this event, I had a chance to taste different Central Asian cuisines and my home country's food as well.

It reminded me of home and made me get the feeling of homesickness out of sight. With the help of these activities, I am learning more about AUCA and its role in students' academic life.

On the following day, an Open Door event was held inside the campus that was organized for recent high-school graduates and other university students to provide them with navigation through the university campus tour. In the Open House event, the majority of the university's club coordinators represented their clubs, such as FLEX Volunteering Club, ENACTUS Club, AUCA TEDx Club, Japanese Club, and other clubs based on extracurricular activities. Hadia (an AUCA student) and I got the opportunity to represent the TEDx Club as new coordinators and invited many interested candidates to the club to participate in the future. As a social activist at the university and beyond, I felt a huge responsibility while representing the club and taking part in the in-campus-based activities.

Due to these events, my spring academic semester was full of incredible experiences, memories, and a new circle of friends. I will forever cherish these moments given by the university. I cannot wait to see what the upcoming Fall 2022 semester has in store for AUCA students.

Sitora Sufijonova  
ES-121



## Finals are Coming...!

Finals are coming. Finals week is the week that all university students dread the most. There are a few things that we should keep in mind as we fill the last two weeks of the semester with late nights, Monsters, RedBull, and coffee. The prospect of studying for final examinations after a semester of research papers and presentations might be daunting. However, we should prepare our study materials and seek out a productive place with a cup of liquid motivation, or coffee, to make the effort more tolerable.

Many feelings may occur prior to and throughout finals week, including depression, nervousness, rage, hopelessness, and even relief. Some students may also have two finals on a single day, which can be stressful. There is a lot of preparation and study to get ready for the final exams and projects, but we should take care of ourselves. Although some stress is useful, some self-care before, during, and after the finals week is needed. Every student understands that exams, more than studying, put the mind and body under stress. It doesn't matter if one is a slacker or a genius student, hearing the term test is always unpleasant.

Onka Ajayebzai, a JMC student of AUCA mentions:

"When I was in school, I had my own set of rules for tests, and sticking to my sleep and studying schedules were more important than eating healthy. University life, on the other hand, is very diverse and challenging. School tests took a month or less and had a set timetable with no homework; however, the university needed assignments, deadlines, projects based on majors studied, and online exams with far more tough questions and less time. My story is unique because I dream about everything and anything. It's also rather amusing; if I have an exam tomorrow, for example, I'll dream about it ten times while sleeping. My grade fluctuates between an F and an A. It is contingent on my exam preparation. My luck only works on very few occasions, which is unfair, but when it does, it rewards me with the highest and most surprising score. Overall, if I ever had the opportunity to work for the entire world education, I would eliminate tests. But, once again, my luck will be the decisive factor."

Many college students are finishing up finals and eagerly anticipating the end of the semester. As a current undergraduate student, I understand how demanding the semester may be. But if there's one thing I've learned, it's how to manage my workload and avoid becoming overwhelmed by school. Here are five strategies for dealing with stress and making this semester (and the semester after) the greatest ever!

- Identify it! (What or where causes you the greatest stress?)
- Write stuff down
- Stay organized
- Get some fresh air
- Stay calm and practice gratitude

Don't forget, once you get a bad grade and result, there is no way you can get away from the path you want to take. There is nothing wrong with getting a bad grade once, try harder next time to get a better result. If you remember these five things, finals will be a little easier! Be strong and don't forget that you are smart; you are talented, and you can get a better result.

Frog Marz Shekan  
JMC-120

# a Great Place to study



A huge tent was recently set up in the courtyard of AUCA to spend time outside classes and meetings. After a long period of rain, spring finally gives us warm and sunny weather. That is why this tent is a great opportunity to combine studies and enjoy the long-awaited, spring atmosphere!

The tent has chairs with transformable tables and a mobile board for 20-25 seats. Classes in this place are completely different than in the classroom. Breathing fresh air and feeling the warmth of the sun helps to have more motivation and desire to gain new knowledge and actively participate in discussions. Leaving the regular classroom and going to a new place to study, especially outside, is a great example of liberal arts education. Liberal arts education is not only about having deep conversations in the classroom, but also having the ability to construct significant dialogues outside the academic walls. Therefore, this tent is a place for finding new approaches, building innovative ideas, and gaining the ability to pose meaningful questions. Liberal arts education extends beyond the academic classroom, which contrasts with the fact that we can go beyond our regular thinking and find different and new visions. The second semester is almost coming to its end, so now is a perfect time to enjoy the AUCA spring campus and spend more time outside. P.S. It is fun to study in the tent, but sometimes the chairs can be dusty, so be careful :)

Salima Almazbekova  
JMC-121

## -Path of liberal arts education!

What are the finals, the midterms, and all other assignments for? They are believed to be an integral part of educational systems helping students to learn better. At AUCA, a liberal arts university, they are structured in a way “to foster in students the desire and capacity to learn, think critically and openly, and communicate proficiently, and prepare them to function as engaged citizens,” as Jonathan Becker writes in his article “Liberal Arts and Sciences Education: Responding to the Challenges of the XXIst Century”.

That is not what I believe. All these finals, midterms, and assignments are to help professors grade students. The whole idea of a liberal arts education to develop students as engaged individuals in democratic societies is finally to be reduced to grading letters A, B, C, D, and F; and finally, a BA diploma in any major.

Would this mean if I receive an 'A' for a course and a GPA of 4.00 for my BA, I will be a much more prepared individual for a democratic society than someone who receives 'B', 'C', 'D', or a lower GPA? The logic of grading answers yes. And the one receiving an 'F' will, certainly, fail to be a good citizen. Who is to judge if we can be good citizens for the liberal modern societies? The whole AUCA administration, the whole institution.

Professors turn into judges in a court called ‘classroom’ to finally declare their verdicts if one of us is an A citizen or a B, C, D, and if any of us must be punished by F. The courses are divided into different sections (attendance and participation, midterm and final, first and second assignments) and each section has a grading scale. During the semester, the professor, for the sake of being a professor, observes each of us, collects evidence, and prepares our case only to give his/her verdict at the end of the semester. After his/her verdict, the Registrar's Office is to prosecute the case. If not content with the verdict, students have the right to appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee. During this one-semester period, the Academic Advising Office, WARC, and our advisors are there to help us convince the professor (the judge) that we are to become good citizens and should not be punished by getting an 'F'. Each semester, we (students) are accused of being unprepared citizens for democratic societies waiting for the judge to declare us otherwise.

Therefore, the secret to our success as good liberal democratic citizens is clear: to get a good grade from your professors!

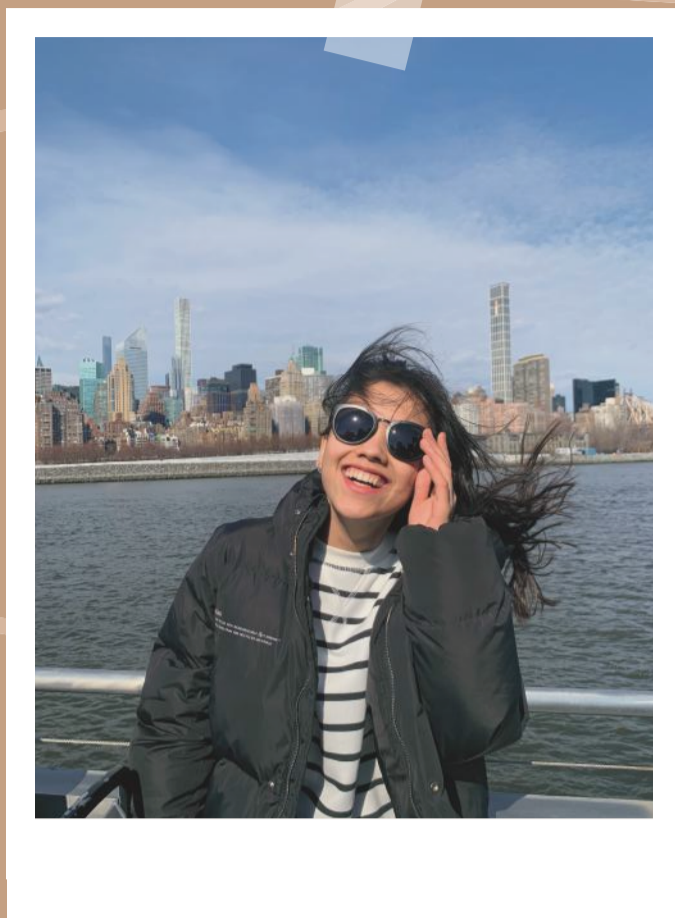
Hasina Ahmadi  
ICP-119

## «Somewhere between studying and dreaming, there is a city called – New York!»

I am very excited and grateful to be a part of the [give the full name of the abbreviation] (BGIA) program this semester! Being the one majoring in International and Comparative Politics at AUCA and studying with people committed to global and international affairs and politics has been such an unforgettable and fruitful experience. I have been given an amazing opportunity to complete an internship and academic program in New York City. I am incredibly excited to study in a diverse community of students and faculty with unique perspectives and valuable knowledge. Here, I am learning more about social structures, democratization, developing my writing skills in international affairs, and acquiring a broad outlook of current global challenges. My personal philosophy encourages me to enhance my socio-political expertise, and status, develop my research skills and practically use my knowledge through social project implementation. I am also lucky enough to be working at Off the Record - the organization that conducts a series of lectures to spread global awareness and understanding of foreign policy issues. I am amazed by its outstanding work and persistent commitment to the field of women's participation in discussions of foreign policy.

As well as that, Off the Record has been a unique chance to develop my professional skills in event management and communication. As an executive intern, I write content for social media, manage communication, and assist in finding speakers and research. The most exciting part of my internship is visiting lectures and getting to know outstanding ambassadors, generals, representatives of think tanks, and political scientists who share their views and engage in direct conversations. Last but not least, coming to New York and discovering a whole new world is another part of my incredible journey. My first impression was that New York is a city of freedom, efficiency, noise, and development. All of the world-known museums, parks, galleries, pieces of architecture, and restaurants inspire me to be productive in studying, working, and enjoying life. I would highly encourage AUCA students to apply for this life-changing program and witness the fabulous experience in New York!

Tahmina Ustoeva  
ICP - 119



## «Club Showcase - FLEX Volunteering Club, Pitch Perfect, Memembroship»

University clubs are one of the vital components of social life at AUCA. They range from chess and volunteering to movie, reading, and accounting—all designed to communicate, collaborate and create a spirit of like-minded communities. This semester, Student Senate decided to organize a Club Showcase for our newly joined students from Afghanistan and those who have not managed to sign up for any in Fall 2021. It was also an exclusive opportunity for socializing and relaxing before finals while finding new friends for Summer break.

Together with FLEX Volunteering, Memembroship, and Pitch Perfect clubs, we made sure all presentations were as engaging as possible. While the FLEX club gathered more than 120 students at Forum to spread the spirit of volunteerism through an interactive Kahoot, Pitch Perfect ran the show through several performances of our top singers and a special ensemble they have worked on during the last semester, and Memembroship led a fun Kahoot poll relevant to university spirit, which unites all the students.

Pitch Perfect, the key singers of our university, created a small interactive presentation about the goals and mission of the club along with a short Kahoot poll about music and art. While more than 60 participants joined the game, we hope that it was clear that it was informative. Pitch Perfect is the community that supports and works with you regardless of your ability. Sabina, the coordinator of the Pitch Perfect Club shares:

"It's very hard for people without musical education to dwell on a note, feel the rhythm, listen to other voices, and keep all these listed things together. I am very proud of my team for performing despite stage fright and overcoming this difficult musical stage".

It is wonderful to see that the number of student-led clubs is rising. And we, the Student Senate, along with the Student Life Office, are eager to support them in any way. Please make sure to join the clubs or open one, because social life is one of the most important parts of university life.

Aidin Turganbekov  
SOC-119



Throughout my five years of studies at the AUCA, I have been looking forward to graduation and getting that diploma. However, little did I know that I would be this sad for leaving all these beautiful memories behind. The AUCA has been one of the greatest opportunities in my life! It has been one of those life-changing experiences which has transformed my life for the better. I would not be the person I am without AUCA, and by AUCA I do not mean the university alone, I mean the friends that I made here, the professors who have taught me, the staff that made sure all facilities are taken care of and many other things which come under AUCA umbrella. It has been five years, and trust me when I say these five years have passed in a blink of an eye, so quickly!

What’s next you might ask? Well, let me tell you that GRADUATION IS DEFINITELY NOT THE END! You might say let me finish my BA, I am going to work or pursue my MA, or I will do nothing and relax for some time. But the truth is that you have no idea what you want to do most of the time, and I am talking for myself! Graduation comes in a chaotic way! At one moment, you are struggling with all the assignments, and fast forward, you find yourself holding the diploma and shaking hands with the AUCA president while also posing for a picture, which totally does not make sense, LOL. But it is beautiful to see how your hard work has paid off!

As for me, the last semester has been unbelievable and very difficult to take in the pain and happiness of graduation. I have had bittersweet memories that I will cherish forever, that is why metnally, I am not yet ready to graduate. Yes, I am glad to graduate to a very high extent because I have taken advantage of all the opportunities provided by the university. That is to say, I have been active in both the academic and extracurricular activities provided by the AUCA. I have been part of Peer Advising Center, Student Senate, WARC, Volunteering Program, Exchange Student Program, Diversity Week, and Mirrors?? performers???, and many other activities, which I have lost track of. I am not mentioning all this to brag about it, but I want to remind you that AUCA is a great university with numerous opportunities for everyone. So, take advantage of it and use it to develop yourself and your skills. Another reason why I mentioned my achievements is because I am proud of myself. I have always been very grateful for everything that comes my way, good or bad because both of them taught me life lessons.

My future is very unpredictable, and not me but all of us, Afghans, here, at the AUCA or all over the world. I cannot think of going back to my homeland anytime soon to perform my duties in my country. The good thing is that I have been accepted by the Central European University (CEU) with a scholarship for MA in Human Rights. I might or might not be able to go to the CEU due to the visa procedure and issues, but at least I got in, which is a great accomplishment!



When I say 'graduation is not the end', I mean that we need to study all our lives to become better versions of ourselves. Getting an MA and Ph.D., earning money for living, getting married, establishing our own family, raising children, and many other real-life issues are the following goals to realize. To make a long story short, we all have a long life ahead of us in which we will make more memories, meet more people, and build our network. Therefore, if you think your graduation is the end or that you are confused about what to do next, do not worry because we all are uncertain at some point, as time will sort things out. My last advice to all would be:

- 1. Make real and good friends.
- 2. Use each opportunity that AUCA is providing you.
- 3. Do not study too hard. Enjoy your life!
- 4. And do not panic as everything is going to be alright.

Shahdukht Tapesh  
LAS-118

Homeless

It was not a choice  
It will never be a choice  
It is not about being hungry, naked, and displaced  
It is about unwanted, unloved, and uncared  
I am homeless because humanity does not have a proper conscience  
Home is the place where no one calls you a refugee, but world doesn’t even call me a human  
I am homeless like a bird whose nest was destroyed by a storm  
I am homeless because I want peace  
I am homeless because I want freedom  
I am homeless because I want to be educated  
And yes, my homeland is not accepting me because I want to live as a human  
But World!  
Why don't’ You accept me?  
Don’t You belong to all humans?  
World!  
I will never forget your silence  
World!  
I will never forget you didn’t accept me because I wanted a home  
I will never forget you didn’t accept me because I was tired of war  
World!  
I will never forget  
You didn’t accept me because I didn’t have blue eyes  
You didn’t accept me because I didn’t have blonde hair  
World!

I will never forget your silence  
When war was destroying my homeland and dreams  
Ok, I am leaving  
But all close borders, peaceful houses, colorful trees, Clean streets, Perfect schools, And comfortable shoes will remember my pain and tears  
I am leaving  
But how you know maybe one day you will need a home  
Then you will understand my pain  
But,  
I will show you borders are meaningless  
I will show you what kindness is  
I will show you what humanity is

Frogh Marz Shekan  
JMC-120

The summer plans

Summer is a time for vacations and a variety of plans for each person, which makes this season ideal for traveling. Where else can one go in summer if not for research work abroad! This trip has been planned by my favorite Department of Anthropology, Technology, and International Development and me for this summer season. The purpose of this trip is to explore other cultures and get acquainted with the research methods in the field of anthropology. For research purposes, we chose one of the most beautiful and developed places in the world, the city of Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. (Although there were other options, such as India, Russia, Lebanon, etc.) We want to visit the city of Dubai to conduct ethnographic research together with the masters and professors of our department and explore the local attractions. For example, we want to visit cultural sites and interview residents of the city for research and project work purposes. In addition, students will have their own topics for ethnographic research, which will make our visit more inspiring and multifaceted. We plan to spend one or two weeks in Dubai to learn more about the local specifics and rhythm of the city. Due to the harsh climatic conditions of the region and high temperature, our research will mostly be conducted in the afternoon and evening. All the studies are scheduled for the first month of summer, which is the best opportunity to get acquainted with a new culture and acquire valuable experience in conducting research.

Zhanybai Sarybaev  
ANTH-120

# Lost Dreams



It was early in the morning, but the sky looked like it was still cloudy at night and dark. Sara the little girl of 12 was already feeling terrified from what happened yesterday - the scary sound of the bomb explosion next to her house. Every second she was carrying that heavy fear deep down in her tiny heart that it would happen again. That fear always made her be a silent person and always be on her own. I did not know[what?] anyone could ever think of that little girl's morality and motivation for the future. For me, it was like a black spot that was difficult to recognize and think positively.

The door opened and her mom entered the room and asked her to get ready.

She woke up without questioning where they were going. She had never had a specific plan anyway because she felt lost. Nothing could shake her feeling happy.

They both [Sara and her mom] headed to the city where everyone rushed to buy the best products. Her mom suddenly stopped in the corner.

Sara looked around and felt that she was lost in the crowd.

- What are we doing here? We don't have money to buy anything. Sara asked her mom. The mother took a deep breath and pulled out

Sara was so disappointed and felt that her soul already died, and the only thing left was her body that people were shouting and putting a price on. They were both surrounded by a circle of people. She never had anything left with herself to think or to feel; she lost the sense of identity she had by being a girl at that moment. She was staring at her mother's eyes from the small square of Burqa, which seemed like a cage for all Afghan women, and saw her mother's eyes full of tears. She understood how sorry and speechless she felt. Sara never dared to ask anything else. She probably forgot how to speak or even say a word at that moment. All she was feeling was that the world was on her shoulders and touching her soul with a very heavy fear and loss of her hopes in her life.

The worst case was that she had a lot to say and a lot of reasons to cry out loud; unfortunately, she was not even able to cry. Her beautiful green eyes were full of tears, and everything blurred before her eyes. Was that the end of her life?

At the last moment, she was looking for something; something white, or something bright like her future career that she always dreamed about. However, it was still obscure and unclear because of her tears. She raised her head, and the tears were streaming down her face. She could see the brightness of the sky and the white color of the clouds, but that was the last picture that she had of her life. She took the final heavy breath by saying [You touched my soul, god] and closed her eyes forever.

Firoza Muradi  
ICP-120

## Result of overthinking

Abdullah was a tall, young lad who was always preoccupied with his own thoughts in his own world. He was under a lot of mental and emotional traumas. He used to say to himself with a deep sigh that the world was hard to live in for a practical man, especially for someone who cared about everything and everyone.

Lately, Abdullah has been trying to discover his goal in life. He knows he has a lot of potential for great deeds in this world. He just did not know where to start. Abdullah always knew he was a special person with a special mission. One day everything changed for him when he acquired a unique piece of secret information about human nature. He found out that even the the smartest people in the world use only ten percent of their brains.

So, Abdullah found his goal in life, if only he could use seventeen percent of his brain, then he would put some great people to shame that he could not quite remember their names. He

guessed it was something like; Davinci, Newton, and Plato. [clarify what you mean] Anyway, it wasn't such a big deal; their accomplishments compared to Abdulla's would be like comparing a piece of pebble with a mountain. He smiled to himself, thinking about the idea of comparison. He loved it very much so that he would at least fantasize about it thrice a day. Those people whose names he was confused about, their names, and knew very little about their creations or inventions, which actually did not interest him at all. He thought they only discovered stuff, invented some other stuff, or maybe wrote some books about politics and life principles, but none of them used seventeen percent of their brain. Abdullah implied it was not even worth thinking about them.

He knew very well that if he wanted to discover that secret, he had to act differently, unlike other people. Something that nobody had ever done. That is why Abdullah did not read books

because reading would make him a nerd, Abdullah was no nerd, he was a Practical man. Also, Abdullah did not like talking to people because they were so narrow-minded, in addition, the smartest of them used only ten percent of their brain, he never forgot about this fact! Why worry? Was it not a waste of time talking to them; he was better than they were. Not only was he one piece of a genius, but also he was working on his project sixteen hours a day by lying on a fluffy couch and thinking and thinking on how to improve his brain. He could not believe that eight billion people around the world relied on his work. He felt like God! If he stopped thinking, they would all go extinct or perish.

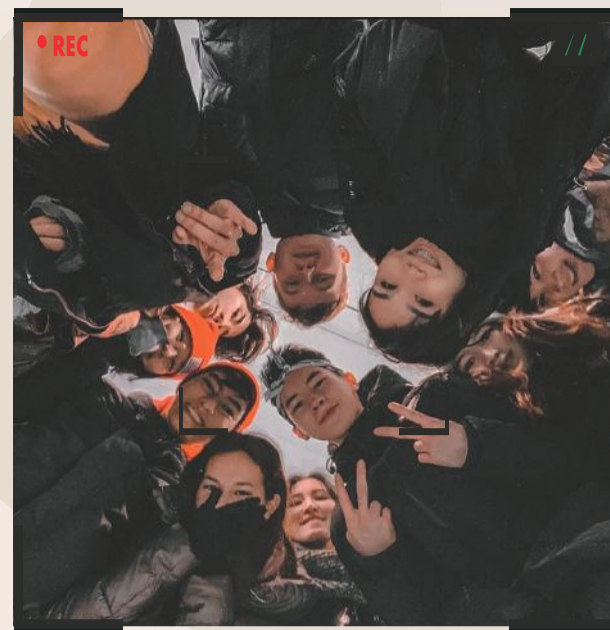
After months of deep contemplation and reflection, he came to the conclusion that he needed to draft a solid plan. The plan was so great that it would change the entire planet after its realization. However, to draft the magic plan, he had to think about its structure, evidence, and details. Fifty years later, he was still thinking about planning and planning about the thinking. Lying on his used-to-be fluffy couch with oily spots and a huge hole under his head, he confessed that the world was so harsh and terrible for a truly Practical man that he actually had not done anything despite his unendurable work. His last words were, "At least I tried..."

Shah Mohammad Alidad  
NGA-122

# Brightest Moments in AUCA

Моё самое яркое воспоминание связанное с АУЦА, это вешущество. Больше двух лет я вела разные мероприятия, как внутри, так и вне АУЦА. Больше всего мне запомнился конкурс талантов "Стрим", поскольку это был один из первых моих выходов на сцену. Перед этим днем я много репетировала, готовилась, знакомилась с участниками конкурса и нервничала. Мой со-ведущий успокаивал меня дрожащую за кулисами. В итоге все прошло наилучшим образом, самый незабываемый экспириенс! Спасибо Жазгуль, Диане, Паше и Олегу!

Дания Арман  
ТСМА-118



«Какое у меня самое яркое воспоминание об университете?», с приближением конца обучения я задаюсь этим вопросом все чаще и чаще. Не смотря на то, что хоть и половина моего обучения прошла онлайн и из дому, ярких воспоминаний у меня много.

Мой "Orientation week". Я помню с какими волнением и страхом, я шёл впервые в университет, в голове были мысли «как я буду здесь один? Ведь тут нет ни одного знакомого» «получится ли у меня?», но это было напрасно, стоило мне лишь ступить на двор, так все понеслось. Меня встретили волонтеры, с символической надписью на груди «You are not alone» и помогали в первые дни с адаптацией, я познакомился с замечательными людьми, которых вскоре я стал звать лучшими друзьями. Думаю эта дружба будет длиною в жизнь.

Наверное я бы ещё хотел отметить своё участие в университетском театре «Mirrors». Я попал туда абсолютно случайно, меня привёл друг, но именно там я сумел найти себя. Готовясь к новой постановке, мы репетировали практически каждый день, по несколько часов. Театр помогал справиться со стрессом, там я мог выплеснуть все свои эмоции через танцы и игру. Думаю именно здесь был момент моего нового «Я». Театр сильно изменил меня, я стал более смелым, уверенным и целеустремленным.

Порой мне жаль, что мне не удалось полноценно прочувствовать «Unique Spirit» АУЦА, из-за COVID-19. Все это лишь малая часть моих ярких воспоминаний об АУЦА. На самом деле, все 4 академических года в АУЦА можно назвать одним большим ярким воспоминанием!

Ruslan Musalimov,  
PSY-118



I am looking at these pictures and I realize that it's been 4 years of constant self-growth, achievements, failures, and uncertainties. I had a different understanding of what success is, focusing more on the result than on enjoying the process.

At the end of the day, we join certain institutions and communities to find a sense of belonging, and it's all about the people, moments with whine you create this environment. I don't have one Fab moment. This way, I will devalue all these great moments during my four years of studies. One thing that I was not expecting was losing two years of my studies online, outside of Kyrgyzstan. It took some time to accept that fact. It seemed like the best years of my life were stolen from me, but it was what it was. The AUCA curriculum allowed me to look at life holistically. The AUCA community gave me a long-lasting friendship. AUCA resources was an opportunity to build good networking and explore some parts of the world. During the last Diversity Fest, my friends and I, while singing "We are the World", admitted that we would miss AUCA. It was such a bittersweet moment!

Mumina Abdulvohidzoda  
ICP-118



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