

THE NEW STAR

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OF AUCA SDP

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New Year in Kyrgyzstan

New Year is one of the favorite festivals in Kyrgyzstan, very much celebrated by everyone. New Year is unlike other festivals that are celebrated with such fervor in a quiet, domestic setting with the family. New Year is something that is celebrated with great pomp and ceremony, with collective merriment. It is not just celebrated as the beginning of a new year, but it is also celebrated as a sign of hope. Preparations for the New Year celebration begin in mid-December in Kyrgyzstan. This time, Bishkek is decorated with colorful lights, giant New Year trees, and New Year markets. Residents deck their homes with artificial Christmas trees, decorations, and Christmas garlands. Traditional Kyrgyzstani cuisine is also set for New Year's celebration—delectable olivier salad, basically the most beloved and celebrated one, herring under fur coat, roasted chicken, fruits, sweets, and sparkling beverages. These showcase elements of Soviet influence in the celebration of New Year festivities. On the 31st of December, families with friends get together at home. Just before midnight, all of them wait for the New Year's message from the president on TV. When midnight comes, everyone makes a New Year's wish and says Happy New Year to each other with “Жаңы жылыңар менен!”. Fireworks light up the sky, with the streets packed with people as everyone celebrates together. A special tradition of the New Year celebration in Kyrgyzstan is Ded Moroz (Santa Claus), who is followed by his granddaughter Snegurochka, who is a special gift bringer, especially for children. Children receive gifts from the New Year tree, with schools and kindergartens also observing New Year performances and concerts. New Year is also a time for reflection for many, since it gives a chance to look back at the previous year, make some plans for the future, and spend some time with their close ones. It is a time of warmth and hope, even in rough times. New Year's Day in Kyrgyzstan is more than just a celebration; it is an opportunity for the entire nation to pause for a moment, smile, and look into a brighter future.

Ismailov Isroilzhon
LAS-125

Zhypara Kadyrakunova: New Coordinator of the Sustainable Development Program

The importance of tomorrow, the comfort and convenience of the campus, and the meaningful use of resources are the objectives of the AUCA Sustainable Development Program (SDP). Spending most of our time on campus, we often do not think about how important it is to keep this place clean and orderly. Returning to the building of our beloved university day by day, we rarely consider who came up with the ideas and solutions that make our lives more environmentally friendly and less harmful. Zhypara, the current coordinator of the Sustainable Development Program, spoke about how she came to her new position, what sustainable development means to her personally, and what plans she has for future advancement.

Zhypara Kadyrakunova is a graduate of the AUCA Department of Environmental Sustainability and Climate Science. From childhood, the topic of ecology and reasonable consumption influenced her worldview, as she grew up in Naryn, where everything was given a second life. This approach was not unusual; on the contrary, it made life easier for local residents. The value of each resource gave rise to an early understanding of sustainable development. Later, Zhypara's friends noticed her way of thinking and, looking at her example, became more conscious about the use of different items and their further processing. During her studies, Zhypara participated in many initiatives related to her major and contributed to the development of the university. As an ecology student, she worked as an assistant to the first coordinator of the Sustainable Development Program, Mira, where she observed the work of the office and the level of engagement of the AUCA community. Now, already in the role of coordinator and working alongside former mentors as colleagues, Zhypara expresses gratitude for this opportunity.

Today, the Sustainable Development Program is gaining momentum and becoming an active part of campus life. Students show interest, participate in initiatives, and join the Green AUCA program under the supervision of Margarita Lazutkina. The program is moving in the right direction by raising awareness among students, staff, and professors about the mission of the SDP office. To increase effectiveness, the idea of sustainable development must become a shared goal of the university. If all members of the community collaborate and work toward a common purpose, it will benefit not only the institution but also personal values. One of the notable challenges remains unconscious consumption, shares Zhypara. Students often take more food than they can eat and leave waste in classrooms and common spaces. According to available data, approximately 60% of the waste consists of organic residues. This issue is one of the key focuses of the Sustainable Development Program, which is developing more effective approaches to sorting and recycling. Students play a significant role in this process by assisting with research, volunteering, and spreading information. Zhypara emphasizes that communication between students and the SDP office should be active and two-way. The Sustainable Development Program should be a recognizable space where students can come not only for information but also with their own ideas. Sustainable development is impossible without active participation. Students should not remain passive observers; they are partners and co-authors of change. Sustainability concerns all fields, from economics to journalism and IT. Addressing students who do not yet consider the Sustainable Development Program their own, Zhypara reminds them that the university is our shared home. As a sign of gratitude for the knowledge, support, and opportunities it provides, it is important to care for it through behavior, initiatives, and partnerships. Sustainable development is not only about environmental issues but about a mindset that creates a respectful and meaningful space for everyone.

Nazbike Turgunaliyeva
JMC-124

LET'S BE SUSTAINABLE TOGETHER!



English Club in Elistan: A Simple Story About Learning and Kindness

This semester, my classmate and I led an English Club for ten students in the fifth grade in Elistan. As part of the AUCA leadership program, we had to create a student club that helps the community. We chose to teach English because many children only know the school program. We wanted to show them that English is not only about memorizing words. It can be fun, interesting, and useful for their future. When we met the children for the first time, they were very shy. They did not talk much and looked a little nervous. They were only eleven years old, and this club was something new for them. But after a few weeks, everything changed. They became active, curious, and excited for each lesson. They started asking questions, laughing, and enjoying every activity. We also became very attached to them, because they were kind, open, and full of energy.

One of the best lessons was about professions. We asked them what they want to become in the future. This topic made them very happy. They wanted to know the names of different jobs, repeated new words many times, and practiced speaking. They loved telling us about their dreams. This lesson showed us that children can learn very fast when the topic is close to their lives and interests. Some lessons were difficult. Sometimes the class became too noisy, and the children stopped listening. It was not easy to control the group. But these moments helped us grow. We learned how to change the activity quickly and use games to bring their attention back. We understood that teaching is a hard job. I gained experience and learned that you need patience, new ideas, and good communication to work with children.

At the beginning, it was also hard to find a common language with them. They were quiet and careful, and we did not know how to communicate better. Later, I used the same way I communicate with my younger relatives: I tried to be friendly, open, and calm. This helped us build trust. After that, the children talked more, asked questions, and felt comfortable with us. My happiest moment was at the end of the semester. We prepared a small test for them, and all students got full points. I felt very proud of them. It was great to see how much they learned in just twelve weeks. I also enjoyed our small conversations before and after classes. We talked about their day, their feelings, and what was new in their lives. These simple talks made the club feel warm and friendly. During the semester, I kept a small reflective diary. I wrote about what worked well, what was difficult, and what I learned. I realized that leadership is not only about leading others. It is also about being patient, showing kindness, and understanding the needs of others. I learned that even small actions can make a big difference for children.

*Umankolova Amalia
BA-124*

The second year of university brings a mix of hard work and real-world projects. For students in the class "Challenges of the 21st Century," our work went outside the classroom. In the fall semester, I had the great chance to start a project that felt really good and taught me a lot: running an English club at the Elistan Orphanage. The main idea was simple but strong. English is becoming more and more important all over the world. I knew that children in the orphanage might not have extra chances to learn and practice English. So, my idea was to make a fun, easy place where the Elistan children could use their English skills. We didn't focus on tests or tricky grammar rules. It was all about building their courage and showing them a bigger world. My first visits were about making friends. I quickly saw that the children, from young kids to older teens, were smart, curious, and excited to join. The club became a weekly meeting full of games, songs, acting, and reading stories. We put the strict school books away and learned by doing things together. One week, we acted like we were at the market, making them use words for food and buying things. Another week, we learned fun English songs, which everyone loved and brought lots of laughter. The change in the children was clear right away. Shy children who were afraid to speak at first started to whisper words, then speak in simple, complete sentences. Their faces would look bright when they spoke an idea clearly or won a game. More than just learning new words, the biggest success was the rise in their self-belief. They were not just learning a language; they were learning that their voices matter, and they were getting a useful skill for their future.

This project came from a class about big challenges of our time, like fairness and getting a good education for everyone. It became a real way to show how small, regular actions can help fix large problems. It was hard work to manage my school timetable and go to the orphanage every week to teach about ten children with different skill levels. It taught me important lessons in being patient, changing my plans quickly, and what community service truly means. The success of the Elistan English Club was due to the happy energy of the children and the help of the orphanage staff. I want to tell all of you that the biggest problems of our time can often be solved with simple things, a little time, a skill you can share, and a kind heart. My experience at Elistan Orphanage was more than just a class project. It showed me that we all have the power to do good, one word and one happy smile at a time.

*Tokonova Akmaral
BA-124*



Online Discussion with Nigerian Students



On November 3, we had the privilege of hosting an online virtual discussion with Nigerian students on a topic that has become increasingly important in our rapidly changing world: “The Role of Technology in Shaping the Future of Education in Nigeria and Central Asia.” This discussion not only brought together voices from two distinct yet interconnected regions but also provided invaluable insights into how technology is transforming education on a global scale.

The Goals: A Journey of Growth and Discovery

When preparing for the virtual discussion, I set out with clear objectives. Primarily, I aimed to foster a meaningful exchange of ideas, drawing connections between the educational challenges and opportunities in Nigeria and Central Asia. I also hoped to learn firsthand about the experiences of Nigerian students as they navigate the intersection of technology and education. Upon reflection, I can confidently say that many of these goals were achieved. The exchange of ideas was lively, insightful, and thought-provoking. Students shared their perspectives on how technology has helped improve access to education, bridge gaps in resources, and enhance the quality of learning experiences. Their enthusiasm was palpable as they spoke about online learning, digital resources, and the potential for technology to bridge educational divides in their communities. However, there were moments of uncertainty and even embarrassment that I had not anticipated. For instance, when trying to connect the technological advancements in education between Nigeria and Central Asia, I sometimes struggled to find common ground, particularly when discussing infrastructure disparities. While both regions have made strides in adopting digital tools, the level of access and resources available to students can be vastly different. In these moments, I felt the weight of the reality that technology's impact is not uniform across the globe, and this created a slight sense of confusion. How could we reconcile the disparities in resources between these regions while still celebrating the advancements made?

Moving Forward: Bridging the Divide

One of the most powerful takeaways from the discussion was the collective call to action for stronger international collaboration in the realm of education technology. While each region has its specific hurdles, the global nature of the digital world offers opportunities for sharing resources, expertise, and best practices. Nigerian and Central Asian students recognized that the future of education depends not just on local solutions, but on a cooperative global effort to build an interconnected, inclusive educational ecosystem. In conclusion, the virtual discussion on November 3 was a highly enriching experience. It allowed me to not only meet my initial goals but also broaden my understanding of the complexities involved in using technology to shape the future of education. As we continue to navigate the rapidly evolving landscape of digital education, one thing is clear: technology is a powerful force for change, but its benefits can only be fully realized through collective effort, empathy, and adaptability.

*Zirekova Mariam
ECO-125*

Bridge to the Future



This semester, the course “Challenges of the 21st Century” taught by Professor Ekaterina Galimova had a major influence on my personal and academic growth. Throughout the semester, I learnt not only about the global issues shaping our world today, but also about the responsibility each of us has as members of a community. This course helped me to realise that I am not just a witness to the problems—I can be someone who works to solve them. That is why I began to think about the problem that is happening in my community and that I could address. I noticed that many people, especially those in my local area, are lacking the opportunity to study English because of some limitations, such as not having access to the internet or to books, or simply because the English courses have been very costly. Nowadays, the English language has become the main part of access to education, international projects, or job opportunities.

These limitations and opportunities helped me to think about the project called “Bridge to the Future”. My club was a free weekly club that was open to anyone, regardless of their age. My goal was simple: to create a space where people could learn, stay motivated, and find new opportunities through English. Every week, I devote 70 minutes to teaching my students online. I chose the textbook “Let’s Go O” since it is ideal for complete beginners who are just starting their English-learning journey. I wanted to help students not only learn English but also become interested in the process. I tried to motivate them by showing examples of free programmes, work opportunities, and international projects where English can open doors. In my classes, I focused less on grammar rules and more on communication—helping students learn how to speak, build sentences, and use vocabulary in real-life contexts. Even if I thought this would be easy for me to do, I faced several challenges along the way. The greatest difficulty was internet access. Many people wanted to join, but they lived in distant villages where stable internet was not available. I reached out to local schools and asked them to provide internet access for the students, but they refused. Due to limited time and resources, I had to start with only six students who could join regularly. Even so, I decided that a small group was better than giving up. When my students first joined the lessons, most of them did not even know the English alphabet. But by the end of the semester, they could read, write, recognise many words, and even construct simple sentences. Watching their progress was the most rewarding part of the experience. This project taught me many valuable lessons. I am proud that I had the courage not only to create this initiative but also to continue it despite the challenges. I am deeply grateful to Professor Ekaterina Galimova for her guidance and support throughout the process. “Bridge to the Future” became more than a class assignment—it became a meaningful experience that I will always remember. Working on this project showed me that even small steps can create changes. And now I am motivated to continue building bridges for others, one lesson at a time.

*Davlatova Mizhgona
PSY-125*



Community Service Project within the SYS class

During this semester, we conducted a community service project as part of our Second Year Seminar class. We provided twelve sessions for 9th- and 10th-grade students at School #42 in Bishkek, helping the students learn digital skills, guiding meaningful discussions, and sharing their own experiences.

The admission process to AUCA was a whole story and a process that taught me a lot, and my studies here have become a life-changing experience by giving me opportunities to travel, discover, research, and become the best version of myself. Looking back, I can never forget where it all started – in public school #42, where I was studying and taking my first steps toward achieving my goals. That's why, when Nigina and I wanted to start a volunteering project, it was the first place that came to my mind. I wanted to teach them the skills and capacities I wish I had learned at that age. Also, since our traditional educational system is very outdated, I wanted to try modern teaching practices with them, especially those we learned during the SYS class: round-table discussions, debates, and questions to improve students' critical thinking. However, when we started conducting our sessions, I was very amazed by what I discovered: the schoolchildren nowadays know so much more than I thought they did. Their understanding is so advanced for their age, and they can even discuss topics like artificial intelligence, cryptocurrency, and so on. It motivated me even more because they are very smart and talented; however, they need more sessions like this and more opportunities to help them grow, develop, and strive for a bright future.

The challenge I faced was that in public schools, there was very limited access to technology, such as projectors and computers, so we had to adapt our materials to the reality of the school. Thankfully, every student had a mobile device, so we used them to do some exercises, like learning to work with AI tools. Also, the classrooms were not very suitable for interactive lessons, so we had to change their seats every time and make sure to bring items like markers, paper, and so on ourselves. Moreover, the debates and round-table discussions were a new format for the students, so it took a bit of time until they adjusted and learned to think about both the "for" and "against" positions. Some students needed a more individualized approach, but unfortunately, we couldn't work separately with each student because there were 25–30 students in one classroom and limited time.

Working with the students taught me patience, flexibility, and the importance of adapting quickly when things do not go exactly as planned. This is the first, but definitely not the last time, I am conducting a service project in my school. I am very grateful to Professor Galimova for encouraging students to give back to our community while learning important skills and capacities ourselves. I really hope that we helped these students to discover something new, improve their skills, and become a better version of themselves.

Mimoza Emilbekova
BA-121

I got inspired to start this volunteering project with Mimoza because I wanted to give back to the community I live in and make a positive contribution. At first, I wanted to conduct English lessons, but then I realized that I could be more helpful by sharing different opportunities and ways they can apply and participate. My favourite part of the volunteering project is the friendships and connections that we built with the students. I was very nervous before the first session because we were conducting sessions for Kyrgyz-speaking classes, and as an international student, my Kyrgyz is still poor. However, the students were very open and immediately switched to Russian so that we could communicate comfortably. Despite their young age, the students were very ambitious, and each of them shared what plans they had for their future and how they wanted to contribute to the betterment of Kyrgyzstan. That's why Mimoza and I shared our personal stories of how education changed our lives and the importance of focusing on studies and keeping working towards our goals. Specifically, I shared my experience of being a scholarship exchange student in the US as a high school student, and how meeting new people, studying at an American school, and discovering the world outside contributed to my worldview and ambitions. I gave them tips and advice for the application process for different exchange programs for school students and shared my own created resources for their preparation. Also, we cooperated with the PR office of AUCA to tell them more about the university and the admission process, providing small gifts to the most active ones.

However, there were challenges as well. For example, I had to drive for 1.5 hours to get to the school since it was in a different part of the city, and it required me to leave home before 7 a.m. on some days. Also, sometimes it was very hard to maintain the attention of the students, because they got distracted very easily and would start talking to each other instead of doing the assignment. However, instead of shouting at them for misbehavior, we tried to communicate with them, explaining the importance of the exercise and respect for each other. Since we taught them how to use ChatGPT, at some point, they used it as a tool to cheat, so we had to conduct an additional session to teach them how to use AI correctly to avoid academic misconduct. Twelve sessions did not feel like enough because there was so much more I wished we could cover. That's why I am currently in contact with some of the students who asked for additional help and guidance with their studies and admissions to the university. Moreover, I became very close friends with some of the students and invited them over to my apartment to get to know each other more. I believe that it's important to stay in touch with our mentees, even after project completion, and make sure we can sustain and expand the impact.

Nigina Zoidboeva
JMC-122



GOOD JOB!!

A Brief Escape, a Lasting Feeling

Since the fall semester has already ended, I decided to go back to Tajikistan to visit my family and friends for the upcoming holidays. I arrived home as a surprise, and the emotions on the faces of my family and friends made every moment of the journey worth it. The first thing I did after arriving was to try traditional food that I had deeply missed while being in Bishkek. Those familiar tastes immediately brought a sense of warmth and belonging, reminding me how powerful even small moments of home can be.

One of the most meaningful parts of my holiday was visiting my teacher, with whom I had been preparing for Russian Language and Literature Olympiads for almost five years. It was a truly special meeting, made even more memorable by the chance to see other students from my cohort. Reuniting with people who have shaped my academic path reminded me of the value of guidance, dedication, and shared effort over time. I also managed to visit the organization where I had been volunteering during the past year and reconnect with many close friends. We spent hours talking, laughing, and remembering the moments we had shared together. Thankfully, our holiday break is not short, which allows me to spend enough time with my family and friends and truly appreciate being present with them.

As the New Year approaches, I sincerely wish that all members of the AUCA community have the opportunity to celebrate it with their loved ones, surrounded by warmth, support, and a sense of home. Even a brief escape can leave a lasting feeling, one that stays with us long after the holiday ends.

Farah Saranjomova
LAS-125



Student Senate's Achievement

Microwaves installed in common areas of the university are a shared resource intended to support students' daily needs and to make campus life more comfortable. Their continued availability depends on responsible and respectful use by all members of the AUCA community.

The Student Senate would like to remind students of several basic rules that must be followed. Only food should be heated in the microwave, and only in approved, microwave-safe containers. This includes non-metallic dishes and heat-resistant containers designed for microwave use; metal utensils, foil, and non-microwave-safe materials are strictly prohibited. Students are also asked not to heat multiple containers at the same time, as this can cause uneven heating and damage to the equipment. Users should monitor their food while heating and clean the microwave after use if any spills occur. Leaving food residue or strong odors creates inconvenience for others and leads to faster deterioration of shared equipment.

Artur Kim
Chair of Student Senate



Farewell Kiss: Goodbye to Graduates

Every year, AUCA sees another group of students complete their four-year journey in this wonderful place. Seniors finish their studies and say goodbye to the university, their professors, and their friends. And every year, it is still hard to let them go because these amazing students leave their mark and many warm memories. At our university, students from different years and majors have a great opportunity to take the same classes, which allows them to make new friends, and volunteering or joining a club can help get to know even more people. But there is also a downside: these friendships often feel short because of graduation, but they still become important. All we can do is enjoy the time we have with each other at the university and, at the end of the year, see seniors begin their adult life. And of course, we can always meet again after graduation (if busy adults find the time). I am a freshman, and I would like to talk about the graduates of this year, who became very dear to me during this semester. As I said, it's not hard to meet different people at our university, and thanks to that, I got to know several great seniors from the "Mirrors" theater. I admire these students so much: they are in their fourth year, they are writing their thesis, and on top of that, they perform at the freshman Initiation Ceremony, come to rehearsals every evening, work, volunteer, and some of them are even part of the Senate. How do you survive, guys? Tell us your secret. Is it some kind of magic? And it really is because these people are truly magical. They not only manage to do all of this, but they also help freshmen, spending their free time on others instead of napping on the couches during breaks. They shared their experience and became a real source of strength during the first months of university life. These students are not only role models but also good friends who made the first semester unforgettable for many freshmen. And now, when they are leaving, everyone feels a bit sad because we have already gotten attached to them. But still, AUCA is great not only at welcoming new students but also at saying goodbye. All students and professors love and appreciate our graduates and will never forget them. All of us become one big friendly family, and freshmen can, just for a moment, take on the role of a parent and give a tight hug to their "kids" who are leaving the nest, and give them a Farewell Kiss. Thank you for everything, dear graduates. We will keep all your advice and kindness in our hearts. We hope this new chapter in your life will be as bright as your studies here, and that every door will open for you as easily as we will open ours when you come to visit us. Keep inspiring others even outside the university walls.

*Popova Kristina
TCMA-125*

THANK
YOU!



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