

# THE NEW STAR

independent student newspaper

ISSUE 3

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AUN & AUCA  
COLLABORATION



INITIATION  
PREPARATION  
AT TSI AUCA



STUDENT  
SENATE  
WORDS



# HOW NATURE UNITES

A foreign soul who finds his place around beautiful, huge mountains. This is how Nathaniel Matala, who came to Bishkek as an exchange student, can be described. He still remembers the morning when he boarded the bus with the other guys. The bus left the airport, and as he looked out the window, mountains appeared in the distance, huge, confident, dominating every corner of the landscape. Nathaniel had seen mountains before, but the accessibility and beauty of Kyrgyzstan's nature hooked him especially deeply.

When he came to AUCA and learned about the existence of the Outdoor AUCA club, founded by NGA, he realized that his admiration was shared by many. That's how his journey into the world of hiking began here in Kyrgyzstan. Standing in places that most people only see in photographs, Nate felt more than just delight; he felt the transitory moments. In such places, it seems that nature preserves the traces of those who came before you: emotions, breathing, memories. It was this feeling that made hiking not just a hobby, but a form of connection. He often shared these moments with friends, enjoying the clean air and the silence that heals. These same feelings have become the philosophy of the Outdoor AUCA club. That's why Nathaniel became his supervisor, while simultaneously working as an instructor in the ICP Department. For him, the club is about bringing students and professors together, giving them the opportunity to see more in each other than academic roles. When people climb the hills, walk in one step, and share water or jokes, there is a special closeness. Later, when they meet in the corridors of the campus, they already feel a little different, closer, warmer. This is useful for friendship and mutual understanding. In addition to new acquaintances, hiking is also a great opportunity to go with close friends. Nate advises you to start this way: with those you feel comfortable with. This makes it easier to discover this activity and create new memories against the backdrop of majestic mountains.

Speaking of the club, Nathaniel is beaming. For him, "Outdoor AUCA" is not only about physical benefits, but also about inner peace. Hiking helps you hear yourself, feel free, and get rid of unnecessary noise. And although Nate himself didn't always like hiking, it seemed boring as a child, over time, his love of nature only grew. Today, he is looking forward to new members. Even if you like to be alone, don't be afraid. Outdoor AUCA will give you movement, nature, and the quiet power that mountains provide.

*Mazbike Turgunaliyeva*  
*JMC-124*



# Initiation Day: Freshmen's First Look



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Initiation Day is considered one of the fascinating events at AUCA, not only among freshmen but even among those students who have already graduated. What makes this event more unique is that it collects all students regardless of their major and year of study. As a freshman, I found this event breathtaking and captivating, starting from the official part and ending with the performance of the theater "Mirrors". I was able to see that happiness on the faces of elected senate members, and was really inspired that one of those members is a freshman. I felt really proud realizing that AUCA is the place where students are able to speak out about their ideas and find support from others. The performance left no one indifferent: the way Aigerim played the role of Juliet was to such an extent graceful and refined that one would assume that she was the real Juliet from Shakespeare's play. It is obvious that the "Mirrors" team had spent a huge amount of time on rehearsals in order to achieve such amazing results, so let's ask some of the participants what the picture "behind the scenes" looks like.

Rayona Kadyrova from SOC-125: *"To be honest, because of the several lights, I couldn't fully see the audience, so I just pretended it was another rehearsal and danced; however, of course, I was feeling nervous and embarrassed while performing, but I tried to fully focus on our performance. I had thoughts of giving up because it felt like I was not managing to do everything, but I stayed and found a way to manage time for my studies and rehearsals. I really love our team: every time someone forgets something, there are always people who can help, even when someone has problems, we can always listen up and support. Basically, the support was felt through little things, but these little things were something big that filled our hearts with love and care. It was like an honour, while being a freshman and already being part of this big team "Mirrors", and I really want to continue performing till I graduate because "Mirrors" is not just a team, but it is more like a family."*



Alidina Karageneyeva from AMI-125: *"When we were first told that we would be performing at the Initiation, I didn't even understand what kind of event it was, so I didn't take it seriously at first. Then our rehearsals increased to 6-7 hours, and I began to realize that this wasn't just some simple event. I was excited because I knew that my close friends would come to watch, and I wanted to make this evening unforgettable for everyone. The most stressful thing right before the show was the nervousness and anxiety. It felt like the dance we had been learning for 2-3 months had completely vanished from my memory. But fortunately, thanks to the countless rehearsals and a short warm-up, I managed to overcome those feelings. I hope the audience understood the main message of the performance - the power of love. The production shows that love has the strength to unite things that seem impossible to bring together. It's an unforgettable experience that I'm incredibly grateful for. Of course, I would love to continue participating in theater, try new roles, grow, and keep moving forward."*

As the lights faded and applause filled the hall, I realized that Initiation Day is not just a ceremony – it's a reminder of how quickly strangers become a community, and how every story here begins differently yet grows toward the same place. I hope that the lines *"I was born once in AUK, I was made in AUCA"* will continue uniting all AUCA students during the Initiation Day and far beyond it.

Farah Saranjomova  
LAS-125

## The Magic of Yet

Leaving Afghanistan to pursue my studies was one of the biggest and most transformative decisions of my life. I arrived in Kyrgyzstan with hope, fear, and a suitcase full of dreams. The first few months at AUCA were filled with excitement but also uncertainty. The Kyrgyz culture felt somewhat familiar: warm people, strong traditions, and a shared sense of community, yet there was so much to adapt to. Learning Russian, adjusting to a new academic system, and being away from my family were challenges that often made me question my strength. I remember telling myself, *"I can't do this,"* or *"I'll never fit in."* But eventually, I learned to add one small, life-changing word to those sentences: yet. Suddenly, *"I can't speak Russian fluently"* became *"I can't speak Russian fluently yet."* That single word transformed fear into hope and struggle into possibility. The power of yet, as psychologist Dr. Carol Dweck explains, lies in understanding that growth takes time, patience, and persistence. Later, when I moved to the United States, I experienced a new level of transition, adapting to new cultural norms and facing the quiet pressure to succeed once more. There were moments of doubt, but the word yet reminded me that progress doesn't happen overnight. As Nelson Mandela said, *"Do not judge me by my success; judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again."* Each challenge has taught me resilience and reminded me that growth is an ongoing journey. Meeting others who are still in their "yet" stage has shown me that we are all learning and evolving together. I still have goals I haven't reached yet, but that word gives me strength because I'm not there yet, but I'm on my way.

Hafasa Yousufzai  
Alumna-125



University is not a place.  
 It's a pressure cooker for becoming human.  
 You come in with bright eyes and a backpack,  
 and somewhere between Week 3 and midterms  
 You start questioning your entire existence—  
 in MLA format.  
 The lectures are loud,  
 but your thoughts are louder.  
 You nod like you understand the theory,  
 then Google it under the table,  
 praying Wi-Fi is stronger than your willpower.  
 You learn that "*critical thinking*"  
 sometimes means crying in the library  
 and then writing the best paragraph of your life.  
 Your coffee is your survival strategy,  
 your friends are your emergency therapy sessions.  
 Someone always says, "*We'll start early next time.*"  
 But nobody ever means it.

Still, we show up—  
 tired, messy, but still showing up.  
 Because that's the secret lesson nobody writes in the syllabus:  
 You don't just study subjects,  
 You study yourself.  
 How you fall apart and rebuild.  
 How you lose confidence  
 And still raise your hand.

University is where you learn  
 that intelligence is not certainty—  
 It's curiosity.  
 It's standing in the storm of "*I don't know*"  
 and daring to stay there until something clicks.  
 One night, you'll look up from your notes  
 and realize:  
 You're not just chasing grades anymore.  
 You're chasing meaning.  
 You're building a life out of late nights,  
 small victories,  
 and the courage to keep learning  
 even when you're tired of being human.  
 That's the art of almost knowing.  
 And maybe—  
 just maybe—  
 That's what education really means.

# UNIVERSITY IS NOT A PLACE...



*Daiana Monolova*  
BA-125

# IMKONIM BO'LSA-U...

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word "Poetry"? Maybe it is old and boring poems? What if I say that behind every poem there is a huge work of writers? Some write about love - expressing the true love inside them to their beloved ones, or maybe about nature, reality. It can be about anything, but the thing is that they are not just written; every single word is written from the depths of the heart. Poetry is very powerful; every single word feels like a weapon - it reaches the heart and finds the truth in our souls. For instance, there are many poets whose poems are highly loved in Central Asia: Alisher Navoiy, Rudaki, Jusuup Balasagun, etc. Those poets wrote so amazingly that people still read their poems, even though many centuries have passed. It is not about the magic they used, but it is about the truth and emotions they used that still remain the same across centuries.

Now, I would like to share a piece of my own poem that I wrote recently. By the way, it is written in my native language - the Uzbek language, but I will provide a translated version:

*"Imkonim bo'lsa-u...  
 Vaqtni qaytarsam ortga,  
 Husni jamolinga termulsam bir bor.  
 Yokida soy bo'yida yana yursak birga.  
 Garchi yillar shamol kabi o'tsa,  
 Villar aslarga aylansa...  
 Seni birinchi bor ko'rganimni  
 Chiqarmayman men yodimdan.  
 Tabassuming dunyoni olar edi,  
 Nigohlaring meni telba qilardi.  
 Senga yozgan birinchi maktubim...  
 Hali hamon yodimda."*

Here, it's basically saying that if I only had a chance to turn back time, I would like to see you again, see your beauty. Or walk with you again along the riverside. Even though years fly by, years turn into centuries, I will never forget the time I met you. Your smile would take the world (because of its beauty), and your gaze used to make me lose my mind. I still remember when I first wrote you a letter. This is actually my first experience of writing a poem; consequently, it is perfect. I hope you like that.

To conclude, I would like to say that poetry is not just a poem - it is a weapon that reaches the soul only with words. It is what makes you wise; the more you read, the more knowledge you get. If possible, write your poem - there are no wrong ideas.

**Ismailov Isroilzhan**  
**LAS-125**

# AUN & AUCA DISCUSSION

Earlier this year, I had the remarkable opportunity to visit the Tom Mboya School in Mombasa, Kenya, as part of a community-based service learning program. Walking through the classrooms, assisting teachers, interacting with students, and observing how they use tablets and computers gave me a firsthand understanding of how technology can transform education. Participating directly in classroom activities and supporting students' learning made the experience even more meaningful, and it stayed with me as I prepared for the virtual discussion with AUN. Before the discussion, all participants voted on the topics they were most interested in. I was thrilled when *"The Role of Technology in Shaping the Future of Education in Nigeria and Central Asia"* received the most votes, including mine! Knowing that many students were eager to discuss this topic made me even more excited to share ideas and learn from my peers.

Preparing for the discussion was both exciting and intense. Under the guidance of our AUCA professors, Ekaterina Galimova and Emilienne Akpan from AUN, I researched examples of technology-driven learning in Central Asia and Nigeria, watched videos, and practiced presenting my thoughts clearly. When the session began, the initial moments were filled with anticipation. Students from Nigeria and Central Asia introduced themselves, and as soon as the ice was broken, the atmosphere became warm and collaborative. Nigerian students shared fascinating insights about how mobile applications, online platforms, and interactive teaching tools are helping schools reach students in remote areas. Their stories reminded me of my experience at Tom Mboya School, where even simple digital solutions were making a meaningful difference in students' learning experiences. I shared what I had learned about technology's impact on education in Central Asia, and the discussion quickly became dynamic and engaging.

Communication flowed smoothly, and even though AUN students spoke with a slightly different accent, understanding each other was never a problem. The conversation highlighted that education and technology are global challenges and opportunities, and it was inspiring to see how much we could learn from one another. By the end of the session, I felt a deep sense of connection and optimism. These discussions are not just about academics; they are opportunities to build friendships, exchange knowledge, and learn from each other's experiences. I am deeply grateful to our AUCA professor, Ekaterina Galimova, and AUN professor Emilienne Akpan for organizing this event and giving us the chance to connect with students from another part of the world.

Participating in this discussion, together with my community-based service learning experience at Tom Mboya School, showed me the true power of technology to connect people, bridge gaps, and inspire innovation. I am convinced that through collaboration, creativity, and shared learning, the future of education in Nigeria, Central Asia, and beyond can be bright, inclusive, and transformative.

**Navruzova Sharifa**  
**ANTH-125**

To read more about the event, please click this [link!](#)



# BEING NEW TO STUDENT SENATE

Applying to the Senate in my second year was very important to me, because in my first year, I spent too long deciding whether to apply or not - and in the end, I missed the deadline. So I had to wait an entire year for the next chance. During that time, I already knew that I wanted to try again and that I had something meaningful to offer. I was motivated and determined to give it a real try. The campaigning process turned out to be much more fun than I expected. I enjoyed thinking about how to present myself to students, coming up with slogans, creating posters, and putting them up around campus. And then seeing my work on the college walls - in those moments, I truly felt like I was participating in campus life.

I didn't want to win by making big promises, but rather with small, realistic ideas - things that could genuinely make students' lives easier: a bit more comfort, a bit more order, a bit more attention to what we all need every day. I believe that it's exactly these small things that change the atmosphere of the college the most. Even the process itself - submitting the application, talking to students, presenting my ideas - became a valuable experience. It taught me to be more confident and showed me that I really do want to take part in college life and help make it better.

*Mamaeva Aiturgan*  
DMDT-1-24

# IN PREPARATION FOR INITIATION...

The college is currently actively preparing for the Student Initiation Ceremony. This annual event is held for first-year students at the beginning of the academic year. The main goal of the induction ceremony is to introduce our freshmen to college life and create a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. Since the ceremony is scheduled for the end of November, the preparation process has started early to ensure everything is organized at the highest level. At the moment, freshman students are looking for partners and preparing their stage entrances. Each of them wants to make a memorable impression, so they are putting in a lot of effort. For many, this is their first experience participating in such an event, and naturally, they are excited and nervous. They are discussing themes, outfits, dresses, and imagining how everything will unfold, since the whole event is still a mystery to them.

The Music Band and Dance Club are also actively preparing for the ceremony. They are rehearsing the songs that will accompany the main part of the program, and the dancers are preparing and refining their choreography. Many of our freshmen are members of these clubs as well, so they are highly engaged in the process and looking forward to the event with great anticipation. The Student Life Office is developing the overall script, organizing all stages of preparation, and assisting students with planning and coordination. The Student Induction Ceremony is one of the most important events at the start of the year. It helps freshmen adapt more quickly, get to know the college, and feel like a part of our community. Very soon, our freshmen will officially become students.

*Farsobina Sofia*  
DHT-1-24



# STUDENT SENATE

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Over the past year, the AUCA Student Senate has carried out a series of initiatives aimed at strengthening student life, improving academic processes, and fostering a more inclusive and supportive university environment. Here is an overview of the Senate's key accomplishments.

## A Festive Movie Night at Makerspace

To celebrate the end of the semester and the upcoming New Year, the Senate organized a campus movie night inside the newly opened Makerspace. The event brought students together in a cozy, creative setting and highlighted Makerspace as a new hub for community activities.

## A Unified Event Calendar for the Entire Campus

Recognizing the need for better coordination and visibility of university events, the Senate created a comprehensive Google Calendar. It compiles all major campus activities, club events, and essential academic dates, making it easier for students to stay informed and engaged.

## Dialogue with the Chairman of the Board of Trustees

In a significant step toward strengthening student representation, the Senate held a meeting with the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. The discussion focused on current challenges at AUCA, proposals for improving the course registration system, and long-term plans for enhancing academic conditions for students.

## Collecting Student Opinions on X-Grade Deadlines

Following a Faculty Senate meeting, the Student Senate launched a data collection initiative to gather student perspectives on possible changes to the X-grade deadline. This effort ensured that student voices were included in administrative decision-making.

## Revising the Student Senate Charter

During the summer, the Senate conducted a thorough review of the Student Senate Charter. Motivated by concerns over low engagement from elected senators, the team worked to redesign internal structures, reduce the number of Senate seats, and revise the responsibilities and functions of each committee. These changes aim to build a more efficient and committed student government.

## Collaboration with UNESCO - #NoHateLab!

A major long-term effort involved joint work with UNESCO's #NoHateLab! initiative. Beginning in mid-spring, the Senate collected data on student concerns, challenges faced during the first year of studies, and potential areas for institutional improvement. This collaboration culminated on November 14 with a dedicated anti-bullying event held at the AUCA Forum, emphasizing the importance of creating a safe and respectful campus community.

Through these diverse initiatives, the Student Senate demonstrated its commitment to advocacy, transparency, and meaningful change. As AUCA continues to grow, the Senate remains focused on elevating the student experience and ensuring that every voice on campus is heard.

*Artur Kim*  
Chair of Student Senate



My journey to become a Student Senator at the university started way before I joined the university. I worked as a class representative back in school. I never resisted assisting my classmates, either in terms of lesson-related matters, school problems, or personal problems. I got pride when they put their trust in me, and the feeling of responsibility remained with me. At the time I joined the university, my friends urged me to join the Student Senate. They also thought that I can be able to represent them, and make a real difference. They made me have confidence, and I was proud to get the highest number of votes compared to all the other candidates. The period of the campaign was competitive and a difficult one, because this year they were selecting only five students compared to the previous year, with ten Senate list. It was a stressful situation and simultaneously very exciting. I took days discussing with the students one-on-one, gathering their thoughts, and getting acquainted with their issues. My rivals were good and had great schemes, but I did not merely promote my ideas to students; I listened to them as well. That style was my strength, and this enabled me to relate effectively with the student body.

My initial move towards preparing to take part in the campaign was to have my application submitted by gathering fifty student signatures. I then put posters all over the campus to communicate my vision. I also drafted a video that was very short and which discussed my sincere ambition for the university. Some students also participated in the video in my support, expressing their interest and willingness to share our common objectives. My involvement as the leader of a number of clubs also assisted me in getting the views and concepts of various categories of students, which enhanced my campaign and demonstrated to students that their voices were heard. I was both proud and happy when the email was sent that said I had been chosen as a Student Senator. I was honored by the fact that students had selected me to represent them. Meanwhile, I experienced the burden of responsibility. I understood that being a senator did not just mean a title, but it was to serve all students with integrity, compassion, and commitment.

My present work is aimed at solving student problems and making the campus a comfortable academic place. I preside over social activities and keep a check on them so that they proceed without problems. I am specifically interested in contributing to the academic success, particularly among freshmen. I would also like to see new students being at their best and not afraid of being on campus, as they will be prepared to achieve their educational goals. The first thing I did to start this work was to establish the Active Mind Club, which assists students in overcoming academic issues and life on the campus, giving advice and support in case of necessity. In addition to personal assistance, I will aim to create a feeling of togetherness among students. I would like to establish the possibility of joint work, where everyone would contribute to making our university a better place. My leadership capabilities, teamwork, and creativity are some of the assets I use to make new ideas come to life. In my opinion, students are motivated to join extracurricular and academic activities when they get to know what they can achieve. What I would say to future leaders in the field of student life is straightforward: each responsibility is important. Each task should be taken seriously and should be given maximum effort. Develop a circle of young leaders and surround yourself with them, and collaborate. When students come together, they are able to provide a meaningful change that can help all people on campus.

*Mohammad Qahim Sadiqi*  
SFW-124

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