

THE NEW STAR

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ORIENTATION
WEEK 2025

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A Note from the

President of AUCA

We are opening a new academic year – a moment of great significance for our entire university family.

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate our freshmen. You have successfully passed a rigorous and competitive admission process/ each of you has already demonstrated that you are talented, determined, and ready to pursue your goals. You are here not by chance, and we are proud that you have chosen AUCA. From the very beginning, you will find support at every step of your journey, as caring for each student is our highest priority. AUCA is a community that values individuality, respects diverse opinions, and believes in the potential of every person.



Our university is a space of opportunities. You will have access to modern academic programs, interdisciplinary projects, student clubs, sports teams, and creative groups. Here you will learn from outstanding faculty, try new things, build friendships, and set ambitious goals for yourself.

Dear faculty and staff, a new academic year is both a challenge and an inspiration for us as well. I know how much dedication you bring to your work. In fact, I am convinced that education at AUCA is a reciprocal process: not only do students learn from us, but we also learn a great deal from them. May this year bring you the joy of collaboration, pride in student success, and the satisfaction of knowing that together we are making AUCA a truly special place.

May this new academic year be filled with exciting discoveries, bright ideas, and courageous decisions. Welcome to AUCA!

Sincerely
Timothy O'Connor



A Note from the

Dean of Student Affairs

Dear students, welcome to AUCA!

I would like to congratulate you on the start of your new, very exciting, and joyful journey. Your path at AUCA will last four years, during which you will experience many bright moments. You will find new friends, new acquaintances, and meet people who, like you, are eager to go through this journey together. Therefore, I encourage you to participate in all possible activities, including clubs, the newspaper, and various student events, because these four years will remain in your memory for a lifetime. Once again, congratulations on your admission and the start of the new academic year, and I wish you success in all your endeavors.

Sincerely,
Shabruddin Iminov



A Note from the

Editor-in-Chief

New Star Student Newspaper



Dear students,

Welcome to a new academic year and to the AUCA community!

I wish you a successful and exciting year ahead. University is more than just academics. It is also about discovering yourself, meeting new people, and trying new things.

If you enjoy writing or want to share your thoughts and experiences, consider joining NewStar. It is a great way to develop your skills, express your ideas, and be part of campus life. You do not need to be a professional writer. Just bring your curiosity and voice. Feel free to contact us anytime at newstar@auca.kg.

Best wishes,
Niloufar Rafat

Orientation Week 2025: Welcoming New Beginnings at AUCA



The academic year at AUCA started with the energy, excitement, and cooperation of Orientation Week 2025. Designed to welcome freshmen students into the AUCA community, the week offered a blend of academic and social activities. Orientation Week has been a tradition at AUCA for a long time, helping students adapt to university life and form first connections. This year, AUCA welcomed 413 freshman students, divided into different teams. One of the highlights of teamwork and cooperation is an example of the Yellow team winning AUCAgaphia. As part of the event, there was an auction where the team bought a portion of fried eggs for 45000 soms, a record amount of money went to charity.

Building a Strong Foundation:

The week was not only filled with similar activities but also with academic sessions aimed at creating a supportive environment. Professor Hart describes his favorite part of orientation week: "I don't have a specific favorite part - I love it when I see in a student the moment when it dawns on them in class that they are learning, that this isn't school, that they can express themselves and craft their ideas into something better, clearer, even better than they could have expected. I see that moment of realization, individually, the student's eyes widen, they lean forward in their chair, they usually pull the writing they have just done closer to their face as if to say, "Did I write this?" Then they drop the page and smile, not at me, at themselves. That's my favorite moment."

Professor Qonunov suggests to us how to continue our journeys after the orientation: "My advice to first-year students is that they make the most of the university's resources, such as the library and the gym, always stay in touch with their professors and course mates, find a mentor who could guide and advise, and join study groups and intellectual circles."

Students Voices:

For many students, the Orientation Week was their first taste of university life. Leila, a first-year student in IBL, described it as her most exciting experience: "I think the most exciting part was Star Academy — we worked hard with my Orange Team and really enjoyed performing together. I was also surprised by how talented other students were." Arina from the Business Administration department shared: "It felt like my home for the next four university years. Everyone is kind and always ready to help. The campus is well equipped, and there are all the necessary resources for our academics. I had such an amazing teacher during orientation week who taught us essential skills we can use to make our studies much easier."

From the Author

"As someone who also took part in the Orientation week, I have firsthand experience in how strangers become teammates. Every activity pushed me and other students to step outside our comfort zones. The highlight of the week for me was working together in the Star Academy. Me and my favourite Blue Team and I made a performance in a fairytale format, mixing modern jokes with a classical background. This showed me how much AUCA values collaboration and creativity."

Not the End but Just a Beginning:

As Orientation Week concluded, students left with new friendships, academic expectations, and a stronger sense of belonging. Teachers, students, and volunteers agree that Orientation Week is indeed the Bridge to our Future at AUCA.

Murkhambetova, Kamilla
IBL-125



Stepping into the Unknown.

My Experience at the *Orientation Week 2025*

My first impression? AUCA feels alive.

The first week at AUCA felt like stepping into the unknown. For many of us, it was the beginning of something more than just studying. Orientation Week 2025 was mainly about first meetings, fun moments, and new connections that will shape the rest of our university adventure. Even though I consider myself a confident person, on my first day, I felt shy, wondering who to talk to and where to go. However, thanks to the fun events and activities organized during Orientation Week, I felt more comfortable meeting new people and starting conversations. I realized that AUCA is not just about studying - it is about connecting.

Of course, Orientation Week was not just fun. It came with small challenges: finding classrooms on time, figuring out how to print papers, and registering for courses - the little moments were all part of the journey.

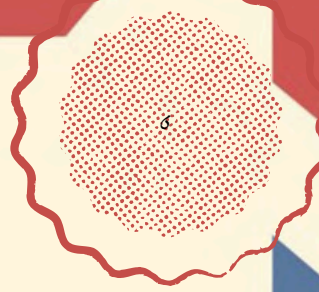
If I could give advice to myself on the first day, I would recommend:

- *Say yes. Join the activities, even if you feel shy. You will thank yourself later.*
- *Talk to people. Everyone is looking for friends; sometimes it's a simple "Hi, what is your department?" is all it takes.*
- *Do not panic. It is okay not to understand everything at once - peers and professors can help, just ask.*
- *Enjoy it. Laugh, take photos, and make memories - especially when your teammate had to look for a lemon in the flour.*

Some of my most memorable moments came from the unexpected. Body Moving Day started with cleaning windows, but soon turned into everyone getting soaked, which I thoroughly enjoyed - my clothes were completely wet, and laughter filled the air. These spontaneous experiences made Orientation Week unforgettable. By the end of the week, I realized that the experiences, conversations, and little adventures were not just fun - they had helped me build a small part of my "bridge to the future." Each new friendship, every lesson learned, and each challenge faced felt like a step toward the person I want to become at AUCA and beyond. I took cozy polaroid photos with my teammates, capturing the first frames of our AUCA story - and something tells me, the best frames are yet to come.



Language Journeys: Switching Tongues, Shaping Minds



At AUCA, a single day might mean greeting a friend in Kyrgyz, attending a lecture in English, asking directions in Russian, and texting family in your mother tongue, and for many of us, four or even five languages swirl together before lunchtime, creating what might feel like chaos but in reality is a powerful gift that psychology helps us better understand. Researchers call this constant shifting between languages code switching, and it is more than just a linguistic skill; it is an exercise in mental flexibility, almost like toggling between tabs on a computer, activating different cognitive pathways in the brain, strengthening attention, problem-solving, and even empathy. This is why multilingual people often demonstrate sharper executive control and greater sensitivity to context than monolingual peers, and nowhere is this more alive than at AUCA, where students instinctively switch to Russian for humor, English for academic debate, or Kyrgyz to show respect in daily conversations. Each shift reveals how language is not only a tool of communication but also a lens through which we think, feel, and connect.

Yet beyond the science, the lived experience of code switching brings both humor and humanity. One student recently confessed to starting an entire presentation in English before realizing halfway through that most of the class spoke only Russian, while another recalled directly translating a Kyrgyz idiom into English, which sent the entire room into laughter, not because it was wrong but because it carried such vivid imagery that it revealed how differently languages frame the world. These small yet powerful stories remind us that our linguistic journeys shape not just our minds but also our bonds with others.

At the same time, the challenges are real: mastering Russian grammar, composing academic essays in English, or catching the rhythm of rapid Kyrgyz conversations can feel overwhelming. Yet psychology offers encouragement here too, showing that the very struggle to manage multiple codes strengthens the brain's executive functions, the same system that governs focus, planning, and multitasking. This means that every time you wrestle with Russian cases, search for the right English idiom, or balance cultural registers in Kyrgyz, you are training your brain for resilience, adaptability, and long-term cognitive growth. This resilience is not just academic; it spills into everyday life, helping students juggle complex schedules, navigate intercultural friendships, and build bridges across communities, because language, after all, is never neutral; it carries memory, identity, and emotion. So the ability to move fluidly between tongues at AUCA also means moving fluidly between perspectives, opening our minds to see issues from multiple cultural angles, and cultivating the empathy that is increasingly vital in a fractured world.

Ultimately, AUCA's multilingual environment is more than practical convenience; it is transformative education, offering us the chance to live and think in diversity every single day. When we look back after graduation, we may realize that our greatest course was not confined to a classroom but lived in the hallways, cafeterias, dorms, and student lounges, where we learned that switching tongues was also shaping minds, and that our language journeys were, in truth, journeys of personal growth proof that diversity does not only enrich a campus but rewires the very way we see and experience the world.



**trying to function while
knowing 3 languages:**

Hafasa Yousufzai
Alumna



When the dream has always been clear and goals are ascertained, a person will find the way even in the dark. This story tells the narrative of one of the young individuals who grew wings in a cage. It is worth spreading and mind and heart awakening. It is a narrative of a person I witnessed her progress and worked with her through online communication.

"A four-year-long silence under the Ashes of a silenced generation"

No one speaks out about a regime's death's exact moment

But I witnessed that dark night

August 15 was a night when everything, the earth and time, busted into absolute silence. Maybe out of fear, maybe out of shame.

It was as silent as if the air had stopped itself.

You could even hear your own heart pounding as if it were death.

And you realize that the world was no longer the way it was

And this story is one of them



At that time, I was 17 and a few months left to my 18th birthday

The age when an individual has a lot of passion for life and explores adult life, not terrified

Supposed to be the start of youth, but ended as the end of a dream

In my twenties, I still sometimes remember that dark as yesterday.

Not only girls, but also all lost something.

Safety, hope, home, peace, and dreams.

And something greater than all of them; homeland

"My sister, she was one of them

An ambitious woman, full of dreams, who worked toward each of them day and night".

She went through an absolute silence.

The deep wound caused her to make a stronger decision

With the cost of leaving everything behind

It felt as if I had lost my entire family.

The pampered and irresponsible girl of yesterday curves her own path taste adulthood before its time.

"And my mom, during these years, was the strongest woman in the world.

We were collapsing from inside, but she, she stood as a strong pillar next to my father

Not that she didn't feel the pain, not that her heart was full of fear, she was broken.

And that day I realized that mother's pain is the quietest scream in the world".

The first few nights wept as if for ages

I remember resting on my sister's lap, my sob was fighting the silence of the night.

The days came when I learned to take my own and others' responsibilities

These years have been like a long and deep sleep from which I have not yet woken up.

It was not sleep, it was a nightmare

It was me and the journals with the pages written with grief and anger

There was little hope in the beginning.

I participated in the entrance exam. I went to the meeting with childish enthusiasm, my heart set on this one small wish.

When the results came and I saw that I had been accepted into the field I loved, I cried—this time out of joy.

I thought that maybe everything was not over yet, and counted the days But that day never came.

A long time passed, and I was trying to work on myself

Attended online courses and learned painting and writing skills, as well as different language classes.

Taught for a year to those kids who still do not know what is ahead of them Amidst all this darkness, I learned one thing.

Maybe staying home and loneliness were not in my interest

I learned who I am, what I want, and what the reality of my life is

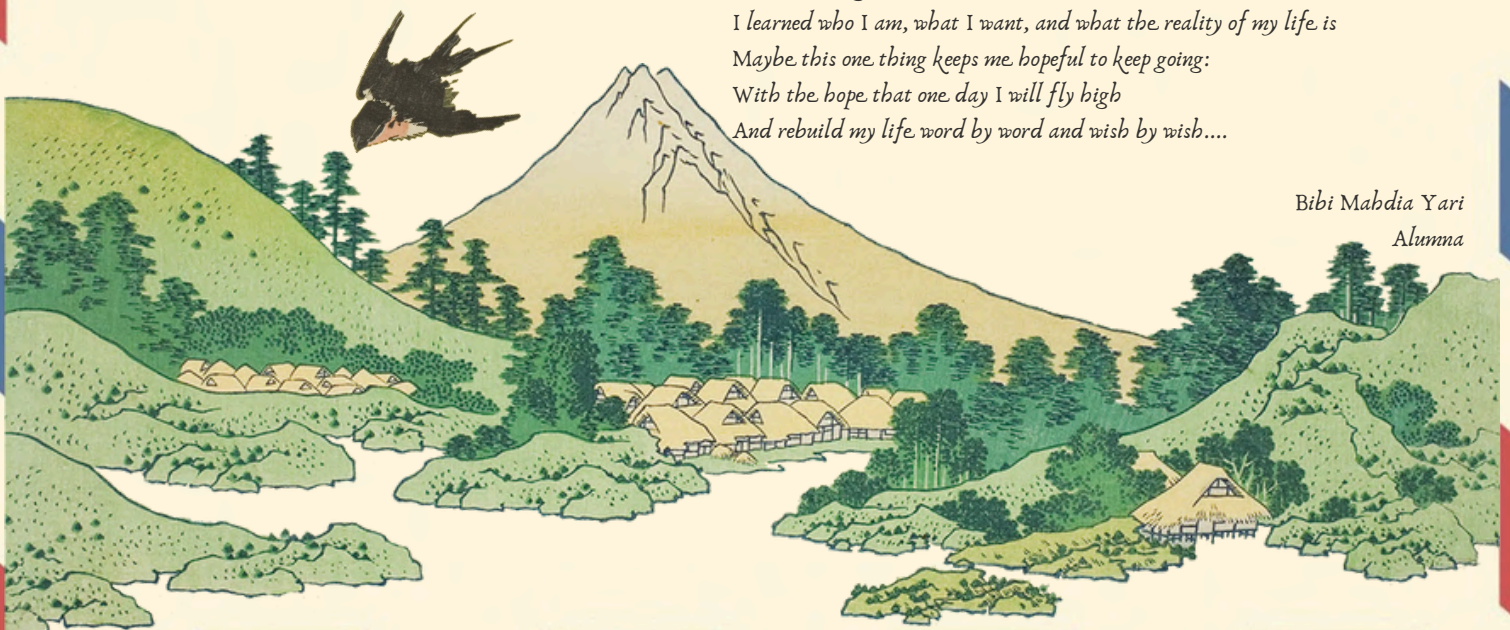
Maybe this one thing keeps me hopeful to keep going:

With the hope that one day I will fly high

And rebuild my life word by word and wish by wish....

Bibi Mahdia Yari

Alumna



From Afghanistan to Kyrgyzstan: Bringing Hope Through Education

I am currently pursuing my undergraduate degree at the American University of Central Asia (AUCA), where I am a sophomore in the department of Business Administration. Throughout my time at AUCA, I have remained committed to academic excellence and founded the Club of Creative Thinkers. I also served as the Local Committee President of AIESEC AUCA, leading student initiatives that connect youth across the globe.

Before beginning my academic and professional journey in Bishkek, I worked as a Protection Officer with the international NGO ACTED in Afghanistan, where I supported returnees and internally displaced people. As the CEO of the nonprofit organization Creative Thinkers, I also led youth development projects in collaboration with UNICEF, Ideas Beyond Borders, and ACTED. These initiatives focused on peacebuilding, youth empowerment, and women's rights, contributing to meaningful change across different communities in Afghanistan.

In 2022, together with my colleague Abdul Rahman Haidari (now a student at AUAF), I launched the Education With a Difference project in Afghanistan with generous support from Ideas Beyond Borders. We introduced ten interactive learning sessions in private schools in Mazār-e-Sharif, covering topics such as traffic safety, daily hygiene, soft skills, and positive social behavior. I witnessed how even small changes in education could transform students' confidence, knowledge, and sense of hope.

This experience inspired me to continue. Working closely with children in Afghanistan revealed to me the true power of education. It offers hope, builds confidence, and changes lives.

In the summer of 2025, I had the honor of leading the Outreach Development Program for Afghan Refugee Children in Kyrgyzstan, generously supported by Spirit of America and conducted in collaboration with AUCA. Under the guidance of my professor, Cholpon Turdalieva, our research team identified the real needs of Afghan families living in Bishkek. These insights helped us design a program that was truly responsive to the community. As a result, we organized a summer English course at AUCA for 20 Afghan refugee children. It became a safe and joyful space where the children improved their language skills, gained confidence, and discovered new talents.

A Transformative Time at AUCA

Although I have spent just over a year at AUCA, it has already been one of the most transformative experiences of my life. Studying here has given me the chance to learn from students of diverse backgrounds, exchange ideas freely, and build friendships that cross cultures and borders. AUCA is not only a university for me. It is a place where I discovered my voice, developed leadership skills, and strengthened my dream of becoming a changemaker for my community.

Jilani Sanaullah

BA-124





«Место, которое меняет нас»

Поступая в колледж, я даже не представляла, сколько нового и интересного меня ждёт. Сегодня хочу поделиться своим опытом учёбы и тем, как изменилась моя жизнь.

Учёба в колледже стала для меня новым этапом. Каждая пара была интересной и вдохновляющей, преподаватели настоящие профессионалы, у которых хотелось учиться. У нас проходило много мероприятий, и каждый день приносил что-то новое. Также я занималась волонтерством, это направление мне особенно близко, и оно подарило много ценных моментов.

Колледж дал мне не только знания и уверенность, но и выпустил нас не просто студентами, а людьми своей профессии, готовыми двигаться дальше и делиться опытом. За эти годы я обрела классных друзей и прожила один из самых ярких этапов своей жизни.

Но этим путь не закончился. После колледжа я поступила в АУЦА, и это открыло передо мной ещё больше возможностей. Появились новые двери, новые горизонты и новые люди рядом. Для меня это стало настоящим продолжением того пути, который начался в колледже. И самое классное, моя цель исполнилась: учёба в АУЦА стала реальностью.

Meken kyzy Aisana
TSI Alumna 125



A Story of the *Tea Tasting Club* in AUCA



Last autumn, when most students were still adapting to the routine of student life, one student decided to try something new as a freshman. Her name is Cholpon, and she launched the Tea Tasting Club. That is a club that has grown step by step into one of the most unique communities on campus. Now, I want to share her story, not only to introduce the club to new students but also to highlight Cholpon herself as an example of what is possible when, at first glance, a strange idea meets determination.

The Tea Tasting Club's table in Club Fair 2024 attracted me with its unusual idea. It was the beginning of their huge story. At Club Fair 2025, they continue their activity and differ with their energy, atmosphere, and presentation. There was a pleasant aroma of tea around them, beautiful tea-things that caught the attention. It was at that moment that I had the idea of interviewing Cholpon. When we spoke, she shared the doubts she faced in the beginning. "I worried if I could handle the responsibility," she told me. But she also mentioned how her sister gave her the initial inspiration for the theme, and how her mother and close friends supported her financially and mentally, encouraging her to keep moving forward. "Every time it felt too hard, the students' interest gave me back my strength," she added.

Now the Tea Tasting Club counts nearly two hundred members. Cholpon emphasized that it isn't just about numbers. Each member brings their own story, and each meeting feels different: with board games, projects, or cultural exchanges. "I wanted to show that tea is a great reason to deeply talk and engage with people, as in our Kyrgyz culture," she said, "but I want to add something new and exciting to this tea gathering."

What amazed me most was her pride not only in the club's success but in what it means for others. People have found friendships, inspiration, and new ideas through this community. Cholpon herself now collaborates with other clubs, making student life brighter and more connected.

The Tea Tasting Club is more than just a student activity. It shows that one person's idea can turn into a place where hundreds gather, share, and grow. And Cholpon, with her mix of humility and confidence, demonstrates to us that potential is already laid in every one of us.

Turgunaliyeva Nazbiye

JMC-124

