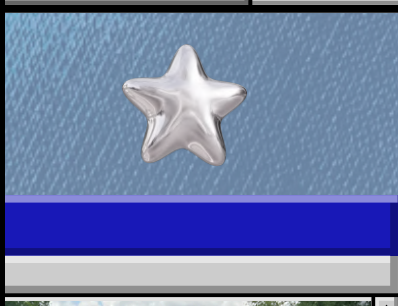
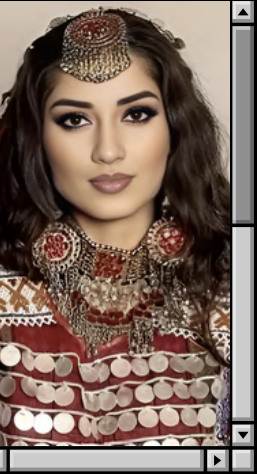
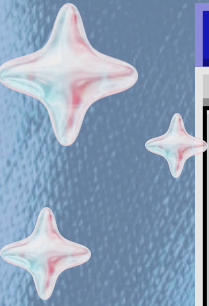


THE NEW STAR

independent student newspaper

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ENJOY YOUR HOLIDAYS!

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"AN EMPTY SCREEN IS THE SCARIEST MOMENT FOR ANY WRITER." DR. TIMOTHY O'CONNOR AND HIS HOBBY.

Dr. Timothy O'Connor is president of the American University of Central Asia (AUCA). He is known not only as the president of the university but also as the author of books in the Russian language. His work does not relate to fiction; he does not write ordinary novels, as Dr. Timothy O'Connor himself says, "I don't quite understand the word writing. It's more of a hobby for me." He is a great advocate of biographical research related to Soviet history.

His interest in literature began with an interest in the history of the Soviet Union in the 1920s. As Timothy himself mentions, "I studied the old Bolsheviks. And not the first rank, because a lot had already been written about Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin. But there is quite a bit about others, very influential and interesting personalities." It was more important for him to understand the motivation of these people: why did they become activists? Dr. Timothy O'Connor paid special attention to the study of the Soviet experiment, which has a very contradictory and ambiguous concept. The president tried to understand these experiments in his works; it was important for him to understand why the Soviet experiment had a huge impact on people. Despite the fact that this method failed, and there is no Soviet Union, however, it still has an impact on society and culture around the world. Despite the fact that Dr. Timothy was inspired by the history of the 1920s, for him, the main examples and standards of classical literature are such authors as Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Pasternak, and many others. Although he has great respect for each author, he especially singles out Dostoevsky, considering him an outstanding writer, philosopher, psychologist, and thinker, and also singles out Berdyaev, who is also similar to Dostoevsky in many ways.

Dr. Timothy, when writing his works, strives to achieve an understanding of the essence of man in the context of time. Dr. Timothy O'Connor's books are not just written biographies but deep studies of a person's personality, revealing his identity, values, prejudices, and motivations. However, is it possible to write a biography without having troubles? Unfortunately, every author faces such difficulties. As Dr. Timothy O'Connor himself says, "An empty screen is the scariest moment for any writer." Of course, the creative process does not tolerate pressure, but when deadlines are tight, you have to work intensively, sacrificing everything. At such times, it is especially important to maintain discipline and not be afraid to rewrite the work. The president believes that constant rewriting helps to improve the text. Timothy cites Mark Twain's words, "Write short," and he himself adheres to this principle. Dr. Timothy O'Connor is currently working on republishing the biography of Alexander Veniaminovich Bari, who was an entrepreneur and engineer who made a huge contribution to the development of industry. [In collaboration] His colleague, psychologist Evgenia Melnikova, is also working on this biography, which introduces important psychological aspects to the study. As Dr. Timothy O'Connor says, it was difficult to create a psychological report without Evgenia's participation, namely, to reveal the inner world of the hero.

In conclusion, Dr. Timothy O'Connor, combining the roles of president and writer, emphasizes the importance of self-discovery. He is sure that real success can be achieved when a person does what they love. In other words, the president advises students to find a vocation that brings joy and satisfaction. He believes that self-discipline and self-realization will lead a person to success and the achievement of goals.

Kamilla Ismailova
JMC-123



ИСТОРИИ ПОБЕДИТЕЛЕЙ КОНКУРСА STREAM / STORIES OF THE WINNERS OF THE STREAM COMPETITION



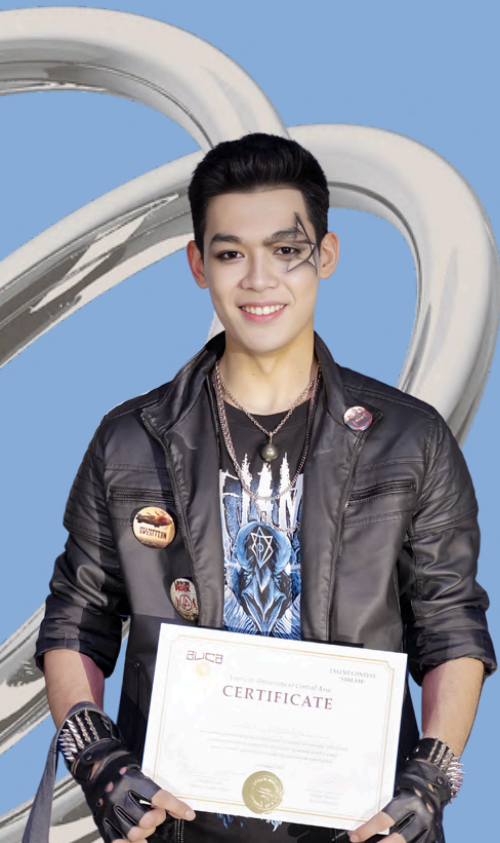
Я занимаюсь балетом восьмой год. Будучи маленьким, в балет я пришёл неосознанно и предвзято, но сейчас я остаюсь в нём с интересом и страстью. Свою конкурсную деятельность я начал в 3/7 классе (3-й год обучения балету и 7-й год в общеобразовательной школе) в YOUTH AMERICAN GRAND PRIX, где получил диплом. Это было напряжённо.

Следующим был Алматинский международный конкурс "Орлеу". Тогда я учился на первом курсе — это 6 лет обучения балету и 10 лет в общеобразовательной школе. Здесь меня наградили 3-м местом и специальным призом. Это был самый тяжёлый период подготовки, так как приходилось изучать много новых элементов. На втором курсе я участвовал в 6th ISTANBUL INTERNATIONAL BALLET COMPETITION, где мне вручили золотую медаль. Это был мой первый опыт участия в дальнем зарубежном конкурсе. Дальше был наш первый кыргызский международный конкурс артистов балета "Улуу Элес", где я занял второе место и получил специальный приз имени Ч. Базарбаева.

И, наконец, конкурс "Stream" — о нём я узнал от отца. Узнав сроки и пройдя первый тур, мы начали подготовку. Придя на разметку сцены, пришлось сильно постараться, чтобы всё уместить. После третьего тура, встав на сцену с другими талантами для объявления победителей, я был готов к любому результату, и результат оказался на моей стороне.

Спасибо за внимание.

Рахманов Адилжан



I'm 17 years old. My family consists of my parents and my five younger brothers. I am the eldest. I study at School #6 in the 11th grade. In the second half of the day, I attended the Kurmanbek Kurenkeev Music College, where I am in my first year, specializing in classical vocal performance. In 8th grade, I studied at Bilimkana, where I met my first vocal teacher, Oksana Valerievna. She encouraged me to start singing, which led me to enroll in music college.

I create my own music and songs, and I write poetry in both Russian and English. Besides that, I am also a professional track and field athlete. I am a member of the national athletics team and the second-fastest sprinter in Kyrgyzstan in the 60m and 100m races. I hold the title of "Candidate for Master of Sport."

I first heard about the STREAM Contest from my first vocal teacher, and together we spent six months preparing for it. The contest was incredibly thrilling—I was amazed by the talent of my competitors. At one point, I thought I wouldn't win; I even lost faith in my victory. But my mom supported me, and from that moment on, I was determined to succeed. With the help of my parents, my first vocal teacher, and God's guidance, I won the contest. Honestly, a second before they announced the winner, some part of me already knew that I had won.

Moving forward, I plan to enroll at AUCA, continue developing my artistic and athletic abilities, and after graduating from university, pursue my path in Italy.

Myrzaliev Baizak

MY JOURNEY IN PHOTOGRAPHY: FROM A COLD CLASSROOM IN KABUL TO THE NATURE OF KYRGYZSTAN

Photography for me has been more than a creative hobby—it has been a way of sharing my view, saving my memories, and finding my voice. As a Software Engineering student at the American University of Central Asia (AUCA), it may seem unexpected that photography plays such a big role in my life. But I started photography before I arrived in Bishkek.

It started in ninth grade at Marefat High School in Kabul. I found a friend, Hamid Sultani, in my school who was doing photography. His photography inspired me to take a photography course offered each year in my school. I remember that it was cold in winter. I went to the photography class despite missing the first day. The instructor did not allow me into the class and said that I had been replaced by another person, but after convincing him, I was allowed to participate in the class, and my photography journey started from there. I didn't own a camera, but the school lent us one. I remember the nervous excitement of taking my first photo in the snowy schoolyard. That moment was small, but it changed everything.

In 2021, when the Taliban took over Afghanistan, my family and I fled to Pakistan. After six months there, I moved to Kyrgyzstan to begin my studies at AUCA. Starting over wasn't easy. I met a new place, new people, and a new culture without knowing the language. The first year was the most difficult for me to engage in this environment. After two years of study, I started traveling around Kyrgyzstan, and my journey truly began. When I started, there were many major problems: financial hardship, the cost of photography equipment, and, most of all, the language barrier. But with AUCA's scholarship, though intended for education, my photography journey became easier.

Now, I travel across Kyrgyzstan, sharing videos and photos on my photography Instagram account. I'm proud to be an ambassador for Trekking Union KG and Mountain Magic Tours, using my lens to show the beauty of this country. Looking back, I see how one missed class, one borrowed camera, and one photo in a snowy schoolyard set everything into motion. I'm grateful to AUCA for giving me the chance to start again, to my mentors and friends who encouraged me, and to the younger version of myself who kept going. My journey isn't finished, but each time I take a photo, I'm reminded of how far I've come and how much more I hope to share.

Alisina Jawid
SFW-124



ANTHROPOLOGY STUDENTS' FIELDWORK IN ISTANBUL



Practice is one of the main contributions to professional development. Theory without practice is not that valuable. I have experienced and realized it by myself. Since I am an Anthropology student, I have to learn and study different cultures and different people by contacting them directly. Therefore, I and my group had a trip to Istanbul as part of one of our courses. In my opinion, it was a precious experience because I was able to leave my comfort zone and open up to a whole new world. Every student had their own topic, and mine was about Turkish traditional music and the impact of tourism on it. I visited Turkish stores with musical instruments to conduct interviews. I was meeting interesting musicians and people in general. Though it was a bit hard to adapt to a new environment, it was a great practice and challenge for my skills. Obviously, not everything was so great and I have met various people, but every experience is an experience and we have to learn from it. In the end, I was able to get valuable information for my research and got to know so many different and interesting people.

Tortaev Ermakhan
ANTH-124

The main mission of our trip was to dive into a totally different context, culture, and language to develop practical skills in ethnographic research and get a taste of what and how it is. In this 7-day trip, I have gotten a close view of the practical work of ethnographic anthropologists. During the process of gaining information for our research topics through participant observations and interviews in a different country, we learned a lot of nuances and faced a lot of challenges. Nevertheless, we overcame them with the courage of curious learners of the world. With the guidance of our professors, we learned how to properly interact with and take interviews from people, how to analyze the information, and how to ask the right questions in order to get valuable, high-quality answers. We delved into local life as much as time could afford.

Istanbul itself is very brilliant, such a vibrant and amazingly beautiful city, but what I liked even more there is the people. We took interviews from diverse people: locals, tourists, elders, youth, etc. Their stories, opinions, perspectives, and values are what truly made this week in Istanbul unforgettable. I am very grateful to our university for giving me such opportunities for development and skill learning.

Zhamankulova Myrzagul
ANTH-123

Our trip to Istanbul in March of this year was our first anthropological trip, which became a kind of initiation for us. As future ethnographers and anthropologists, we had to explore a culture that was new to us and gain experience in conducting ethnographic research. I was surprised by the smoking culture in Istanbul and how it is strikingly different from what we are used to seeing in our city. From the quiet courtyards of the Bulgur Palace to the lively cafes near the Blue Mosque, I observed how deeply smoking has entered into everyday life, whether it's young people chatting over a cup of tea or workers taking breaks for a smoke. Conversations with local residents have revealed cultural and generational factors that support this habit. Through ethnographic notes and interviews, I have gained a wealth of information about the gaps between politics and practice, as well as society's tolerance of smoking in public places. This trip not only deepened my understanding of the basics of anthropology but also gave me direct experience in field research.

Gulnur Urmat Kyzy
ANTH-124



CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE



I am a freshman student in the Psychology department. I want to share my cultural and educational experience in Germany. I graduated from school in 2022 and wanted to study abroad. So my parents advised me to study in Germany. I visited 4 countries in Europe and also studied at Studienkolleg (it is a foundation year in Germany in the economics department) in the German language. I met with a lot of people, tried German food, and also discovered a new culture. It was a really interesting experience. But after a year of studying, I came back to my home country. But why did I come back?

The first reason is that I wanted to change my department, but also I realized that the American system of education is much more interesting than in Germany (but it is just my experience, so for me, it is more comfortable to study in English). So there are also a lot of advantages that I noticed at AUCA. There are a lot of different exchange programs, a high quality of education, and the best-supporting community that can always help you. Through this incredible first year, I learned a lot of interesting things, such as writing academic essays, expressing my own opinion in English, and also enjoying studying at university. I met a lot of interesting people and made friends.

I plan to study as an exchange student in the USA, so AUCA is a great opportunity for me to improve my skills and language and develop in different ways. All the meetings and classes that we have in the university help us to stay strong and develop inner strength, self-belief, and aspiration for a better future. There are a lot of different club activities for every taste, so you can be sure that you will find your own. The supporting community is really strong, and there are counseling services when we have midterm exams, but also the atmosphere of the AUCA is inspiring. So I could strongly say that I didn't regret choosing AUCA as the university and my lovely department.

Now I also work as a German and English tutor and feel how AUCA made a contribution to my development as a good specialist through the educational system and developing networking skills.

Psychology helped me to understand people and their pain and wishes more clearly and realize how I can help people. I also want to mention the minor system in AUCA, which provides a great opportunity to try yourself in another field where you have interests, and I think it is really good that we have this university in Kyrgyzstan, which can show us a small piece of the American dream and help to achieve it.

Venera Tagaeva
PSY-124



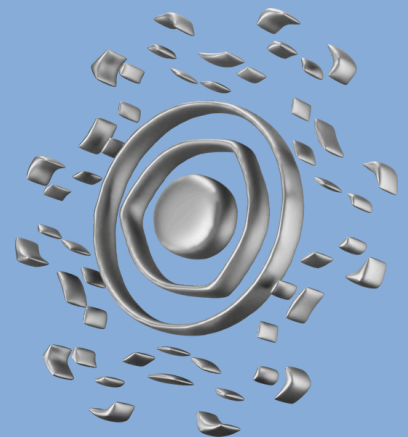
WONDERS OF DOING ETHNOGRAPHY

During the past two years, as a graduate student in the Anthropology Department, I had the pleasure of doing two ethnographic research projects: one among Afghan (Pamir) Kyrgyz in Taldy-Suu village in the Alay valley of the Osh region and a second among Afghan migrants in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. I want to confess that writing about ethnography—the method of sociocultural inquiry highly used by anthropologists and many other social scientists—is difficult; however, in the context of this essay, I would like to share two interesting facts about ethnography based on my personal experiences.

It was a sunny, beautiful day in August of 2024. The Alay region in the foothills of the Pamir Mountains in southern Kyrgyzstan was a bit cold. I had a little stress, and I should have, as it was my first day to conduct my ethnographic research among Afghan Kyrgyz in Taldy-Suu village. We—me, my ethnographic research professor, and one of my classmates—arrived there around 10:00 AM in the morning. Some Afghan Kyrgyz men were gathered in front of their house and as the taxi stopped and I approached them and started talking with them in the Dari language, I vividly noticed the brightness in their eyes and how amazed they were to be speaking Dari after 7 years, as they had been resettled by the Kyrgyz Republic since 2017. As if we had known each other for years. Despite the fact that building rapport in field research is foundational, challenging, and time-consuming, it went so smoothly for me to make the necessary trust for further inquiry. Saying this to confidently elaborate that doing ethnography without understanding the language of the research community is impossible, as ethnography is about channeling the lived experiences of people across time and space, and it's not something you could do through surveying.

It is around one week and I am talking with an Afghan small business owner to interview him. Finally, after initial trust, we specified a time to meet. Fully prepared, I got a taxi and drove toward his workplace somewhere on the outskirts of Bishkek city; it took around 1 hour and 500 soms to get there. As I arrived, I found a large used auto shop with employees working extensively. After waiting for half an hour, my interviewee arrived. We had an interesting start; he suggested tea and we went to his small office. I explained the whole research project's objectives and as we were supposed to start the interview, some customers called him from outside. He told me to wait for him. I waited for another half an hour as he returned a bit nervous and outrageous and told me to start. I opened the recorder and told him that I would record him, as it is important for me to have a solid interview. The matter of recording became so irritating that he unexpectedly withdrew from the interview and suggested I leave his workplace. Regardless of requesting any further questions, I calmly collected my belongings, directed the talks to other topics, and diplomatically managed the situation in a way that he should not feel bad, as he did not cooperate with me. We shook hands politely and I left him. Saying that ethnography is about people, and people are different, it is a plus point to be aware of it and see things differently and respect differences. Despite the fact that I could not interview this person, it raised the question, "Why?" that later on laid the foundation of my research, analysis, and findings. In addition, ethnography is full of adventures, meeting new people, visiting new areas, learning about new cultures, testing food, realizing surprising facts, facing yourself in the mirror of others, and finally developing your narrative of a social phenomenon.

Farhad Ehsani
MA-ANTH



FROM AFGHANISTAN TO AUCA: A JOURNEY OF GROWTH AND CONNECTION

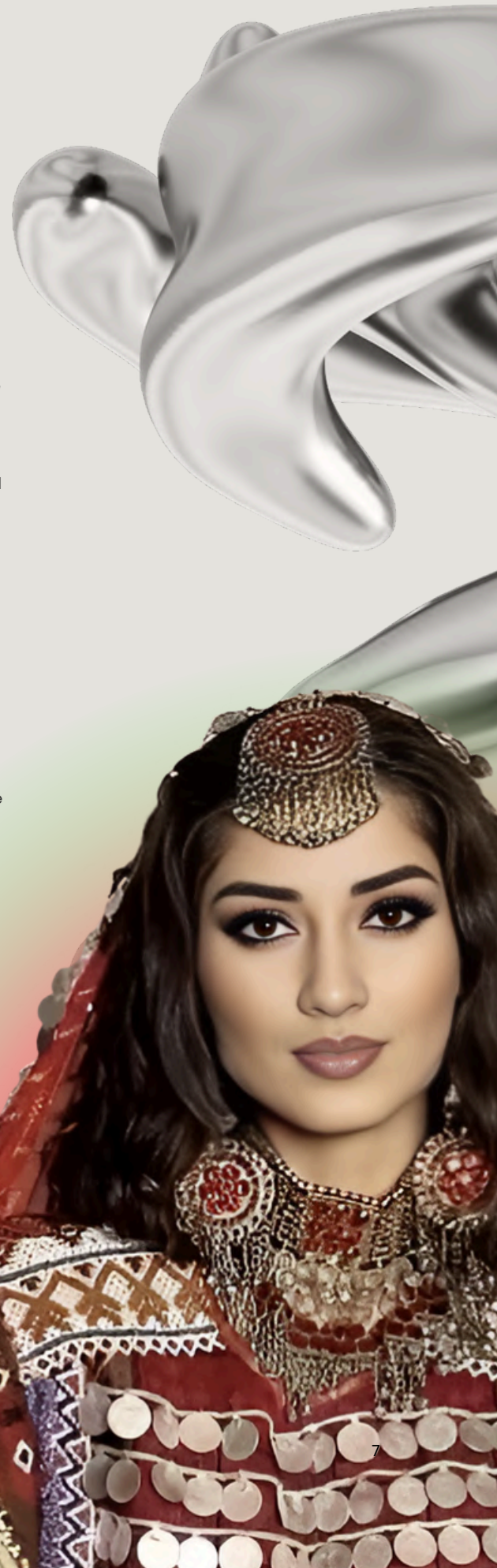


Reflecting on four years of unforgettable memories in just one paragraph feels like a challenge, yet the impact of my journey as an Afghan girl at AUCA has been so profound that it's worth trying to capture. When I first arrived in Kyrgyzstan, I met Afghan girls from different tribes and ethnic groups, each one strong and resilient in her own way. Growing up in Afghanistan, we rarely had the chance to travel and experience the richness of our diverse cultures. Afghan girls who, like me, had dreams of pursuing education but were held back by the limitations of living in a country torn by conflict. These were girls from different tribes, ethnic groups, and backgrounds, yet they shared a common strength and determination. It was a reminder of the resilience that has always been ingrained in Afghan women, even when we were separated from the rest of the world, confined to the borders of our own country, unable to experience the broader diversity of cultures and histories. But at AUCA, I was introduced to students from all over, with different backgrounds, worldviews, and experiences. I saw firsthand how diversity could become a source of strength. I had the opportunity to learn from students with backgrounds I had never even imagined—people from Central Asia, Europe, the USA, and beyond. Through interactions with classmates from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and other regions, I was introduced to perspectives that challenged my own worldview, helping me grow and expand my understanding of the world.

One of the most memorable experiences was AUCA's Diversity Week, an event that celebrated the beauty of each ethnic group and its culture. During AUCA's Diversity Week, I was amazed to learn how each ethnic group presented and celebrated its culture and how we found commonalities despite our differences. Watching my peers share their traditions, art, and values, I realized how much we have in common despite our differences. We speak different languages, wear different clothes, and follow different customs, but at our core, we all share the human experience. It was at AUCA that I truly learned the value of diversity, something I never fully grasped in Afghanistan. I'll forever be grateful to AUCA for providing us with the opportunity to learn from each other and grow together.

One of the most meaningful experiences was seeing how Central Asians, Afghans, and Iranians celebrate Nawruz, the Solar New Year. This year, though I wasn't in Kyrgyzstan to celebrate, I am living in the United States, participating in the Kurdish Nawruz celebration. The similarities were striking—it felt like a reunion with my AUCA family. The warmth, the joy, and the sense of connection that came with celebrating together reminded me of AUCA and the power of shared traditions. Nawruz, no matter where we are, has always been a celebration of unity, showing how our cultures, though distinct, are intricately woven together by our shared humanity.

Hafasa Yousufzai
Senior Student ICP-121





FROM NEWCOMER TO GRADUATE: MY TRANSFORMATIVE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE AT TSI

Every time I see the kids and their parents stepping over the threshold of the TSI, I remember myself three years ago, when I also came to college with my dad.

Looking back, I see how much I have grown, how my thinking, outlook on life, attitude to things, and social circle have changed. I remember that Nastya, who was already in the ninth grade, understood that she wanted to change her life because school did not provide sufficient opportunities to realize her potential. And so, having entered college, I seemed to have opened the doors of opportunities that had been following me for three years.

Studying at TSI not only gave me the opportunity to reveal my potential but also introduced me to cool people, gave me wonderful life experiences, and taught me to be flexible and adaptive.

Studying in the New Entrepreneurship and Human Intelligence program, I not only received a foundation in business but also learned the main lesson for myself – learn to learn. Studying at TSI, like the adult world, is a huge opportunity, but you have to learn it yourself, be able to independently study what you didn't know before, figure it out, and do it. It may not be perfect, and the work may not be done at a professional level, but you have gone through this path on your own and gained experience and knowledge. This skill helped me a lot in the real world when, while working at Accelerate Prosperity as a summer intern in the summer of 2024, I learned new skills, dealing with the unknown on my own.

The main thing that an applicant should learn for themselves is that when choosing to study at TSI, you need to be ready to work and invest in yourself and your development, not be afraid to offer new ideas, go against popular opinion, stand your ground, and be confident in yourself and your abilities.

I'm graduating in a few months. I can't even believe that three years have already passed. It seems like only yesterday I visited TSI for the first time, and now I'm graduating soon. It was a moderately difficult but very interesting time when you grew up, understood yourself and what you want from life and college, and seeing you gave you directions in which you developed and found yourself. The main thing is not to be afraid to try, choose difficult tasks for yourself, and express yourself.

Krivova Anastasiia
EHI-2-22





HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE NGA COMMUNITY



NGA Team Takes Second Place at AUCA Brain Ring 2025

This year's AUCA Brain Ring competition was as exciting as ever, and the New Generation Academy was proudly represented by two teams: "Freedom" and "Шарим, но не всегда."

While the team "Freedom" unfortunately exited the competition in the first round, the team "Шарим, но не всегда" made it all the way to the final round. After a tough and intense battle, they secured second place, marking the third time NGA has taken the runner-up position in the last three years of participating in Brain Ring.

NGA Scholarship Program

The New Generation Academy (NGA) is still accepting applications for its fully funded scholarship program!

Each year, NGA offers 25 scholarships to talented and motivated high school graduates from across Kyrgyzstan, giving them the opportunity to study free of charge in a supportive and dynamic academic environment. The program is designed to empower youth from all regions of the country and help them unlock their full potential through quality education and personal development.

NGA Alumnus Accepted to Stanford University

Uluk's achievement is a testament to his hard work, perseverance, and the strong foundation he built during his time at NGA. His journey continues to inspire current students and alumni alike, proving that with dedication and ambition, anything is possible.

Congratulations, Uluk! The entire NGA community is cheering you on as you take this exciting next step.

Ruslan Musalimov

NGA Outreach and Student Coordinator



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