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A place of light, of liberty, and learning

Knowledge is the power, and education is of great importance for economic and social development. Universities play an important role in the production of highly skilled workforce and providing of research output to meet various economic needs. They equip individuals with the advanced knowledge and skills necessary for positions of responsibility in business, government and other professions.

To provide future success for their students, universities are adapting their curricula to the requirements of the new economy and present-day labor markets. Modern universities are attempting to move away from transmission of theoretical and practical knowledge to putting more emphasis on applicability of transmitted knowledge and the possibility of its transferability to various situations and contexts. Furthermore, universities strive to incorporate skills, attitudes and other individual aptitudes into their educational programs in order to build foundation for a competent, professional practice.

Many universities in Kazakhstan are offering a growing number of degrees taught in English.

Among them is Kazakh-American University (KAU) which represents a joint project between Kazakhstan and the USA. In 2017 KAU will celebrate 20 years since the day of its establishment.

KAU has been actively introducing various educational modifications for their students. Starting from 1997, it was first among other universities to introduce a concept of teaching in three languages, practicing defense of academic thesis in English, use of student handouts and American letter grading system.

Now, KAU is actively participating in the implementation of governmental objectives of introducing multilingualism. It is directed on strengthening the quality of language skills among specialists with higher and graduate education. For more than 19 years all disciplines in KAU were partially taught in English. The university offers 9 undergraduate programs in Journalism; International Relations; Translation; Radio, Electronics and communications; Tourism; Accounting; Finance; Economy; Law. KAU offers two Master's programs in Management and Business Administration.

Moreover, according to the principles of Bologna Declaration, KAU works in partnership with international universities and offers dual diploma programs for Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Their partners include universities of USA, Italy, Spain, Canada, North Korea, Turkey, Malaysia. After three years of studying in the "A" category KAU students have an opportunity to continue

their education abroad. After graduation these students receive a foreign university degree. When they return to Kazakhstan they make up the difference in disciplines and receive a Kazakhstani Bachelor's degree.

High standards of education in KAU have been noted by numerous international organizations working in Kazakhstan. Currently, KAU has established long lasting partnerships with IREX, ACCELS, and British Council. In the last five years KAU has become the only university in the CIS region to be accepted into Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Members of this association include more than 1100 educational institutions, colleges and universities including American University, Eastern Connecticut State University, George Mason University, Berkeley College, Harvard University and etc. It is fortunate for KAU to be acknowledged at an international level at such a young age. Connecticut University (127 years) is one of the youngest American universities among members of AAC&U and houses in itself more than 70 thousand students.

KAU places high demands on itself and aspires to offer a comprehensive education for all levels. In 1998 KAU opened an elementary school. Education at KAU School includes primary, secondary and post-secondary levels. Classes in primary, secondary levels are taught in Russian and Kazakh. However, classes in the post-secondary level are divided into three disciplinary directions: scientific and technical, economic and humanitarian and are taught solely in English.

Work of KAU in fields of international co-operation, intercultural dialogue and enhancing quality education was acknowledged in 2013 when it was accepted as a member of UNESCO associated schools. UNESCO Associated Schools, is a global network of 10,000 educational institutions in 181 countries. Only 21 of 7900 elementary schools in Kazakhstan were offered membership.

In 1999 KAU has included in its structure Almaty College of Communication. It is one of the oldest universities in Kazakhstan and was first founded in 1930. During its 87 years of work it had given degrees to more than 30 thousand specialists and had proven its reputation for educating professionals in operating of communications.

Students of KAU are actively involved in out of class activities. These include sports events, competitions, round tables, leadership training workshops, English Club, essay contests, shooting video contests and other. Last November students of economic and finance specialties took part in National Bank essay contest. Every year KAU students regularly become winners of Republican and international competitions in different fields. Every term KAU organizes academic conferences for students and academicians, as well as for professors and research experts, where as a tradition KAU students and teaching staff share their research findings and views, and guests from other Universities present their papers.

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As it was noted by Benjamin Franklin: “A university should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning”. Over the years Kazakh-American University has proven its close portrayal of this idea. It has become a place where given knowledge is not only theoretical but practical, where teachers and students work closely together to effectively exchange ideas, where innovation and creative thought are valued and encouraged.