The New Student Intellectual Games Club
ADA Student Life: "Strictness vs Benevolence"
Cultural Exchange: "Make Every Minute Count"
Presenting the New Undergraduate Student Government
Poem

Inspiration's lost within,
No more stories, they're a sin
of past; delusional I was
to believe in a greater force.
Motivation left me stranded
on an island of pure hatred.
No more poems, none at all -
Forgotten picture on my wall.
Mixed emotions: anger, hurt-
Combine into what we call 'dirt'.
No more pictures, no more smiles -
What good they bring to good that dies?
Forgiveness never crossed my mind,
For I have never been so kind.
Benevolent I am, indeed -
It's just the evil people breed.
They are the source of life on earth
and ironically its curse.
So hear me out, my inspiration!
Please bear some hope inside our nation.
Return to those you left behind,
me being one of their kind.

By Nara Jamalova
“The new league is expected to begin soon. This time we’ll start from the very first league round so that competition with teams of other universities would be more exciting” – shared Konul Gurbanli, who is one of the founders of the ADA Intellectual Games Club.

Establishing the Intellectual Games club in April 2015, Ilkin Umarov and Konul Gurbanli are the first who brought the “What? Where? When?” competition to ADA university. Now the team is larger than that, including Davud Samadov, Maya Hajizade and Sebuhi Bakhshiyev as well as Sevinj Jafarli, who is helping to organize the games.

“Almost all universities in Azerbaijan have an intellectual games club, which is responsible for organizing internal competitions as well as representing the university in country-wide championships”, said a member of the club. “But before our club, no such one was established at ADA, and consequently this affected the performance of ADA teams in different championships with all universities.”

The main goal of The Intellectual Games Club is to establish a society of intellectuals at ADA, representing the university in different competitions. Moreover, such intellectual games encourage students to spend their leisure time learning, while having fun.

Since it has been found, the club organized the “What? Where? When?” synchronic league of 2015 at ADA with other universities. The games took place each week on Saturday since October 2015. The last competition in December was won by the team “Masters”, one of our own ADA University teams.

“Of course, we, as a team, feel great about this achievement and it gave us motivation to do more. Before starting these competitions we didn’t know that we have so many talented people at ADA and so many students who are interested in the intellectual games” said Konul, sharing her impressions about the victory.

“We feel very proud that we have such mates in our university, and proud that we can do something to help them carry their talent even further and compete with other teams from different universities.”

The first synchronic league held at ADA brought not only high achievements for both the university and the club, but also got more students interested, so this year the organizers plan to add some new intellectual games besides the synchronic league.
To What Extent: Strictness vs Benevolence

By Jakub Csabay

ADA as every young community is still in the process of developing its own rules and their standardized implementation, balancing between strictness and benevolence. While a recent move towards standardization in the Department of Foreign Languages has clearly been a positive impulse, a contrary example can be almost strictly standardized delay in the book allowance payment to International Fellowship students, which represents rather negative side of "benevolence" at ADA. Fortunately, there have not been many cases related to the Student Code of Conduct, yet a while ago one such case appeared.

Recently, one ADA student was sentenced to suspension from ADA for one semester and to compensation of damage for writing a vulgarism on a piece of furniture at ADA University. While the second part of the punishment is very sensible and well-grounded in the Student Code of Conduct, the first part is questionable. Certainly, the boy is neither Jean Valjean as his intention was clearly not to feed hungry children of his sister nor does his case have potential to be an inspiration for some future movie such as “ADA Redemption”. Instead, in my understanding, it seems like a very unusual way of self-promotion stemming from boredom, immaturity and childishness; an action with very unfortunate consequences.

Understandably, ADA wanted to make an example of this case in order to discourage other potential “home-made artists” with such degree of creativity, which is very likely to be a successful strategy. Furthermore, ADA, in pursuit of educating the future of Azerbaijan, rightly believes that its students should be mature enough to avoid such “secondary school stupidities” and it is clearly determined to achieve this goal. However, there is another side to consider, too.

The strict approach ADA has taken can have a negative impact on personal and educational development of the student for he will be excluded from the educational process and environment for one semester, which is a very long time ADA could have used to educate him. Therefore, in my opinion, some form of more lenient punishment like community work at ADA could have been more practical, though such option is not present in ADA’s Code of Conduct for the time being. Moreover, if it had really been a youthful indiscretion that had driven this boy to commit to such an act, application of some degree of clemency could have been useful, especially given the fact that one act like this cannot possibly ruin ADA’s reputation, plus a bit of benevolence may teach a lesson too.

Time will surely show which approach, strict or benevolent, suits ADA best. Strictness is often considered to be more professional but without at least a certain degree of benevolence a policy loses its human side. ADA as a relatively small community has still time and space to develop the best possible combination of these two approaches.
I remember that moment well. It was my first day in Lithuania and my student exchange program had just started. Under heavy rain we were shown around Kaunas. Someone asked me if I will later on ask for an extension of my exchange program. I told him that I will have only one year and a half left to spend at ADA. Thus, I will not do it. I was so confident with my answer. I had already spent three years at ADA and run several student projects and initiatives, which were successful according to people’s judgement. I was getting highly encouraged by such feedback. I knew a lot of people at ADA and we were in good relations, yet, I did not have any close friends. Although, I would feel the gap created by the absence of true friends, for me, at the time finding such ones was not really a priority.

In the previous edition of ADA Student Digest, Jakub Csabay, an exchange student at ADA published an article focusing on the importance of communication among students at ADA. He particularly emphasized the lack of communication that exists among foreign and local students. Considering the importance of the issue raised, I decided to present a local perspective on the issue.

"MAKE EVERY MINUTE COUNT"

Unfortunately, lack of communication is not only present among foreign and local students as two different groups, but it also exists among local ones. ADA University presents a lot of opportunities to its students, especially to the local ones, as it is one of the most prestigious institutions in the country. I believe the way the prestige of ADA is reflected on local students is one of the reasons why they do not form enough appreciation of communication or dedication to making new friends. From my observations, I think, many local students try to fit into the prestige of ADA and in this way, what is being missed is sincere and friendly communication. I observe that, at ADA, many of us as local students have the complex of “being someone important” or “more important”. I believe this complex (or “competition”) discourages us from taking enough time for one another to communicate and benefit from each other’s experience and thoughts.

I believe, in the case of many local students at ADA, communication and discovering different minds and cultures are not a priority. The foreign student perspective in the previous edition has shown that such a lack of communication is felt by foreign students as well. Additionally, when talking to foreign students, I realize that a proper integration process into the society is still lacking. Although here the responsibility lies upon their shoulders, too.

In one single minute, so many things happen at the same time in this city: A driver does not stop in the traffic light and risks the life of a passenger. An actress feels excited or nervous as she is going to perform on the stage in less than a minute. Someone thinks of leaving this country after not getting into the metro that she/he was waiting for. A mind thinks of an idea...
that will be very valuable in the far future. A student asks the professor to give him/her several more points so that he/she can get a scholarship.

There are a lot of opportunities. The choice is ours. The way we form our surrounding is also our responsibility. That is why I encourage our foreign students to keep discovering as much as they can so that their experience is valuable.

When I went for an exchange program, I had set up a different priority for myself. In Lithuania, I had many friends: Lithuanians, Azerbajianis and other foreigners. It was a new experience, and I was eager to learn and discover. I dedicated myself to discover Lithuania, a new culture, a new mindset in order to also learn more about myself.

I remember that moment well. It was one of the first days just after coming back to Azerbaijan. I was in the Dean’s office to convince him to prolong my program in Lithuania. When he asked me why I wanted to do so, I told him that I will have one year left at ADA anyways. I was so confident with my answer.

By Mullah Nasruddin

It is just a couple of days before the deadline and a couple of students are studying together in an empty classroom. The task seems tough enough so the students interact. Amongst them, there is one student called “the International”. Most of the students are speaking the local language, the International sitting amongst them. Words in nicely built English constructions are thrown about, aiming to put the International at ease so that he may not feel detached from the discussion. Actually, this is going to be discovered briefly.

A student in the back row, who has been talking to her friend in the local language, suddenly asks: “Niyə Azərbaycanca danışmışın?” (“Why don’t you speak Azerbaijani?”).

The respondent to this somewhat awkward question is about to accomplish a rather challenging mission. On the one hand, he wants to explain to his friend in the back that he cannot or does not want to switch to the local language (due to reasons including, but not limited to: his kind Azerbaijani heart, having a relatively high degree of understanding of time and space around him and having been interacting with the International for a while).

The Silent Hero

On the other hand, as a matter of - let’s say - courtesy, he is not willing to say all this out loud. What is obvious at this point is that he is putting much effort to cover up the awkwardness of the question. With his firm intention to do so, he has now turned red, probably experiencing a higher rate of heartbeat and a shorter time interval in his breathing. Finally taking action, he makes an attempt to test his “pantomime” skills.

He looks to the back while pointing at the International. All of this was done in silence amongst the three of them. Although the International is not actually facing the action, he manages to witness it from a ninety-degree angle.

A couple of seconds later, three people feel relief. One of them is the student in the back who got an answer to the awkward question. The second one is our Silent Hero who managed to control the situation. The third person - the no-longer-isolated International - is filled with joy and happiness. He looks gently at the silent hero sitting next to him and, with a great smile, says “thank you”.

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"Leadership is an action, not a position"

Interview by Sabira Imrani

This is the motto of the new student government; and it matches with upcoming projects: full of action and new experience!

The winners of the elections at ADA were glad to give an interview, sharing their thoughts and feelings and discussing their plans for this year.

Many congratulations on winning! The motto of the team is so exciting, how did you come up with this?

Tahir Qurbanli, The President of Student Government: The idea was suggested by Anar Soltan. This motto wonderfully expresses that “leader” is not just a fancy word, but rather that being in the position of a leader means having a huge burden on your shoulders, indeed.

Nurlan Ilyas, representative of SITE: Due to problems, caused by disorientation amongst our students, there is a demand for someone, who would respond to their academic problems immediately. However, this job is pretty tough and difficult, it takes a lot of energy, attention, care and responsibility. So, I understood that actually a leader is the one, who sacrifices himself and his own interests and makes sure that everything is ok with students.

That is why leadership is an action, not a position!

Helping students to be heard and problems to be resolved, I agree, is probably a difficult and tough job, but you weren’t afraid and ran for election. What motivates you to take such responsibility?

Aynur Jafarova, representative of BSE: The idea itself that we would work for whole BSE class inspired us. We knew that it would not be that easy, yet, we were sure that it would be a great experience for us. This motivated us to join the elections.

Ismayil Zeynalli, representative of BAPA: Two reasons motivate me a lot. Firstly, I want to help people as much as I can. On a daily basis I interact with the social environment that is ADA family, and that’s where I want to help. Secondly, my friends and some BAPA students recommended me to apply as a candidate and I hope they did it not only because of our friendship (laughing), but because I can be better as part of the council which makes me believe in myself and in Gulnar more than everyone.

Nazrin Mammadova, BBA representative: I’m always interested in various projects, whether it be social, academic or around my own interests. So far, I have run three different projects under the names “Arts for Orphans”, “Project L against CBC”, and “Sigma”. The purpose of those projects was certainly to emphasize the importance of ongoing issues related to children in our society. When it comes to my achievements, all my work was appreciated by our university and others, but most importantly, we, as a team, reached the hearts of children and made them think about their future, keeping optimism and lifted them up - and, that was a SUCCESS! On May 1, 2015 we, as a team of “Sigma”, were rewarded with Haji Zeynalabdin Tagiyev Award, and donated all the received funds to our upcoming projects.

Gulnar Dadashova, BAPA representative: Of course. I always liked to help people, liked to solve problems of students, and wanted to make the learning process more interesting with the help of student clubs, projects, and competitions. All this became one part of me, of my life and now...
I can’t get rid of it, don’t want to (laughing). Now as a representative of BAPA I do believe that I will be able to solve our problems because I know our problems, I know our BAPA students and how to communicate with them.

Then taking responsibility and facing challenges should not be something scary for your team. However, what were your first feelings, when voting results were announced?

Ilkin Umarov, representative of General Education: During the election period, in the very beginning, I was completely sure of our victory. However, day by day I started to think that we are going to lose this competition, because our opponent team worked really hard. Even on the last day, I thought we had already lost: but the results were completely different. And when our victory was announced, I was surprised: I didn't expect that kind of victory.

Ikram Nesirov, representative of EAPP: I will never forget that situation. It is a magnificent feeling to share your happiness with your friends, people who voted for you, and especially with my best friend Mahammad.

And now, that you are in power, it is interesting for all us: What projects are you working on? What should we expect this year?

Ulvi Shiraliyev, representative of BAIS: Before giving brief information about the upcoming projects, I would like to mention that BAIS and BAPA councilors will be working together as representative body of SPIA. One of the projects we are going to focus on is the monthly congress for all SPIA students. This is going to be a great platform for the students to share their ideas or problems with us. So, we will know about their needs and find a solution as their councilors. This congress is going to be first-ever experience not only in SPIA, but also for ADA University. So, stay tuned for this great event and for more projects, which we will put all our effort in.

Altun Baratli, representative of SITE: One of the projects, we are working on is called “Exchangeable”. We want to increase the number of exchange universities. We already came to an agreement to have Exchange Programs with Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), Kazakh-British Technical University (KBTU), Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology (UNIST), Nazarbayev University, and Singapore University of Technology. Another project is related with study trips: “Study Trip to Silicon Valley” - this is the first study trip special for SITE students! The third project is C.A.S.P (Comitee of Academic and Social problems). This network will help staff to understand students better and students will have the chance to express their concerns at any time they want.

Nazrin Abbaszade, representative of BBA: BBA and BSE councilors will be representing the School of Business, so on some projects we will be working on together. We have one grand project, which will take a long time and a lot of effort to realize. But it worth that: it will have a great impact on ADA’s students and their future careers. Another project we are working on is the Business Case Competition. It was held before, but the difference and importance is that we want to take the winner team to Honk Kong to participate in the International Business Case Competition. There are other small and big projects, which we will release throughout this year. We tried to be precise with projects and work hard on them. Hopefully, the students will appreciate them.

Mehemmed Memmedzade, representative of EAPP: Upcoming projects are National Day and Distant Education... all others I will keep as a secret, let us surprise too! There are also some projects we’re still working on. Anyways, as soon as it will be ready to announce, we will inform you. Just follow the news!

Natiq Aleskerli, Vice President: Firstly, we have already finished our “Students for Students” project, which was for EAPP students. It helped students from A group to pass for General Education. Also, the event “ADA Got Talent” was organized by the Bermud Group (Natiq is a member of the Bermud Group). And for sure events such as Football tournaments, Trips, Parties, Economic conferences, Internships, Trial exams before Final for EAPP students, and UniGotTalent projects are also included in our future plans. Soon, we, members of USG, will inform you about our projects in more detail.