

Embracing New Horizons: An International Student's Journey of Growth at ASU Lake Havasu

By Akbota Bakyt



Celebrating a birthday together

My name is Akbota Bakyt, and I am an international student from Kazakhstan, studying Biology on a pre-med track at ASU Lake Havasu. The journey from my homeland, known for its diverse culture and distinct seasons, to the heat of Arizona was a leap into the unknown. At 17, the thought of stepping into a foreign land alone was daunting. Airports, with their bustling crowds, were intimidating, and the scorching heat upon arrival was a stark reminder of the new reality I was about to face.

Despite the overwhelming sense of being in a different world - where the food, the people, and even the air felt alien - there was an underlying current of excitement. ASU's warm welcome for freshmen dissolved my initial fears. I found myself engaging in conversations effortlessly, starting conversations, and introducing myself, something that was out of character for me back home. The faculty and students were incredibly supportive, making the transition smoother than I had anticipated. I was

particularly glad to meet so many great professors and faculty members, engaging with them in classes and volunteering activities. Their guidance and encouragement significantly enriched my experience.

However, the thrill of independence quickly gave way to homesickness as I missed the comfort of homemade meals, the presence of my family, and the celebrations with friends. The digital smiles through the screen during family gatherings were bittersweet reminders of the distance separating us. There were moments I feared they would start forgetting me.

Yet, ASU Lake Havasu became a second home, thanks to the bonds formed with friends from across the globe. Despite our diverse backgrounds, we found unity and became a family away from home. We celebrate events together, travel together, and help each other when in need. Learning about different cultures and sharing my own enriched my experience, making the unfamiliar familiar.

The journey has been a rite of passage into adulthood, filled with challenges but also with shared goals and aspirations, to study and build our future. The airport that once seemed intimidating now feels like a gateway to my second home. As I prepare for my next arrival, I do so with a new perspective, ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead with confidence.



Shopping with friends