

December 27, 2017

Global Undergraduate Exchange Program

Dear Selection Committee,

I am pleased to send you this recommendation for Dana Zhumabekova, currently a second year student at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan, studying computer science. I first met Dana this past semester when she was a student in my Database Systems class, and I got to know her quite well.

Dana is an excellent student. She is very bright and hard-working. Because my class included a project, the students were required to have several meetings with me outside of class to discuss their project's design and progress. Dana and her partner met me many more times, because they decided to attempt a much more challenging project than was required.

They decided to create a system for campus eateries. Her partner created an iPhone app for users to see today's menu at each of the eateries, including descriptions and ingredients of the dishes, as well as the prices. Dana created the backend system, including the web APIs for the app. She also created a web client app for the canteen managers to enter and manage the menu data. Her partner was already an experienced iPhone developer, but all Dana's tasks were new for her: creating and hosting a backend system, and developing a web application. They elected to do a project using tools and techniques that I was not covering in class. I could tell she was nervous about taking it all on, but she completed it successfully, including a professionally-written technical report and a (voluntary) public project presentation.

Besides her outstanding project, Dana also did excellent work in the rest of the course, scoring 100 on the final exam, and finishing with the 2nd highest grade (98) from the 88 students in the class. Nazarbayev University is the top university in Kazakhstan, and all students must earn a highly competitive scholarship to study here. For a student to be among the best of this group means that the student is exceptional.

Dana's communication skills are very good; she has been studying entirely in English for 2.5 years in programs that I am aware of, and probably much longer. Her listening and speaking skills are quite fluent, and her writing is also very good. Although Dana is very soft-spoken, she gave a very confident presentation about her project. She has a friendly and open personality.

I think what makes Dana particularly well-suited for this exchange program is her willingness to take risks and challenge herself, as she did with her course project. These traits will serve her well if she is accepted as an exchange student. I believe that Dana is an excellent candidate for the UGRAD program and will be very successful if selected. I am currently on vacation and cannot provide a signed copy of this letter, but if you need more information, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Mona Rizvi

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