*Why would you be a great participant in the Global UGRAD Program? (\*)*

From ancient times the night sky strewn with thousand of stars was a great source of mystery and inspiration for human. It does not matter who you are, king or peasant, adult or child, rich or poor just looking on the sky will remind you that you are just a tiny dot on the small planet in one of the billion galaxies existing in our Universe. This kind of thoughts came to me when I used to immerse to daily life with all its small problems and that is why I love astronomy. When I was a child my great dream was to become an astrophysicist in the future and work at an observatory. As growing up some practical reasons shifted me away from this track, especially because it seems hard to build a science career in my country. When I applied to Nazarbayev University it was like the second breath because it offers us a plenty of opportunities from doing research in the fully equipped laboratories to continuing our study in famous foreign universities.

Nevertheless, there was no separate astrophysics department, and after some hesitations I decided to choose Computer Science as a professional area of my interest. Indeed, there is a connection between all sciences and it is possible to combine astronomy with computer science maybe pursuing Master’s degree in the first one. Moreover, computers and technology are all around, and you can either do research or create some useful product as a software engineer. Right now people who work in such tech companies like Google, Facebook etc., who create break-through innovations shaping the whole world, inspire me, though astronomy still remains my main passion.

It is not difficult to guess now why this opportunity in America grabbed my attention since I heard about it. The United States is one of the leading countries both in IT industry and research in astrophysics and computer science. Even though my university use American system studying in real American university in English speaking environment is entirely different. For me personally is an opportunity to get high quality knowledge in my professional field, meet with interesting people and visit research centres. Most importantly, I will contribute to cultural exchange between our countries, so more and more people from the world will get acquainted with Kazakhstan and see how talented our students are.

Doing mandatory community work required by the Exchange program is another opportunity to show how you care about the society. Any community work or volunteering gives you a feeling that you are part of something really important. That was what I felt last summer being a volunteer during the international recognized exhibition Astana EXPO-2017 held in the capital of Kazakhstan, and having a chance to contribute to successful organization of the event. I think that there is no much difference between eventual goal of such exhibitions or exchange programs. Both of them have a purpose of cultural exchange, connecting people from different countries and sharing ideas for technological and science development.

As I mentioned, the reason why I was afraid to follow my dream to become an astrophysicist was its low development in Kazakhstan and unclear future. For me it was like an unachievable dream to get education in America and work in NASA or other research centres, but participating in the program will help me to be closer to my goal. I appreciate the opportunity given by Kazakhstan’s government to have a scholarship in the best university in my country and its support of exchange programs so I feel that I must give back something in my turn. After getting real experience abroad, I would be happy to help my country to achieve high levels of technological development so young people like myself will not doubt to dedicate their life to science or whatever they like.

Piano

Aikido – certificate

Volunteering – certificate, thank-you letter, attendance

French

Astronomy

***Essay Choice A:*** *John Quincy Adams said, “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.” Everyone’s approach to leadership is different. How would you describe your personal leadership style? What values do you consider the most important when leading others? How do you inspire and influence others to get behind your vision?*

One book that had a great influence on my vision of leadership is “The 7 habits of highly effective people” by Stephen R. Covey. After reading this book the conclusion that I made is that before being a leader for others you have to become a leader for yourself. Being a leader for me is not just an ability to manage your time and control what you do everyday but an ability to understand you priorities and values in the life and determine long-term and short-term goals accordingly. If you fail to build a solid foundation of your life based on your principles then you are hardly likely to be able to lead other people or inspire them with your words or actions.

Recently I met one of my friends who was on that period of life, when you lose your motivation and cannot cope with melancholy. I am not a psychologist but in this case I understand that simple cheering words will not help. I tried to share with my own experience and say how I behaved in a similar situation, what motivated me and what keeps inspiring me. I was very happy when on the next day she wrote me that she got up earlier and again started to read books and attend English classes she abandoned last weeks. I could not influence someone if I did not believe to my own words or did not do what I determine as my goals.

Sometimes I feel that I spend a lot of time for study and forget about such important components of personal development as spirit, art, sport and interaction with other people. Thinking more about it this summer I made some important decisions for myself. I joined ACM Student Chapter Club in our university as a peer-to-peer mentor, who help freshman students with programming. I kept in my mind how it was sometimes difficult to cope with my courses when I was a first year student and how it would be helpful if someone directed me. I also decided that it is never late to learn something new and started to attend piano classes, since I always wished to play this beautiful instrument. Finally, one of the biggest victories over myself is that I made it a habit to run everyday in the morning in any weather without excuses.

Probably it seems strange that my whole essay about leadership is dedicated to my personal development rather than to stories how I led a large team and inspired them to follow me. However, as I said before being a leader starts from becoming a person who deserves to lead others. At the end I want to add words of Mahatma Gandhi, one of the greatest leaders in history: *“You must be the change you want to see in the world.”*