



A Conversation With One Of Algonquin's Best: International Student Dina Aitbaeva (Russia)

written by Matt Wheatley



Since arriving from Ufa, Russia in September 2005, Russian student Dina Aitbaeva, a recent graduate with honours in Business Administration - Materials and Operations Management has excelled at virtually everything. Want to know her secret to success? Want to know how she adapted so well to studying in Canada?

The following is a portion of the interview I had with Dina.

Where are you from (city and country)?

I came to Canada from Russia, from a lovely city named Ufa.

What did you study here at college?

When I first arrived to Ottawa I had to take English as a Second Language courses to improve my English. Two months later I became more familiar with the language, gained some confidence and registered in Business Administration program.

Why did you choose Algonquin College?

Choosing Algonquin College was an easy decision for me. I always wanted to go to Canada because it is a peaceful country as well as a technologically advanced country. I first narrowed my options to Ottawa region since it is a capital of Canada that speaks both English and French. The fact that Algonquin College is considered to be the largest community college in Eastern Ontario also contributed to my decision. In addition, I decided to go to Algonquin College because it has transfer agreements with multiple universities in Canada and abroad; which means that I can still transfer my credits earned at the College towards a bachelor degree at a university.

As a new graduate, I am quite happy with the choice I made 3 years ago.

Did you receive any awards from Algonquin College?

In my final year of Business Administration program I received two scholarships: Canadian Business Equipment Manufacturers' Award and Women Business Network Scholarship.

The **WOMEN'S BUSINESS NETWORK OF OTTAWA**



Dina Aitbaeva

Dina Aitbaeva (left), winner of the Women's Business Network of Ottawa award, presented to a female student entering the final year of her Business studies with high academic standing, and demonstration leadership qualities.

The **CANADIAN BUSINESS EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS SCHOLARSHIP**



Dina Aitbaeva

Dina Aitbaeva (right) winner of the Canadian Business Equipment Manufacturers Scholarship Award 2008 with School of Business Faculty member Geoff Mace.

Do you like Canada?

I absolutely love Canada. It has been almost three years that the unique culture and beauty of Canada has kept me attached to it. Though I have traveled to many countries I have never come across any country where people from all cultures and backgrounds live together so peacefully and happily. This unique culture of the people of this country not only benefits me personally but also gives me a good opportunity to enhance my knowledge and career.

Do you hang around with mostly Russian students?

Since my arrival to Canada I became friends with a lot of wonderful people. Some of them were from Russia; others were from other countries including Canada. There is, of course, a Russian community in Ottawa and anybody is welcome to join. As for me, however, I prefer to hang out with multicultural groups of people. Canadians are quite welcoming people and I feel comfortable with them.

Did you work part-time while studying?

In my second semester of Business Administration program I got a part-time job at Algonquin's *First Class Bookstore* on campus. In addition, one of my teachers recommended me to become a Statistics Tutor. I followed his advice and started tutoring other Algonquin students. Soon after, I had to learn how to juggle two jobs while still focusing on education and maintaining high grades. It was challenging but at the same time it was a great experience because it allowed me to meet a lot of new people outside of my program, and it also showed me what it is like to work in Canada.

Where do you work now and do you like it?

I just got on at Mxi Technologies (<http://www.mxi.com/>). It's time for me to start the next step of my life... my career. I just started a few weeks after graduating and I'm really excited.

Would you recommend Algonquin College to others?

Algonquin is a great institution that has everything required for students' success. I will definitely recommend it to other students.

How does Ottawa compare to your home?

When I see the wide difference between back home and Canada, it makes me feel even better that I made the best choice. As compared to back home, here I feel that I am respected and valued more as an individual. When I get lost or confused with something most people are always willing to help. The customer service in Ottawa is one of the best which saves a lot of time and makes me feel secure. Ottawa's crime rate is very low, which encourages me to start my own business some day and later settle here. This country has provoked all positive feelings in me. I feel stronger as a woman, more motivated and more secure.

Was the International Education Centre at Algonquin College helpful to you?

From my personal experience I know that personal success depends on the person itself. Nevertheless, International Education Center has all the information and tools required to assist and guide International Students in the proper direction. There were few times when I had to come to the Center and ask for some help. International Education Center has always been able to help me in a timely and professional manner. I can definitely say that without them it would've been much harder for me to deal with arising issues.

Did you belong to any clubs?

Soon after arriving to Canada I became a member of ISC (International Student Club) and a member of MBN (Multicultural Buddy Network) club. Both ISC and MBN are designed to bring people together to form friendships and have some fun. We participated in a number of events, shared our experiences and learned more about Canadian society. Joining clubs is a great opportunity to make new friends and fight homesickness.