

Delegated

Student served as a delegate to the G(irls) 20 Summit in Beijing

MBA student Nastasya (Stacy) Tsultsumova '18 joined the Maine Business School last fall fresh from the annual G(irls) 20 Summit in Beijing, where she represented her native Russia.

"For me, it was a life changing experience and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet amazing and accomplished women from around the world who are part of a female championship environment," says Tsultsumova, who is earning a dual master's degree in information systems and business administration (MBA).

She was among 23 young women from 20 countries who served as delegates to the G(irls) 20 Summit, a Canadian-based organization that aims to cultivate a new generation of female leaders. Delegates were tasked with developing a list of recommendations about the roles girls and women can play in building strong economies. The proposals were presented to international leaders during the G20 Leaders' Summit in September.

"It was our message on what should be done to empower women and girls; it was a great honor to have my voice heard," says Tsultsumova, who was among more than 2,000 young women who competed to be a delegate.

"It was nine days of intense, creative and inspiring work," she says. "We listened to speakers and attended workshops that helped us with our strategizing, networking, leadership, and communication skills. At the end, we felt well prepared to create organizations and opportunities for women in our respective countries."

Born and raised in Elista, capital of the Republic of Kalmykia in southwest Russia, Tsultsumova has been participating in international educational experiences since she spent her junior year in high school in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

"I wanted to see the U.S., have the opportunity to advance my English speaking skills and make myself more competitive for college," she says.

After finishing high school in Russia, she returned to the U.S. to study at the College of Saint Elizabeth in New Jersey where she earned a bachelor's degree in business and global studies. She made the most of her undergraduate years, taking classes at the United Nations, studying German in Berlin and serving as a legislative intern in Virginia. She was selected as a delegate to a highly-competitive Harvard Project for Asian and International Relations at Harvard University, where she met executives and venture capitalists from across Asia. After graduating, she worked for a year as a senior executive assistant in the corporate sector of JPMorgan Chase, a leading global financial services firm in New York City.

Last May, she travelled to Copenhagen after being selected to represent Russia in the Women Deliver Global Conference, the world's largest global conference on the health, rights and well-being of girls and women.

What was the application process to be a delegate to the G(irls) 20 Summit?

We had to write 10 essays on a variety of topics including the challenges that women face in our respective countries. I also created a video in which I spoke about why I wanted to be a delegate.

What were some of the recommendations by delegates?

Our goal was to offer ways to realize the G20 leaders' 2014 commitment to reducing the gender gap and bringing 100 million women into the labor force by 2025. We suggested mandating that five percent of government procurement be given to female-owned or led companies; that financial subsidies and tax exemptions be given to the private sector as incentives to reach at least 30% female representation on boards and in senior management; that private companies promote pay transparency; and that government remove factors that deter women from holding office.



What are some of the challenges women face in your country?

Many Russians still have traditional attitudes, so women leaders are rare in my country and there are few opportunities for women in business, politics or media. Things are slowly improving, but many men think, 'why should a woman look for a job when she is going to get married?'

Why did you choose MBS?

I knew I wanted a college in New England and I had heard that Maine was beautiful. When I learned that the University of Maine had a dual graduate program in which I could earn my MBA and a master's degree in information systems at the same time, I knew MBS was for me.

Last spring, I had the opportunity to meet Dr. Richard Borgman, then director of the MBA program, while he was in New York City as part of the annual SPIFFY trip. He was accompanied by other faculty members as well as students and alumni. It was great to be able to meet everyone in advance of starting my MBA program.

Where did you learn to speak English?

Since Russian schools are required to teach English, I became familiar with the language at an early age. I also took English speaking classes at a local university during high school. During the first three months with my host family in Tulsa I spoke British English, but by Christmas I had become comfortable using American English. I always say I learned to speak like an American by watching "Keeping up with the Kardashians." ■