THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY of AFGHANISTAN

Educating Afghanistan’s Future Leaders
The American University of Afghanistan is the only private, not-for-profit, independent and co-educational university, preparing Afghans from every province to be the country’s future leaders.

AUAF is chartered under the Afghan Constitution and Ministry of Higher Education of the Afghan government. It was founded in 2006 with an initial enrollment of 53 students and today, enrolls more than 2,000 full and part-time students in undergraduate and graduate programs, and professional certification courses. AUAF is dedicated to providing a world-class higher education.
AUAF by the Numbers

- 934 Students enrolled in professional development certification courses
- 34 Provinces represented
- 35 Fulbright scholars
- 32% Female enrollment in degree programs
- 48,082 Facebook friends
- 15 Countries represented by international faculty/staff
- 28,490 Books in the library
- 97% Percentage of Afghan staff
- 3 PDI Regional Centers
- 84% Students who receive financial aid or scholarship
- 15 Student clubs
- 1,151 Students currently enrolled in degree programs
- 33% Professors with PhD degrees
The American University of Afghanistan is an Afghan university dedicated to providing a world-class higher education that prepares Afghanistan’s current and future leaders to meet the needs of Afghanistan and the region. In these pages, AUAF is proud to showcase the work of students and professors, who are all committed to creating a brighter future for Afghanistan.
Onaba Payab & Mohammad Qaseem

The stories shared below are from the top graduating female and male students of the class of 2014, Onaba Payab and Mohammad Qaseem. Congratulations to them for graduating, and representing the very best of their class.

“I believe it is not a choice, but a moral personal responsibility, for me to promote empowerment of women”
– Onaba Payab

**FEMALE VALEDICTORIAN**
**Onaba Payab**

I was born in Kabul in 1992. After graduation from the Government College in Quetta, Pakistan in 2009, I took the university entrance exam. Due to my exemplary academic record, I was admitted to the competitive medical faculty in Pakistan Bolan Medical College. Unfortunately, I could not complete my education due to family problems. But in 2010, after moving back to Kabul and taking the TOEFL entrance exam at the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF), I was admitted to pursue my BA in Business Administration. I have consistently been on the Dean’s List and received several academic awards for my scholastic achievements. I have been involved in many clubs and engaged in many extracurricular activities, including serving as President of the Community Service Club, and Vice President of the Women’s Basketball Club.

It is not easy to be an Afghan woman who wants to claim her rights and stand up for herself and for the rights of other fellow women.

There are tremendous, complex challenges on multiple levels. However, I believe it is not a choice, but a moral personal responsibility, for me to promote empowerment of women, as well as education and economic rights for women. Therefore, I have worked as a mentor helping freshmen girls acclimate to university life. In order to achieve economic independence, I joined the finance department as a Finance Payroll Assistant, in addition to my studies.

I am a motivated and committed person. I think my classmates, peers, and professors would describe me as a well-organized person, who adapts to meet challenges as they arise. As a young Afghan, I am committed to contributing to the development and reconstruction of my country. I am planning to apply for scholarships in order to pursue my Master’s degree in Public Health and grow intellectually, personally and professionally. After the successful completion of my Master’s, I want to bring tangible changes to the lives of Afghans, especially to the lives of fellow Afghan women.
MALE VALEDICTORIAN  
Mohammad Qaseem

Growing up during one of the most volatile times in the history of Afghanistan was not easy. Born in Kabul, our family moved to Mazar when my father, a pilot, was relocated. I was in the fifth grade when war engulfed the city, and we fled to Iran. Living as an Afghan refugee carried its own set of challenges — social and psychological. For me as a child, the direct effect of immigration was that I had to give up attending school. Thus, the family decided it was in our best interest to leave for Pakistan. Life in Pakistan was also a struggle. So my brothers and I had to start weaving carpets — this was a common and low-paying, yet easy to find, job for an unskilled immigrant. Two years later, we left carpet weaving and joined a tailor shop, where we continued to work until the end of high school. During those years, I also managed to take English and computer courses.

In 2006, after high school, I returned to Afghanistan and got a job at Azizi Bank. A year later, the whole family moved back and settled in Afghanistan again. New life in Kabul started to burgeon. Yet my salary at the Bank was not enough to provide for the family and afford higher education at a private university. After all, life isn’t fair all the time. I had learned to prioritize and make trade-offs.

It was in 2010 that I located an opportunity at AUAF when the university started to offer a series of financial aid packages. I registered for an entrance exam and enrolled for spring 2011. My high TOEFL score at the entrance exam earned me a full scholarship at AUAF. These four years at AUAF, pursuing a BBA in Finance, have proved to be the best years of my life — challenging times through which I had to constantly test my passion and commitment. I received the President’s High Honor Awards six times due to my commitment towards studies, as well as the support from my professors who were always available to provide guidance. I made new, good friends, learned so much, not only about finance from academic classes, but also about life in general, from studying and interacting with friends and professors on campus.

With years of professional experience and now having completed my bachelor’s degree, I am ready to initiate a new chapter in my life. I am aiming to earn a graduate degree in finance that would enable me to work on reforming and standardizing Afghanistan’s emerging banking sector. With a growing focus on service sector at the international level, I believe Afghanistan would stand a far greater chance in developing businesses in the service sector with qualified individuals to lead it. With the country envisioned to be a trade transition hub between South and Central Asia and the Middle East, I believe its banking system stands on the verge of extensive expansion and growing improvements and I want to play a major role in that process. I think that is the best I can do for myself, and for those who have helped me achieve success, as well as for my country, which has a dire need to rebuild a cadre of well-qualified professionals.
Aimal Gerowal
THE ATHLETE

When Aimal Gerowal was a high school student in Kabul during the Taliban regime, he remembers the school principal coming to him one day with a request: to start a soccer team.

Aimal jumped at the chance, and served as captain. It was difficult to find safe areas to play that were not mined, and the team had to adhere to strict rules about when they could play and the style of uniform they wore, but despite the challenges, for his entire life, Aimal has always found a way to keep playing.

Aimal, 28, whose father also played professional soccer in the 1980s, has been playing soccer his entire life. He currently serves as team captain for the national Roshan Afghan Premier League team, Oqaban Hindukush.

Soccer may be his profession and passion, but business is his pursuit. Knowing that he will have to forge a lucrative career in order to supplement the meager salaries given to professional athletes in Afghanistan, Aimal has prioritized his education, regularly forgoing matches abroad so he doesn’t miss class.

Aimal, a junior majoring in business, sees a gap in the sports market in Afghanistan. He says sports uniforms are low-quality, and sports equipment often sourced from outside Afghanistan. He believes high quality products can be manufactured inside Afghanistan.

Inspired by Adolf ‘Adi’ Dassler, the German who founded the giant sportswear company, Adidas, Aimal said, “I want to become a sports entrepreneur for my country. If we start investing in our own country, sportsmen, especially youngsters, will benefit from that.”

Aimal also believes sports benefit the nation as a unifying factor amongst the nation’s diverse groups. During matches, he gets motivation from the diversity of spectators cheering his team, which itself is comprised of players from five different provinces. “That gives me a lot of motivation to play for my country, and I think sports can unite us,” he said.

In fact, diversity is one thing that drove him to study at AUAF. Said Aimal, “I can see there are many different people at AUAF. I can see a community where every Afghan can learn and interact.”
For sophomore business major Soraya Afzali, the decision to stay was an easy one. Faced with two full scholarship offers — one to Georgetown University and one to AUAF — she chose to stay in Afghanistan.

“When I am here in Kabul, besides studying, and following my passion, there are a lot of other things I can work on, whether that is starting a business, photography, or simply /g77/g88/g86/g87/g3/g86/g87/g85/g88/g74/g74/g79/g76/g81/g74/g3/g87/g75/g85/g82/g88/g74/g75/g3/g79/g76/g73/g72/g15/g180/g3/g86/g75/g72/g3/g86/g68/g92/g86/g17/g3

And at only 21 years old, Afzali has done all three. She /g90/g68/g86/g3/g69/g82/g85/g81/g3/g76/g81/g3/g48/g68/g93/g68/g85/g3/g68/g81/g71/g3/g86/g83/g72/g81/g87/g3/g87/g75/g72/g3/g191/g85/g86/g87/g3/g28/g3/g92/g72/g68/g85/g86/g3/g82/g73/g191/g70/g72/g17/g3

Her passion comes from the desire to capture human emotion in a picture.

“There is something about eyes,” says Afzali. “You can read people’s eyes like a book, and to be able to capture that book is really a blessing.”

In 2013, she co-founded the Humans of Kabul non-profit Facebook project, inspired by the book Humans of New York, which currently has close to 18,000 'likes.' Each photograph captures a Kabul citizen captioned by their response to a specific question. The project aims to show a positive image of Kabul to the world.

“We see a lot of negative things about Kabul and Afghanistan in general in the media. There should be someone or something that focuses on the positivity of Kabul,” says Afzali. “With Humans of Kabul, we try to show that Afghans are normal just like any other people on this planet. We are just like your sister or your brother.”

She sets out each week to capture the city in photographs, walking the street or visiting bustling gardens or shopping centers. But for Afzali and her female friends, it’s a hobby that comes with risk.

Despite harassment she sometimes faces as a woman, Afzali refuses to be discouraged, and sees her generation as pioneers for a better future.

“We have to deal with this problem so that people who come after us will have a better life. It is my duty to deal with these problems, so that later on, if I have a daughter, she will not have to face them,” she says.

Though she has accomplished much already, she says her long-term goal is to become the “best business communications specialist that Kabul has ever seen.”

“At AUAF, I feel like I have been able to gain that ability of expressing myself, which is very important for me,” she says of her time at AUAF.

“What advice do you have for parents?”

“I advise all parents to give their children education. Do not let them work for money when they are young.”
AUAF Alumnus Omar Ehrari says he has AUAF to thank for a lot in his life.

Not only did the model for his now successful prize-winning assignment for an entrepreneurship class at AUAF, but he also gained the business communication skills here that helped him give back to his community as an active volunteer.

“The university really provided me with a toolbox,” said Ehrari, a business major who graduated in 2014. “I had a fantasy for my life, as everyone does. I wanted to achieve certain things, but I didn’t know how. When I came to the university, within the first 2 years, my education here equipped me with the tools that I needed — writing skills, communication skills — that really have played a big role in my career.”

Ehrari is now the co-owner of a successful saffron production and export business, Negin Saffron, based on a 700-acre plantation in his hometown of Herat, which provides employment to many women in the city. He also has set-up his own saffron import business, Chivana Saffron, in the US, where he now resides with his wife, who is also a graduate of AUAF.

But business is not all that drives Ehrari. Inspired by his mother, who ran an underground school for boys and girls during the Taliban regime, Ehrari spent his years before university volunteering as a women’s rights activist, writing grant proposals for grassroots women’s organizations, and conducting literacy and income-generation trainings for women.
“If I want change, I have to take action and make the change I want.”

— Omar Ehrari

“Afghanistan can’t be changed by foreigners,” he said. “It can only be changed by the actions of the individual citizens of Afghanistan. If I want change, I have to take action and make the change I want.”

In 2011, Ehrari participated in the Global Change Makers summit, where he met a representative of Solace for the Children, a US based NGO that provides corrective surgery to war-wounded Afghan children. He returned with a new volunteer position at Solace that would soon turn into employment, and the idea to create a culture of volunteerism in Afghanistan that would last longer than a generation.

After becoming Country Director for Solace in Afghanistan, Ehrari set up two new programs that aimed to engage young Afghans in giving back to their society, including the Peace House Academy program, and the volunteer task force program, which recently received over 200 applications from AUAF students wanting to volunteer.

Though he is now based in the US to work as Solace’s International Director, he says everything he does is a contribution to Afghanistan. Said Ehrari, “Everything I’m doing is for Afghanistan. I believe in a life without borders.”
PHOTOS FROM TOP LEFT:
Champions of the US Embassy’s First National Moot Court competition with US Ambassador Michael McKinley; Students perform the traditional Attan dance at the annual fun fair; President Emeritus Dr. Michael Smith presents an MBA degree at graduation; AUAF’s soccer team; Member of Parliament Shukria Barakzai honored on International Women’s Day at the Women’s Center; Speech club students celebrating victory in an speech competition.
PHOTOS FROM TOP LEFT:
Students in classroom; Canadian Ambassador Deborah Lyons with students; Law students celebrate their victory at the First National Moot Court competition at the US Embassy; Participants of the Afghan Women’s Economic Forum hosted by the Women’s Center; International Center for Afghan Women’s Economic Development; Female students participate in a roundtable discussion.
This year at AUAF has been one of transition, in which the university assumed new leadership while continuing to expand its academic programming, facilities development, and regional reach.

Dr. Mark A. English assumed leadership of the university as Acting President in January 2015, as President Emeritus Dr. C. Michael Smith stepped down after nearly six years of exceptional service.

Under the leadership of Dr. Smith, the university grew from an enrollment of around 300 students, to nearly 2,000 students. Several new programs, including the Master’s in Education and MBA programs, and new affiliate programs, including the Business Innovation Hub accelerator, were added under his leadership. PDI expanded to regional hubs in Mazar, Herat, and Kandahar, as well as programming at the International Center for Afghan Women’s Economic Development (established in 2013) expanding.

Said the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Fredric Berger: “We thank Dr. C. Michael Smith for his tireless work during these six years at AUAF, and leading the university through tremendous growth and development.”

Dr. English’s vision for the university aims to continue and expand on this progress. This year, the university will break ground on a number of new buildings to accommodate more students on the International Campus. New academic programs to further meet the higher education needs of Afghanistan are also expected to commence.

“I appreciate and offer my heartfelt gratitude for the exceptional efforts of Dr. Smith. The establishment of the MBA and LLB programs, providing more scholarships, and creating a friendly and open environment for students are some of his appreciated accomplishments. We also welcome Dr. English and trust he will bring even higher standards and improvements to AUAF, and explore new programs in academic fields that are important to Afghanistan, such as economics and engineering.”

— Ahsanullah Ahsan Popal
Junior, Business major
VISION STATEMENT FOR AUAF

The Greek Philosopher Heraclites once said, “Your character is your destiny.”

I believe this to be an appropriate maxim as we chart a new pathway for educational success, and sustainable achievements for AUAF. My vision for the university is both inward and outward looking.

Internally, the overall mission of AUAF must reflect a holistic orientation to education. All students bring different sets of intelligence, ability, passion, and skill to the learning environment. In order to maintain, inspire and involve students with a variety of learning styles, it is critical to design curricular programs that engage all students. I am committed to developing students as scholars and faculty as leaders by personalizing learning environments, sustained by a foundation of principled education pedagogy.

Externally, AUAF must be more than an academic institution. Through the extracurricular activities of students, faculty, and staff, the university must have a positive impact on Afghanistan. As the country’s premier institution for higher education, the university must be part of the cultural and social fabric of Afghan society. We will achieve this not only by producing the country’s future leaders, but by also enhancing non-academic programs: promoting women’s economic development through the International Center for Afghan Women’s Economic Development; providing courses in Kabul and around the country through the Professional Development Institute; and supporting local businesses through the Business Innovation Hub. Outreach must be at our core.

Underlying these aims are three fundamental concepts of my vision: Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. By rigor, I mean sustaining a balanced, challenging curriculum that will lead to overall success in student performance. By relevance, I mean having a process of implementing curricular standards and benchmarks that are applicable both inside and outside the classroom so students have the core competencies to thrive in the 21st century. By relationships, I mean that we are in the people business. Creating an environment of openness, trust and teamwork is how I envision our relationship.

This vision is informed by my view on what a quality educational experience brings to all of us — a revelation of the interconnectedness of everything; law, science, business, technology, politics, language, philosophy. Like a thread directly connecting the learner to not only the past, but also the future, it allows us to view life in both new and old ways. Ultimately, through a quality educational experience, we all become connected to the essence of being.

I hope to instill in the AUAF community a fundamental belief of learning for learning’s sake, by creating an inclusive environment that inspires and empowers everyone to reach their full potential.

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— Dr. Mark A. English

AUAF ACTING PRESIDENT
DR. MARK A. ENGLISH
Back to the Future: Dr. Bahar Jalali on gender roles in Afghanistan

When AUAF enrolled its first class in 2006, only one student was a woman. Nearly 10 years later, 36% of enrolled students are female. Such a rapid and exponential increase in female students meant the university had to adapt to meet the particular needs of female students, and quickly.

That task fell to Associate Professor of History and Gender Studies, Dr. Bahar Jalali, who joined the university in 2009 and served as Chair of the Department of Political Science, Humanities, and Law from 2010-2012, the first female department chair in the undergraduate program. As an Afghan American, born in Kabul and raised in the United States with a PhD in History from the University of California, Berkeley, Jalali was the perfect candidate for the job.

“I’m old enough to remember the ‘old’ Afghanistan, how it used to be — when a woman wore a headscarf in Kabul, she would be considered a villager,” Jalali says. “The question is now, can we go back to the future?”

Since 2009, she has not only established and directs a Women’s Mentorship program (funded by the US Embassy in Kabul), but has initiated the development of a pioneering Gender Studies minor and gender courses, as well as conducting her own research on women’s issues in Afghanistan.

“Afghanistan is a male dominated society. Girls generally don’t have a lot of resources or mentors inside the home, or in their families, and they are usually limited to gender stratified roles,” says Jalali. “Because of this, they don’t have many opportunities to realize their full potential, not only as students and future professionals, but simply as individuals.”

The Women’s Mentorship program was launched in October 2014 with a keynote speech delivered by Afghan First Lady Rula Ghani, who was herself Jalali’s mentor years ago when she was struggling to complete her PhD.

“You can’t change the society tomorrow. You can’t have a revolution,” says Jalali. Instead, the program aims to create more personal awareness on an individual basis and provide a support system.

But Jalali saw not only individual female students’ needs at the university, but an entire nation struggling with gender discrimination. She thus set out to develop a gender studies minor, a relatively new field of study across the globe, but one that Jalali believes is of the essence in Afghanistan.

“Gender discrimination and inequality is a global problem. But Afghanistan, more than any other country, is where this minor is needed,” she says. “People here welcome gender studies because gender equality is so disproportionate.”

Jalali describes it as a “practical minor,” one that will not only raise awareness of women’s issues, but also help students develop a skill set they can implement in professional and social life.

Many of the students in her special topics gender course, offered for the first time in Spring 2015, already have a solid foundation in those skill sets, she says, with some of the male students already holding jobs in gender mainstreaming.

“We do have enlightened Afghan men and their voices are not always the ones that are heard and get attention,” she says. The real challenge, she believes, is not getting the nation to believe in women’s rights, but getting individuals to challenge discriminatory social norms. “Legislation without social change means nothing, and that’s a problem this country has.”
In October 2014, AUAF launched its Women’s Mentorship Program with a ceremony featuring very special guest speaker, Her Excellency the First Lady of Afghanistan Rula Ghani.

The launch featured Mrs. Ghani in her second public appearance since taking office. She encouraged students to develop new friendships as they go through life as a means of exploring opportunities and opening doors, while also relying on the support provided by their family networks.

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I want to know, how many are prisoners of patriarchy and how many are actual criminals? I want to tackle the issue of battered women in a practical way at a high level,” she says. Jalali aims to interview each and every female prisoner, many of whom are locked up for moral crimes such as running away from home, often to escape domestic abuse.

Jalali, who believes the best academics have “one foot in academia and one foot in the policy world,” is taking her gender work outside of the university, conducting research throughout 2015 on battered women in female prisons in Kabul and Herat.

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Jalali has dedicated her professional career and much of her personal time to helping elevate Afghan women in their society. For her, it’s a “labor of love.”

“I come from a family that has always been very active in women’s issue,” she says. Her father is a former interior minister who helped appoint the first female governor in Afghanistan, and her mother dedicated much of her own life to working with children’s charities and orphanages. Both had a strong influence on her.

Now a mother herself, Jalali says her work has a new meaning. “Being the mother of a daughter has really opened my eyes much more to the example I need to set for her, and other women,” she says. “I will be a rich repository for my daughter growing up.” And, no doubt, countless other young Afghan women.

“Mentoring is a way of helping you in a new environment. The American University...presents a lot of possibilities and the mentoring program will help you get the most out of it.”

— First Lady Rula Ghani’s speech on mentorship program to AUAF female students

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Around the world, women who choose to study, work, and have a family face a particular set of challenges. The Women’s Mentorship Program builds confidence in female students, and equips them with life skills and tools they need to succeed at university, and in public life. The core of the program is routine one-on-one mentoring, matching female students with faculty and staff mentors. The mentor works with the student to build confidence, chart goals, and impart skills and knowledge to achieve those goals, while also addressing any particular challenges that female students may face, such as balancing family life and studies. The program includes a workshop series, which focuses on topics such as women in public space.
BRAINSTORMING BUSINESS POTENTIAL

Colleen Foster

Colleen Foster, Assistant Professor of Marketing and Management, is known around campus for being inquisitive. You may find her asking about the packaging of a local juice box at the lunch table, marveling at the export potential of carrots grown in the country, or brainstorming about how Afghan pomegranates could lead the global market in organic fruit juices.

“A lot of people think marketing is just advertising, but it’s a lot of more than that,” said Foster. “It starts with good research and includes having in-depth knowledge of the context and environment.”

Though a relative newcomer to AUAF, Foster, who started teaching undergraduate and graduate-level courses in the business department in Fall 2014, has wasted no time delving into local markets and products and, with her students, exploring ways to create business opportunities.

“There are so many great products in Afghanistan. This country is on the road to be a leading producer of organic vegetables,” Foster believes. Many of these products become the subjects of a marketing project she assigns to her undergraduate and graduate students, which must include an export component. She is currently excited about the work of two female students working on a business model to produce and sell organic Afghan chickens.

“Students discover a lot of information they did not know about their own country, like 60% of potatoes come from Bamian, or there are 32 varieties of melon in the country. Then they get really excited about the project,” she said.

Foster has a master’s degree from the Thunderbird School of Global Management and advanced certification in Google Marketing Analytics. She has worked in several countries in the Asia Pacific region, including as a marketing executive at the 3M Company (the creators of Post-It® Notes and Scotch® tape). She also taught graduate level programs at the University of Minnesota, Thunderbird and customized corporate marketing programs for Nestle, Eaton, 3M and several global food companies before coming to Afghanistan.

Foster’s inquisitiveness, combined with her skill set and optimism, has her involved in several extracurricular activities in the business department. Not only was she a co-founder of the Arete Student Business Club with Department Chair Dr. Rod Monger, but she also initiated and set-up the Business Lab in the department.

Students work in the Business Lab, conducting research into different Afghan industries to compile portfolios for each. The Lab serves not only as an information resource for business students, but gives those working there an opportunity to learn skills vital to the marketing profession, such as research, office management, and customer service.

Foster, who once attended culinary school and enjoys cooking, said she can envision the country becoming a global leader in agritourism. Said Foster, “The future is bright.”
It was faith that led Professor Mohammad Razaq Isaqzadeh to an academic career in political science and research. Studying as a way to develop concrete arguments for his beliefs.

"After studying philosophy for one year, I realized what is more interesting to me is political philosophy and politics because that is what impacted my life, and also my society and my family," said Isaqzadeh. "Still, I had questions in my mind and I was very interested and research." 

Professor Isaqzadeh is the Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, and one of the most prolific researchers and most-published professors on campus. He was the 2015 recipient of the Dr. Alexandros Petersen Research Fellowship, a grant he has used to examine the support for insurgency in Afghanistan. After earning a BA in Political Science from University of California Berkeley, and an MPhil in International Development from Oxford University, he returned to his native Herat in 2010 and taught for a semester at Herat University before coming to AUAF in 2011. He noticed there was a need for research, but a lack of Afghan researchers who understood the context and had the research skills.

"If you look at Afghan society over the past 30 or 40 years, the state has adopted different and sometimes drastic policies to transform the society, but all those efforts have failed," he said. "It is very important to have policies informed by research because otherwise we could be simply going in the same wrong direction as we have been going in the past few decades."

Isaqzadeh’s first research project focused on the role of clergy in campaigns and elections in Afghanistan, which was followed by research on police reform, political economy, and the role of clergy in pro-social mobilization, the latter conducted in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh. In 2013, he co-authored the book 'Policing in Afghanistan' with Antonio Guistozzi, published by Hurst. His research has been published by Integrity Watch Afghanistan, Afghan Analysts Network, American Economic Review, and in academic journals.

Instilling a culture of research in Afghanistan is the path to a bright future, he believes, which he says starts within the universities with professors encouraging students to develop their analysis and critical thinking skills. "Out of a 30 million population, less than 50,000 young people get into university each year. These people are the intellectual elites of our country, and the brains of the future. They must not be afraid of thinking and analyzing."
• The Professional Development Institute (PDI) offers a wide-range of high quality, internationally-recognized professional certifications that are in high demand in Afghanistan and provide critical skills for Afghanistan’s growing cadre of young professionals. PDI has trained 13,641 applicants since opening in Fall 2009, including staff from numerous Afghan ministries and government organizations. It is a certified testing center, and the only ACCA Gold Member in the country. PDI has branches in Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Kandahar.

• The International Center for Afghan Women’s Economic Development, inaugurated in May 2013 is a pioneering institution dedicated to advancing the role of women in Afghanistan’s economy, through world-class cooperative education, technical trainings, investment match-making, and independent research focused on informing public policy on women’s economic empowerment. This year, the center launched its Professional Development Certification program.

“Through the center for Afghan Women’s Economic Development, AUAF promotes the meaningful and active participation of women in the economy of Afghanistan. It will be a safe place for women to develop the skills and networks necessary to lead private sector development.”

— Former First Lady Laura Bush

• Working together with Stanford University’s Afghanistan Legal Education Project, AUAF established the country’s premier law program in 2012. In 2015, AUAF’s first cohort of law majors graduated from the program.
In a historic election on April 2, 2015, the students of AUAF elected the first-ever female president of the Student Government Association (SGA), Samira Abrar. “Being a woman SGA President — a woman in leadership — is an amazing feeling. Now I have the pleasure of interacting and networking with so many students and the administration,” said Abrar. “I am committed to making sure that the SGA actively and effectively contributes to a better environment for the AUAF community through creating a strong communication network with the students, faculty and administration.”

Further affiliates and partners:
- US Afghan Women’s Council at Georgetown University
- University of California San Diego, behavioral research lab
- Harakat accounting program
- Indiana University, Afghanistan higher education program
- University of Maryland, 2014 Global Classrooms Initiative
- US Embassy scholarship program
- AMZ Foundation scholarship program
- American Chamber of Commerce in Afghanistan
Fredric S. Berger, P.E.
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Dr. A. Reza Hoshmand
First Vice Chair

Leslie M. Schweitzer
Second Vice Chair

Dr. Maryam Qudrat
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A. Huda Farouki

Dr. Akram Fazel

Caroline H. Firestone

J. David Grizzle

Habibullah Gulzar

Dr. Kerry Healey

Frank Islam

Shamim Jawad

Maha Kaddoura

Dr. Zalmay Khalilzad

Dr. Marin Strmecki

Chris Taylor

AUAF mourns the loss of Fredric Berger, Chairman of the Board of Trustees and founding board member since 2004. He passed away on April 23, 2015. He was a steadfast supporter of the university.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Major Donors

• The donation of 80 acres of land from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

• A five-year, $42-million grant from the US Agency for International Development

• Gifts in excess of $1 million in cash or gifts in kind:
  — The Department of Defense Task Force for Business and Stability Operations for construction of the Women’s Center, funded by a grant to the Friends of AUAF
  — The US Embassy in Kabul for supporting full scholarships for women and men to attend AUAF
  — The Bayat Foundation for construction of AUAF’s ITC Center on the International Campus
  — AFCA International for donating land in Kandahar as a regional center
  — Governor Ata Mohamed Noor and Khaled Amiri for donation of land in Mazar-e-Sharif for a regional center
  — Governor Daud Saba for donation of land in Herat for construction of a regional center
  — The World Bank
  — The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
$100,000 – $1 million
American University of Afghanistan Foundation
American Schools and Hospitals Abroad, an office of USAID
Reine M. Ackerman
AMZ Renaissance Foundation
Bayat Foundation
The Louis Berger Group
The Sunshine Lady Foundation
Mission Essential Personnel
The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. David Grizzle
Dr. Zalmay M. Khalilzad
Kamgar Group
The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Moncrief
Mr. and Mrs. Stan Pierson
Kelli Rod
Mr. and Mrs. Karim Camel-Toueg
Mr. and Mrs. David Grizzle
Mr. and Mrs. Robert F. Pence
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Altshuler
Mr. and Mrs. Del Spier
Faud Muslim
Mr. and Mrs. Farid Maqsudi
Fredric S. Berger and Betty Brannan
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Altshuler
Mr. and Mrs. Stan Pierson

$50,000 – $100,000
Anonymous
Academic Search, Inc.
Ayenda Foundation and Shamim Jawad
Mr. and Mrs. Farid Maqsudi
Fredric S. Berger and Betty Brannan
Anonymous
Caroline Firestone
Al Hill
Mirwais Azizi Hotak

$10,000 – $25,000
Alkozay Group of Companies
Dr. Paula J. Dobriansky
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Altshuler
Constellis Group
Lyda Hill
Vin and Caren Protho Foundation
Edward E. Rose
Alan White
Kelli Rod
Hunter Hunt
Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Moncrief
Donald Beall
Cary M. Maguire
Pamela W. Fox
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Frishberg
Alan T. Gibbs
The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation
Mosbacher Foundation
Fergal S. O’Doherty
Pashtany Bank
Dr. Sharif Fayez
Dr. Rod Monger

$5,000 – $10,000
Andrew Abendschein
James N. Falk
Norma K. Hunt
Afghanistan Finance Company
Bingham McCutchen LLP
Peter H. Brown
Bob Brun
Mr. and Mrs. Karim Camel-Toueg
Currier, Inc.
Contrak International, Inc.

*Current as of April 9, 2015
Hassan Akbari
Baqibullah Niaz
Shahla Mahmoodi Sahibzada
Muzhda Kakar
Sadaf Nadri
Maryam Joyan
Mohammad Ramazan Nasrat
Onay Payaam
Ammar Rezaie
Ahmed Bashir
Naqibullah Noori
Murtaza Mohammad
Ahmad Faza Tajzada
Obaidullah Wardak
Mir Azizuddin Jillal
Shafiq Ahmad Khwaaja
Ahmad Milad Assakzi
Mohammad Afzar Omerzoi
Abdul Rauf Meraj
Sayed Atiqullah
Marwa Ehsan
Naseebullah Ludin
Nasir Ahmad Safdari
Hashmatullah Noori
Obaidullah Esmalikhil
Onaba Payab
Wazir Ahmed Amin
Zahibullah Zabih
Shabnam Granzooy
Zahibullah Alemi
Waheed Ahmad
Fardin Atia
Tariq Aziz Jawad
Mohebullah Faghiri
Noorullah Aria
Fazila Rahimy
Azizulrahman Abdul Raouf
Abdul Hadi Ibrahim
Hayatullah Sultani
Raz Mohammad Ebrat

Hilal Ahmad Saeed
Payamuhalq Barrai
Mohammad Raziq Yarkhail
Farhad Ahmad
Saeeda Baz Stankazi
Nangyalai Amin
Najibullah Gulabzoi
Akmal Kamawal
Nisar Ahmad
Fazil Ahmad Afzali
Bilal Ahmad Amiri
Yalda Samih
Mohammad Suliman Kazimi
Tawfiq Ullah
Mir Hamza
Khosbho Alamyar
Sayed Mansoor Afzali

Salma Popalzai
Abdul Hadi Safdari
Salma Alokozai
Zabihullah Khan
Farhad Shinwari
Haseebullah Habibi
Zainab Weera
Mubibullah Ahmadi
Kambaiz Wali
Mojtaba Mohammad
Mahdi Haidari
Mohammad Omar Noori
Abdul Mateen Siddiqui
Abdul Saleem Qureshi
Ahmad Hamad Rasulli
Omid Alkozay
Khaliullah Ahrar
Sameer Ahmad
Hameed Ayami
Mohammad Qaseem
Mohammad Murtaza Noori
Najla Ismail Pahstun
Abolfazl Hosseini
Ahmad Maseh Atmar
Jeena Sayed
Rizwan ur Rahman
Mohammad Zalmai
Qudrat Alizada
Mohammad Sayed Madadi
Naik Mohammad Ahmadzai
Abdul Baits Mohseni
Worang Abdul Ghani
Mohammad Yahya
Abdul Matin Gauher
Zeinab Noori
Metra Mehran Yaqoubi
Gity Murad
Fatima Murad
Parwaiz Ahmadzai
Khwaaja Mohammad Omar

MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAM

On April 17, 2015, AUAF held the graduation ceremony for the inaugural cohort of students in the Masters in Education program, the first of its kind in Afghanistan. The program was launched in March 2014, a collaborative effort with the Afghan Ministry of Education Teacher Training Directorate, and with funding from the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and the World Bank. The program included 318 students (23% women), representing all of the country’s 34 provinces. The majority of this diverse group is instructors from the country’s 42 two-year teacher-training colleges, and will return to their provinces to improve education standards in their communities. “I am very pleased to say that this cutting edge innovative program is really a crucial service to education and the society in Afghanistan. The graduates will return to their communities throughout the provinces to disseminate their knowledge, skills and dispositions to educators and pupils across the nation.”

— Dr. Zaher Wahab
Director of the MA in Education program
On December 5, 2014, the American University of Afghanistan held its fourth graduation ceremony. Family, friends, faculty, staff, and distinguished guests gathered at the university’s International Center for Afghan Women’s Economic Development. A total of 180 students graduated, including 13 graduate students and 163 undergraduate students, AUAF’s fourth and largest graduating class. Nearly 28% of the graduating class this year was female.

The commencement address was delivered by distinguished guest speaker Dr. Frederick Starr, Chairman of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Adjunct Professor of European and Eurasian Studies at Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Starr’s inspiring words looked past repeated narratives of war, and recalled Afghanistan’s golden age nearly 1,000 years ago when the country was the economic center of the world and produced some of the greatest scientists and thinkers. He encouraged students to embrace this past as a guide for the future.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I am here to remind you, as firmly as I can, that Afghanistan has another past, a better past, and one very much worth recalling here today, and every day hereafter,” Dr. Starr said during his speech. “A past to which your education can, and should, lead you. A past, which, God willing, is also, the future.”

The ceremony also featured the presentation of honorary degrees to Dr. Fred Starr as well as former First Lady of the United States Laura Bush, in recognition of her valuable commitment to the university in its founding years.