The American University of Afghanistan is Afghanistan’s only private, not-for-profit, non-partisan and co-educational university.

It opened its doors in 2006 with an initial enrollment of 53 students, and today enrolls more than 1,700 full and part-time students. It has produced 29 Fulbright Scholars and maintains partnerships with the world’s most prestigious universities, including Stanford University, Georgetown University, and the University of California network.
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 new Afghanistan.
Noorrahman Rahmani certainly has one of the more difficult jobs in Afghanistan. As the country director of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (iwpr.net), a nonprofit international media organization with networks in more than three dozen countries and headquarters in both Washington, DC and London, Noorrahman is responsible for simultaneously helping develop Afghanistan’s media to perform at international standards while also pursuing heavy-hitting investigative journalism. Managing a team of 35 intrepid reporters, translators and researchers, he leads an organization well-known for asking tough questions about corruption and misappropriated funds – no matter who it involves. In any country, asking these kinds of questions is an easy way to get on the radar of the wrong people. In Afghanistan, one of the most corrupt countries on earth, it can be a question of life and death. “It has an easy way to get on the radar of the wrong people. In Afghanistan, one of the most corrupt countries on earth, it can be a question of life and death. “It has certainly made me some enemies,” Noorrahman admits.

Noorrahman Rahmani: Class of 2013

“I learned how to lead at AUAF.”

As one of the only Afghan directors of a major international organization’s country office, Noorrahman constantly finds himself needing to communicate clearly to two different and uniquely demanding audiences – the Afghan government and the Afghan people on one hand, and the international community and their embassies on the other. He credits AUAF with helping him work productively with international governments and organizations while maintaining a local perspective. And he says AUAF is directly responsible for helping him lead the organization more effectively – which includes managing an annual budget of more than $2 million. In his business administration classes, he learned various strategies for soliciting feedback from employees. “Now, in order to promote a more open decision-making process, I canvass my staff before making any decisions about our work in Afghanistan. This is something I learned at AUAF. And as a result, everyone in the organization is on board with the decisions we make. My managers in London and Washington and partners at foreign embassies have praised me for my efficiency and my ability to deliver results – and these are things I learned at AUAF.”

This recognition peaked in 2011, when he was selected to brief a visiting Congressional delegation from the US on how to improve local governance. And since then, he has routinely been called on by the Afghan government for his thoughts on how to improve its curriculum for journalism in state-run schools.

Since graduating last year, he’s had time to reflect on what he learned at AUAF. “I learned how to lead,” he says succinctly. He knows he’s equipped with the tools to continue his groundbreaking work. “I’m confident that I can continue to make a real difference.”
My name is Sayed Farhad Hashimi, and while my family is from Kabul, I was born in Balkh and raised in Balkh before returning to Kabul. I came into this world at a unique time – I attended school under the communist, mujahideen, Taliban, and democratic regimes in quick succession. More than anything else, my childhood was one defined by war and deprivation. These memories – of having nothing – are largely what drive me to become an effective and useful Afghan citizen.

Specifically, my experience at AUAF was great because of the objective teaching methods the teachers used in class. They presented content and facilitated discussions about it and encouraged everyone to learn. This allowed for students to explore the issues, learn key points, and reflect on how things could be contextualized to our daily lives in Afghanistan. It also helped us compare our own social and professional practices with that of people or scholars from other countries. This approach was not only

I graduated AUAF in 2011 with a BA in Management, which helped immensely in performing all of these tasks. At the macro level, my experience at AUAF helped me broaden my horizons regarding how I see the world and what I can do to make it a better place for everyone.

I also acquired analytical skills at AUAF that helped me better function at my jobs, as well as dramatically improved my communication skills. I’m now able to convey my points to different audiences in excellent English and understand other cultural value sets. Most importantly, AUAF instilled a confidence in me that allows me to work more effectively to promote professionalism in my fields as well as contribute to a better quality of life for all Afghans.

I’d also like to include an idea here. The entire country is transitioning. While most people focus on the economic or military transitions, they don’t seem to understand the importance of the generational transition occurring at this same moment. Afghan youth are replacing our predecessors in every field across the country, and I believe it is time for the Afghan youth to stand out and make things happen. With support and recognition from Afghan authorities as well as the international community, my generation can play an effective role in getting Afghan society to adapt to changing social realities – and thrive.

I love my people and I’m proud to be an Afghan. And I’m also proud to be a graduate of the American University of Afghanistan. – Sayed Farhad Hashimi

Mozammil Shinwari had a dilemma.

On the one hand, with his energy and work ethic, he was quickly rising through the ranks in different Afghan ministries, increasingly reaching senior management positions where he was given real responsibility to directly influence national policy. On the other hand, he wanted to pursue an advanced degree – feeling that he was reaching the limits of the usefulness of his bachelor’s degree – but didn’t want to sacrifice his hard-earned position in government or leave the country and his family to pursue a degree overseas.

I learned so much with regards to decision-making. The program really lived up to my expectations.

Here, they gain tools for life

Mozammil learned about AUAF’s newly introduced Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. Not only would it teach him the fundamentals of business using Harvard Business School case studies and allow him to stay in Afghanistan, it would also give him the training and confidence to keep his job.

And it was a job worth keeping. By the time he had enrolled at AUAF, he had become the Deputy Minister of the powerful Ministry of Commerce and Industry. In a country working to navigate a transition from a donor-led economy to one led by companies and private business, few ministries play as key a role in the nation’s development.

Since graduating with AUAF’s first MBA cohort last year, he’s had plenty of time to reflect on what his AUAF education gave him. Meeting in his office inside the government department he helps run, he explains why the AUAF MBA was exactly what he needed.

“First, the degree was immediately useful. While by night I was a student at AUAF, by day I had been given an enormous responsibility: to lead the campaigns for Afghanistan’s entry into the World Trade Organization. So there I was, constantly meeting with experienced, senior officials from governments from all around the world, talking about global economies, and signing bi-lateral agreements. Using the information I learned in my MBA classes, I was much more comfortable in these situations, and people could understand that I really knew what I was talking about.”

“Second, there was no compromise with regards to quality. Even though I was a senior government official, when I was late to class, my professors treated me just like everyone else. And once class started, it was hard work. It was a great experience. I learned so much with regards to decision-making. The program really lived up to my expectations.”

“Third, AUAF is good for Afghanistan, and I’m optimistic for the future it’s helping to bring about. My former minister was educated at the American University of Beirut, and he always used to say that university was the best investment the Americans have made in the Middle East. Now he says the same thing about AUAF in Afghanistan, and I agree. You cannot compare the education you receive there to any other institution in the country. And the growing AUAF alumni are stepping into key positions of influence and making a positive impact on the country. You can see it, and you also feel it – we are a youthful country – are really heading towards education and starting to make their mark.”

Despite his workload, he still finds time to come back and visit the campus, located just down the road from his ministry. “I love coming back to the university environment on campus. But now, I have a different relationship with AUAF. Now, my old professors are calling me and asking me to come be a guest lecturer in their classes on business,” he says, smiling.
STUDENT PROFILES

At AUAF, students find their voice

Metra Mehran Yaqouby

was amazed to hear the news. The student club she was a member of had just made it to the Public Speaking Grand Finals at the World University Debating Championships in India, beating out more than 100 other schools from 40 other countries. “There we were, in India, beating schools from around the world. We even beat an American university, from somewhere in New Jersey,” she says, grinning.

What made it all the more surprising to Metra was that the AUAF Debate Club, which she was a driving force in creating, was less than a year old, and it started with a simple idea, one born out of her classes at AUAF: critical thinking. “Here in Afghanistan, we need more critical thinking. Here, beliefs own people, and we need to change this. We need people to own their ideas. You must own your own ideas, it’s so important.”

“Here in Afghanistan, we need more critical thinking. Here, beliefs own people, and we need to change this. We need people to own their ideas. You must own your own ideas, it’s so important.”

Metra, who hails from Badakhshan in northern Afghanistan and is finishing up her degree in Political Science and Public Administration, wants to put the skills she’s learned at AUAF to use in driving policy reform at all levels. “This started in high school, trying to organize change. I’ve been limited by many social and political things, and denied many other things. I want to change that, so other people are not denied their futures. I need these skills. So this is partially about me and partially about my country.”

Since the debate in India, her club has competed in several other national competitions on a wide variety of issues – and the result is always the same: they win.

“I love the idea of making policy, and after seeing so many policies fail, I know I need to do my part. This idea makes me push myself to be the best, to try my hardest.”

Masooma Hussaini

Though she was just a child, Masooma Hussaini remembers life in Kabul under the Taliban. “That was the worst kind of thing, I can’t even describe it. I was young but still knew something was wrong. Afghans now, we have no interest in going back to that, where women can only sit in a house all day and nobody does anything.”

Far from sitting idly in a house, Masooma has taken to the skies, becoming one of Afghanistan’s first female pilots and blazing a trail for other women pursing that.

A few years later, in 2010, she became a member of the first female class in Afghanistan’s history of just 29 women to graduate from the nation’s Officer Candidate School. “That was just amazing, particularly given all of the social obstacles we, as women, faced. There were many people saying women shouldn’t join the military; that women don’t do this. There were only a few of us then, but we became sort of role models. Now there are hundreds of women joining each year, knowing that it’s a good way to serve your country and do something honorable.”

Now a student at AUAF on a scholarship for gifted females from the US Embassy, Masooma is working to translate the leadership skills she’s learned as part of the Afghan military towards more civilian endeavors. “I’m studying public administration here, so I can learn about politics, government and history. Ultimately, I’d like to be a politician and become involved in government, and be a role model for future girls who want to do something different.”

“I’ve been reading all about Mahatma Ghandi lately. He’s so inspiring. I want to be as much like him as I can.”

– Masooma Hussaini

8

9
I have been fortunate to visit AUAF several times, meeting with very impressive women and men students. USAID respects and admires the commitment you show to meet your educational dreams and to make a positive difference in Afghanistan. I have confidence that Afghanistan will be in good hands through the future leadership of engaged citizens, including those who have begun their academic journey as students at AUAF. On behalf of USAID, congratulations on the completion of the academic year. Continue to study hard to transform those dreams into a meaningful and exciting future for yourself and Afghanistan.

– WILLIAM HAMMINK, MISSION DIRECTOR, U. S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
We’ve developed an entirely new curriculum for this brand new, innovative program. It’s unprecedented work, actually. We’ve brought more than 300 teachers from every single one of the 42 teachers training colleges that are in each province right here to Kabul to, in a few words, advance their skills. And while it’s been an astonishing amount of work, it’s also been quite a bit of fun.

Zaher Wahab’s interest in higher education goes back decades – all the way back to the early 1970s, when he was a teaching assistant at Kabul University for a professor on loan from Columbia University Teachers College. Those early experiences set the course for a life dedicated entirely to higher education.

“I attended a boarding school in Kabul, where there were several American teachers who pushed me to apply for a variety of scholarships. One of them, funded by USAID, was sending Afghans to the American University of Beirut. I received that one, and spent five great years in Lebanon at that school learning everything I could. Then I came back to Kabul to work at Kabul University.”

But as the political situation worsened in the late 1970s, with a series of coups that rocked the foundations of Afghan society, he increasingly began looking abroad for more academic options. He was accepted to Columbia University for a masters program, and spent much of his time traveling around the US. “I saw almost every state on one of the programs Greyhound Bus had – we spent months on buses just traveling. It was great.”

After Columbia University, he attended Stanford University for his doctorate degree. “To my knowledge, I’m the only Afghan to graduate from the Stanford PhD program,” he says grinning. “Let’s see how long I can hold on to that.”

Afghanistan stayed on his mind even as he completed his doctorate and became a professor at Lewis and Clark College. Not content to watch from the sidelines, he returned repeatedly to the country despite serious danger, and made it to Kabul as it was under control by the Soviets, the mujahideen, and even the Taliban.

“I came to Kabul and had a meeting with the Taliban Minister of Higher Education, which was rather interesting. I was very blunt with him – I never mince my words – and told him that his group had turned Kabul into a graveyard of a city, that there were no engineers, no doctors, no police, no students.”

In 2001, he received a phone call from Dr. Sharif Fayez, AUAF’s founder, to come back and work in the government on education issues. And for the last 13 years, he’s done just that. He even wrote the charter for AUAF.

Now the director of a major program to teach hundreds of teachers, Zaher Wahab is certainly in his element, bringing to bear the entirety of his teaching skills learned across a lifetime in the classroom and working to improve education.

“This is a truly wonderful program – everyone is here from across the country, and they are being taught entirely new skills that are truly cutting edge. We’ve even included courses on leadership and global citizenship, which is remarkable. It will certainly advance the skills of these teachers in a dramatic way.”

“Many of the people in this program – they will go on to become leaders.”

– Dr. Zaher Wahab
Teaching Shakespeare in Kabul

Seeing the interest in Shakespeare on campus, he’s hard at work on two new projects. “For next year, I’m working to start an AUAF literary magazine that would publish student short stories and poetry. Poetry is really our common ground here. I’m also going to attempt to stage a professional production of Romeo and Juliet, with a few twists,” he says with a smile.

Why Shakespeare and AUAF?

First of all, it seemed like a challenge. It’s Afghanistan, after all. I knew this would be an amazingly interesting place – the people, the culture, the natural beauty of the country. There’s the challenge.”

But what keeps him returning semester after semester are his students. “I genuinely love my students – I know everyone says that, but it’s really true for me. I’ve taught all over the US, the Middle East and Africa, and these are my favorite. They are unique.”

For Ghizaal Haress, a law professor, the interest in the codified rules of a nation was never academic – it was personal and born out of experience.

Ghizaal Haress

FACULTY PROFILE: RICK GRAY

FACULTY PROFILE: GHIZAAL HARESS

Teaching Shakespeare

Our students all become critical thinkers and go on to do great things for the nation. We’re creating leaders here, and it’s unlike anywhere else.”

The Perfect Blend

Teaching a mix of two lifelong interests: development and law

For Ghizaal Haress, a law professor, the interest in the codified rules of a nation was never academic – it was personal and born out of experience.

In 2002, Ghizaal moved back to Kabul following the fall of the Taliban, and quickly sought out the Afghan lawyers, judges and advocacy specialists emerging to make an impact. “I was so inspired by them. They were really working to make a difference, to promote a more just Afghanistan.” When it came time to pick a field of study while a student at Kabul University, the choice was easy: law.

A master’s degree in law from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London quickly followed, as did high positions in government ministries. Then, an offer came to work at the American University of Afghanistan as an adjunct professor.

And though hired part-time as an adjunct to teach one class, she is now a full-time assistant professor teaching a variety of classes on constitutional law and the laws of Afghanistan.

“AUAF is really quite important for Afghanistan’s development. From the way we teach our information to the skills we impart – it helps personal and national development. Our students all become critical thinkers and go on to do great things for the nation. We’re creating leaders here, and it’s unlike anywhere else.”
Affiliate Programs & Institutes

AUAF is proud to work as the in-country partner for a wide array of prestigious programs, including Stanford Law School, the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women Initiative, Georgetown University, Indiana University, University of California San Diego, and the Thunderbird School of Management.

These programs help AUAF continue to meet the needs of Afghanistan – with major international support.

Working together with law students from Stanford University, AUAF introduced Afghanistan’s premier law program in 2012, which built on years of experience conducting legal training programs and developing an ever-expanding curriculum dedicated to producing graduates equipped with a sound understanding of Afghan law and its function.

As the partner institution for The Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women Initiative – a project designed to provide underserved female entrepreneurs around the world with a business and management education – AUAF has seen hundreds of aspiring Afghan women come to campus and learn how to better manage their businesses.

Working with researchers from the University of California at San Diego, AUAF faculty helped create the nation’s first behavioral research lab, where research was conducted regarding the effect of displacement and trauma on economic decision making.

Indiana University’s Afghanistan Higher Education Project, a six-year-long project designed to improve institutional administration and secondary teacher training in Afghanistan, is partially based out of AUAF’s facilities.

And with the addition of state-of-the-art facilities on the International Campus offering a whole range of research options, AUAF is working to continue to sign partnerships with universities and institutions from around the world.
The International Campus - being built piece by piece across 80-square acres - is the permanent, future home of AUAF, and houses the university’s newest initiatives.

WOMEN’S CENTER
Opened in 2013, the 5,500 square-meter, state-of-the-art International Center for Afghan Women’s Economic Development is the centerpiece of the International Campus.

Under the leadership of Nilofar Sakhi, the center has hosted numerous conferences - with participants coming from around the country - related to improving the role of Afghan women in the economy. And with its new, full-time research staff writing reports on a myriad of issues facing Afghan women, the center is increasingly defining the women’s advancement agenda.

MASTER’S OF EDUCATION PROGRAM
In conjunction with the Afghan Ministry of Education and the World Bank, AUAF is delivering a world-class master’s in education – in Dari and Pashto – to more than 300 teacher trainers from around the country. These teacher trainers, who in turn are responsible for the education of hundreds of teachers in their home provinces, hail from all 34 provinces. Be sure to see the profile of Dr. Zaher Wahab, who is running the program, on page 12.

FACULTY HOUSING
January saw international staff and faculty moving into the newest addition to the International Campus – a $3.2 million, 34-room facility designed to house AUAF employees in comfort and safety.

BAYAT ICT BUILDING
Joining the International Campus in 2015, the Bayat Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Building – with more than 30,000 square feet of space – will house the university’s expanding IT offerings.

BUSINESS INNOVATION HUB
In February, AUAF welcomed the Business Innovation Hub to the International Campus. Housed in the Women’s Center and dedicated to improving the business prospects of private companies, the Hub is the only initiative of its kind that partners with local businesses to improve their management and streamline their processes.

2014 – A Formative Year

New programs and state-of-the-art buildings expand the offerings on campus.
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SPECIAL RECOGNITION
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 and 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 to attend AUAF
- The Bayat Foundation for construction of AUAF’s ITC Center on the International Campus
- AFCA International for donating land in Kandahar in use as a regional center
- Governor Ata Mohammad 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 World Bank
*Current as of May 1, 2014

Donor Recognition

$100,000-$1 million
Reina M. Ackerman
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Supreme Food Service

$10,000-$25,000
Academi
AGC Alcoaaz Group of Companies
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Suadali Aryoshi
President and Mrs. George W. Bush
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Tawab Suratzada
Chris and Sheila Taylor
Susan T. Whitten
Debra L. Zumwalt

$5,000-$10,000
Andrew Anderson
American University of Afghanistan Finance Company
Bringham McCutchin LLP
Peter H. Brown
Bob Bruni
Mr. And Mrs. Karim Camel-Toueg
Cartier, Inc.

*Current as of May 1, 2014
ALUMNI 2010-2013

Our Recent Graduates

FALL 2010
Habibullah Athaee
Bilquees Daud
Ahmad Farhad Ebrahimi
Masroda Faqirzada
Ahmad Hedayat
Hamid Mansory
Mirwais Maosod
Mohammad Hamed Mohsen
Ghulam Farooq Mujaddidi
Lida Nadery
Naeria Paeshun
Ahmad Wali Gaderi
Hijrat Ahmad Rahimi
Hameedullah Safi
Zakia Soleiman
Muzhgan Waseeq

SPRING 2011
Khatera Afghan
Abdul Alizada
Hikmatullah Amin
Ahmad Furmolly
Sayed Farhad Hashimi
Kulsum Khan
Abdul Hakeem Mehraban
Ahmad Jawad Murad
Sayed Hassan Naqawi
Tahmina Popal
Masood Sakhi

SUMMER 2011
Eesa Ahmadi
Mirwaise Sadaat

FALL 2011
Ezatullah Ahmadzai
Abdul Waseel Faizy
Kramuddin Frogh
Asadullah Jegbleek
Nematullah Noor
Ahmad Popal
Farukh Shah Rokay
Mohammad Khushal Sherdar

SPRING 2012
Sayed Ikram Afzali
Muhammed Hamid Afzali
Sibghatullah Arsalai
Fatima Behroz
Ahmad Jawed Omar
Ahmad Leo Osman
Omri Osman
Safitullah Rahimes
Mohammad Sadiq
Abdul Samad
Ahmad Waite
Bakhtygul Yetybaysa
Mohammad Youssafi

SUMMER 2012
Maiwand Azizi Hotak
Mahmood Habibi
Ahmad Rashid Hadi
Sayed Khalid
Foroz Khan
Masooma Maqsoodi
Abdul Mohsen
Siddique Nemai
Hosaynullah Niazai
Fazal Rahel
Ghulam Rasouli
Abdul Sadrey
Sayed Ihsanuddin Taheri
Abdul Yousoobi

FALL 2012
Mujibur Abid
Wais Ahmadi
Khusraw Ahmadzai
Bismillah Akbari
Jalil Ahmad Amini
Ovais Attayy
Karishka Bakhei
Said Mohammad Eqbal
Salahuddin Hossaini
Jafar Kazemian
Jamshed Looen
Wasima Muhammmadi
Marzia Naderi
Ghazal Niazi
Sherahmah Parviz Noorad
Mohammad Farukh Orazi
Basharam Parwaiz
Sayed Quraishi
Aimal Rasoly
Sayed Mohsen Sahibzada
Mohammad Faisal Oria
Basharmal Pasarlai
Sayed Quraishi
Abdul Tamim Majeed
Ahmad Nasir
Zakia Nouri
Ahmad Jawid Omar
Hameedullah Safi
Zakia Soleiman
Muzhgan Waseeq

SPRING 2013
Azizullah Adina
Amna Ahmadzai
Hossai Amarkhail
Abdul Jamil Danish
Nasim Ghulamzadah
Mohammad Sakhi Hassani
Mohammad Zaman Hossaini
Mr. Mohammad Hussain
Rahmatullah Hikmat
Baqaruddin Kamal
Behroz Kargar
Zahra Kazemi

SUMMER 2013
Massoud Ahmad
Heena Alamyar
Ahmad Atyooy
Amanullah Azeedary
Abdulaziz Azizi
Ramazan Barberi
Mohammad Behroostan
Mustafa Ozaar Ghayyoor
Ehsanullah Kamal
Abdul Azim Makerda
Pharmaceutical Marketing
Shukrullah Mashal
Mohammad Mobin
Mohammad Mohammadi
Enayyullah Najmi
Mohammad Mansoor Niazi
Nizamullah Rahmani
Allah Jan Sherzaad
Khawaja Akmal Siddiqui

WINTER 2013
Humayon Bayani

AUAF’s Alumni Association was officially established on January 30th, 2014 with a constitution approved and a board elected by the majority of alumni. It has a 5-member board, consisting of two women and three men under Shukrullah Atif Mashal, the current board president. The Association helps forge connections between AUAF and its former students as well as to provide networking opportunities for its members. 29 alumni have been accepted to Fulbright programs, two are deputy ministers in the Afghan government, and the vast majority of the rest work in government, NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs, or run their own businesses.