

Asian University for Women

Quarterly Newsletter from the A UW Support Foundation



Senior University Appointment Announced: Hoon Eng Khoo, Ph.D.

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other,” as John F. Kennedy once remarked. The A UW Support Foundation Board was keenly aware of this as it made key appointments at the March board meeting that will affect not only the inaugural class of students at A UW, but the generations of students to follow. As A UW seeks to educate the most promising students from across the region, the University is embarking on a recruitment effort to identify distinguished individuals to develop and lead the University’s academic programs. In March, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Dr. Hoon Eng Khoo as Vice President for Academic Planning.

Dr. Khoo is Associate Professor of Biochemistry at the National University of Singapore, where she also served as Vice Dean in the Faculty of Medicine. While she has spent most of her aca-

demical career at large research institutions, including her pursuit of a Ph.D. at the University of London, Dr. Khoo’s education is firmly rooted in the liberal arts tradition. She graduated in 1973 from Smith College in Massachusetts—one of the premier women’s liberal arts colleges in the United States. With a student population of 2,600, Smith closely mirrors the size of A UW at its full capacity.

It is her belief in the power of a liberal arts education, especially focused on women’s empowerment, that made Dr. Khoo willing to take leave from her tenured position at a prestigious university and make the adventurous leap to help build A UW’s academic program from the ground up. She feels particularly inspired about the diversity of the future student population in the Chittagong campus. “Growing up in a small town, Penang, in the multi-cultural, multi-

ethnic, and multi-religious environment of Malaysia gave me the opportunity to work and interact with people from a wide variety of economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds,” she explained. “I look forward to helping to build a similar environment at A UW.”



As VP for Academic Planning, Dr. Khoo will play a key role in the design and implementation of the university curriculum and the recruitment of faculty and staff from around the world. In addition, she will work with the master planners and architects to ensure the coordination of academic programming with the campus design in order to maximize the educational experience of students.

Safdie and Associates: Developing the Campus and Building Awareness

In early April, representatives from the Asian University for Women along with A UW’s campus master planners, Moshe Safdie and Associates, met with community members, local architects, engineers, and contractors, in Chittagong, Bangladesh. The purpose of the meeting was to brief attendees on the A UW campus design, forthcoming development and construction plans, concerns relating to the environment and sustainability, and plans for phase one of development, which will focus on the design and construction of undergraduate academic and residential facilities to support the university’s first incoming classes. At the meeting, held in the Chittagong Circuit House, A UW also announced that campus construction is set to ramp up in the fall.

Presenting at the event was Christopher Mulvey, principle of Moshe Safdie and Associates,



Moshe Safdie presenting the A UW campus model to the Support Foundation Board

and Project Architect for the A UW campus master planning effort. An award-winning architect possessing a unique design sensibility and outstanding project management skills, Mulvey is a Master’s graduate of the Design and Computation Department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and has been with Moshe Safdie and Associates for the past eight years. Supported by the local architecture firm Vitti Sthapati Brindo Ltd., in addition to the US-based firms STV Inc (for engineering and sustainability expertise) and Dober, Lidsky, Craig and Associates (for campus and facilities planning), the master plan will incorporate local considerations, sustainable building strategies, and a comprehensive facilities plan.

Mulvey returned to Bangladesh in May to attend the A UW 2007 Regional Symposium, where he formally presented the campus master plan to the local community. Held in Dhaka on May 24, the symposium was organized to highlight A UW’s educational and social vision, to showcase the recently completed master plan, and to reach out to government officials, academics, developers, architects, media and other business and community leaders from across the region.

The visionary behind the A UW campus plan is world-renowned architect Moshe Safdie, founder of Moshe Safdie and Associates, Inc. Safdie’s unusual two tier campus design corre-



sponds perfectly with A UW’s programmatic objectives of creating a space that is at once intimate and inspirational, serene yet vibrant, and encourages interaction between students, faculty and the surrounding community. Also envisioned as a model of environmental sustainability in the region, the campus will employ numerous strategies ranging from hydroelectric power to solar power, hillside stabilization to mass re-vegetation. As Safdie explained, “there is a lot of ambition to make this project very sustainable and responsible in terms of water resources, energy consumption, and use of sustainable building materials and that is a major part of our agenda.”

Despite the numerous design challenges and opportunities presented by the campus site, Safdie says that it is A UW’s mission that he finds most exciting. It was Safdie’s task however to turn the University’s mission into reality—a task that is being completed with his customarily groundbreaking results.



Lone Dybkjaer



Ritu Banga



Kamal Ahmad, right

“you could pour a steady stream of top quality institutions like A UW... and the demand would simply soak them up”

AUW Governing Boards Convene in New York

Members of the Asian University for Women Governing Boards gathered at a dinner on March 21, 2007 at the Harvard Club of New York. The Governing Boards, comprised of the Foundation board members and international support groups, traveled from across the globe to attend the event. Lone Dybkjaer, Member of Parliament in Denmark and Chair of the AUW International Support Committee, delivered a speech emphasizing the importance of leadership in building AUW. “In a post 9/11 world, issues of tolerance, diversity, and education have never been more important,” she said. “The partnership between western countries and those from the east in the AUW project has the potential to affect change for generations of women to come.” Lone has been involved with AUW since its inception following the World Bank and UNESCO Task Force on Higher Education and Society, of which she was a member.

Newly appointed Foundation Board Member Ritu Banga spoke of her experiences attending Lady Shri Ram College, a pre-

mier all-women’s school in India. Ritu mentioned that her accomplishments at Lady Shri Ram College made it possible for her to be one of only ten women selected for a class of 160 out of an applicant pool of nearly 50,000, to enter the Indian Institute of Management in 1979. Ritu has spent considerable time living and traveling internationally in India, London, Brussels and New York. She has written about her experiences living as an expatriate with her two daughters and husband Ajay Banga, who is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Citigroup’s International Global Consumer Group. Ritu observed that opportunities in South and Southeast Asia, especially for women, are severely limited, “The region is like a dry sponge—you could pour a steady stream of top quality institutions like AUW into that part of the world, and the demand would simply soak them up.”

Members of the AUW Support Foundation Board met the following morning, on May 22nd, to address issues relating to academics, governance, finance,

fundraising, and campus design. The Board discussed planning details for the Access Academy, scheduled to open next year, to be followed in quick succession by the first undergraduate class in 2009. Dr. Hoon Eng Khoo, Associate Professor of Biochemistry at the National University of Singapore was unanimously approved as AUW’s first Vice President for Academic Planning.

The group received updates from the Advisory Committee on Campus Design and Facilities Planning, and met with world-renowned architect and urban planner, Moshe Safdie. Mr. Safdie presented the recently completed AUW campus master plan, which was developed by his firm, and was enthusiastically approved by the Board.

The Board reviewed AUW’s operating budget, approved a fundraising plan, and voted on resolutions to guide the University’s financial and academic plans for the upcoming year.

Meyer \$1 Million Gift to AUW Makes Bangladesh Headlines

Jack and Beth Meyer’s recent gift of \$1 million to AUW was featured in the March 12, 2007 edition of the Dhaka Daily Star. This gift is just the most recent demonstration of Jack and Beth’s steadfast commitment to the Asian University Women. Jack serves as chair of the Cambridge-based AUW Support Foundation, as well as chair of the Foundation’s Finance and Fundraising Committees, and member of the Audit Committee. He brings tremendous leadership, energy, and financial administration to the nascent university. This recent gift, which will be matched by an additional \$500,000 from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Challenge Grant, provides much needed seed funding to support all aspects of the University’s development. Jack and Beth

have already established two scholarships to be awarded to AUW students in the inaugural freshman class in 2009.

When asked about the importance of AUW’s mission, Jack made the following comment. “The world’s major problems—poverty, hunger, health, security, etc.—interact in complicated ways. It is difficult to treat one in isolation from the others. Women’s education in the developing world, particularly education that focuses on critical thinking, problem solving, and leadership, addresses them all. AUW graduates will imbed themselves across the region and soon begin to have a profound influence on policy and mores.”

Jack is currently Managing Partner, CEO of Convexity Capital Management LLP in Boston. Prior to Convexity, he was President and CEO of Harvard Management Company, which manages Harvard University’s endowment assets, pension funds, charitable trusts and pooled income funds. He joined the AUW Support Foundation in 2001 and became Chairman of the Board in January 2006.



“The tasks are many and challenging but well worth an extraordinary effort”

At the Board dinner:



Hanna Gray, Henry Rosowsky



Ajay Banga, Judy Moody-Stuart, Jack Meyer, Ritu Banga



Osman Farruk, Jamilur Reza Choudhury, Bill Newton-Smith

Letter from Dr. Hoon Eng Khoo

When I first told friends and colleagues about joining the Asian University for Women, I was surprised by how some reacted. “Why would you want to take extended leave from your tenured position to start a new university in Bangladesh?” Because A UW’s mission reflects my personal values and convictions, what they saw as a risky new job in a third world country, I saw as an opportunity to give expression to three of my most important passions. While many women my age look forward to impending retirement, I feel fortunate to be in a position to take on this new challenge as part of my continuing academic career.

My first passion is for women’s education, particularly in an all-women’s institution. As an alumna of Smith College, and a volunteer recruiter of Asian women for Smith, I have spent many hours speaking to high school girls and their parents about how an all-women’s institution can provide a rigorous academic environment to enhance intellectual development. What is a desirable alternative in the United States can play a critical role in South Asia where women have not had the same access to education as men.

At the A UW we plan to build a secular university with high academic standards in a democratic Muslim nation where micro-financing has already transformed the lives of many women and their families. The Bangladeshi government has confirmed its commitment to A UW’s mission by donating the land for the campus and granting a Charter that guarantees the independence of the University.

Using scholarships and financial aid, A UW will welcome women with high academic and leadership potential who would not otherwise be able to afford a quality university education. By educating and empowering these young women, not only will the lives of our graduates be changed, but their families and communities will also benefit.

My second passion is social activism, especially as it relates to women and others who have been traditionally marginalized. I have great faith that the keys to democracy and social development of the region are in the education of women in humanities, social sciences, languages, arts, mathematics and the natural sciences. Our graduates will learn the critical thinking skills and

problem-solving strategies required of effective leaders.

My third passion is my interest in pedagogy. At the National University of Singapore, I have been active in curriculum and faculty development. I have run workshops on problem-based learning, collaborative small group learning, assessment and general pedagogical principles. My aim is to ensure the achievement of A UW’s educational objectives by introducing effective pedagogical tools into the A UW curriculum and incorporating professional development of the faculty.

My position at A UW as Vice-President for Academic Planning is an opportunity to combine in a meaningful way my passions for women’s education, social consciousness, and curriculum and faculty development. A UW is the path I have chosen for empowering women in Asia. The tasks are many and challenging but well worth an extraordinary effort. With the strong support and shared commitment of the team already in place at AUWSF, I am confident that we will succeed.

Please join me on this exciting and tremendously important journey!

A UW Launches \$60 Million Commitment to Financial Aid

The Asian University for Women aspires to provide scholarship support for fully half of the University’s students and all of the pre-collegiate Access Academy students. By committing to provide scholarship and financial aid, A UW guarantees promising young women access to quality education regardless of their financial abilities. The University will have a need-blind, merit-based admissions policy and will reach out to talented students across South and Southeast Asia.

Many donors have stepped forward to provide scholarship support »

Support Foundation Board member Judy

Moody-Stuart and her husband, Sir Mark Moody-Stuart, have focused their A UW giving on supporting students. The Moody-Stuarts have established two scholarships including an endowed scholarship fund focused on bringing Palestinian students to A UW. All of the Moody-Stuart’s gifts will generate additional matching support from the Gates Foundation Challenge Grant.

“I support A UW because it aims to move the entire world forward,” remarked Judy. “The enabling of intelligent young women—some on scholarships, some from families that are relatively wealthy—coming together from economically emerging nations in Asia to

build a network of mutual support, to have jobs in commerce and government, and to be accorded respect. I feel that when these intelligent young women return home to marry and take a full part in life, their ideas will contribute to the history of the world!”

The Moody-Stuarts call London home, but the British couple has lived abroad for over 30 years including time spent in Brunei Darussalam, Oman, Australia, Nigeria, Turkey, Holland and Malaysia. Their experiences working and living internationally have sensitized them to the myriad of challenges facing developing countries. Currently Lady Moody-Stuart is a trustee of Cecily’s Fund for Zambian AIDS



orphans' education, a governor of Shrewsbury School, and on the board of Transparency International, and the International Advisory Board of the London University School of Oriental and African Studies. Sir Mark, former Chairman of Royal Dutch Shell, is the current Chairman of Anglo-American plc, a mining and natural resources company, as well as Chairman of Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Judy joined the AUW Support Foundation Board in 2005, and is a generous and tireless advocate for the University.

Lucky Thirteen—an international group of corporations and foundations provide support for thirteen scholarships »

U.S. based **Nike Foundation** has doubled their commitment to the Access Academy announcing recently their sponsorship of five additional Academy students, bringing to total ten Nike Foundation Scholarships. Maria Eitel, president of the Foundation, commented that the Asian University for Women and the Nike Foundation share a commitment to providing education, economic opportunity, and equality to women in the developing world. Together we will help realize our shared goal to empower girls and young women as powerful agents of change in the developing world. The Access Academy is aiming to welcome its first class of students in 2008.

Abu-Dhabi-based **Aabar Petroleum Investments Company** has funded the Aabar Scholarship to benefit a gifted student through her five-year course of study at AUW. Through the acquisition of Singapore-based Pearl Energy in 2006, many of Aabar's operations are located in Southeast Asia. The scholarship grant to AUW reflects Aabar's commitment to education and community development programs. "We share with AUW a concern for regional progress and development in Southeast Asia and we are delighted to contribute to this endeavor," said Richard Lorentz, Aabar's Vice President New Ventures & Corporate Relations.

U.K. based **SABMiller plc** has funded a five-year scholarship at AUW. Sue Clark, Director of Corporate Affairs at SABMiller plc, warmly welcomed this opportunity and said, "SABMiller firmly believes in the importance of education, especially education to empower women, as a key to sustainable development. Our friendship with AUW is a demonstration of that commitment."

Unilever Bangladesh Ltd. is creating the "Unilever Bangladesh Scholarship" at the Asian University for Women. The Scholarship will be awarded to two students for their five-year study at AUW. Mononita Syed-Haq, Corporate Communications Manager at Unilever Bangladesh Ltd. remarked, "Unilever Bangladesh has always supported women's empowerment and we are delighted to be part of this laudable initiative that will help provide quality higher education for women in South Asia." AUW is delighted to welcome such a valuable partnership, and is also in discussion with Unilever about providing mentoring and internship opportunities for AUW students.

To learn more about the AUW Scholarship Campaign and how you can provide financial support for a student in need, please visit our website at: www.asian-university.org

Notes & News

◆ AUWSF was recently announced a recipient of a Google Grant award. The Google Grants program supports organizations sharing Google's philosophy of community service to help the world in areas such as science and technology, education, global public health, the environment, youth advocacy, and the arts. Designed for 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations, Google Grants is a unique in-kind advertising program harnessing the power of Google AdWords advertising product. The AdWords campaign will help AUW reach a broader audience, and enable thousands of people to learn about the University's mission and activities when they search for related information on the internet.

◆ Kamal Ahmad was named a 'Harkness Fellow' by the Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, USA, where he spoke at an assembly of students and teachers on April 23, 2007. The event, entitled "The Asian University for Women - Envisioning a New University for Women's Leadership in Southeast Asia," was featured as part of a yearlong celebration of the 75th anniversary of the 'Harkness Teaching' model at the Exeter Academy. Kamal Ahmad is an Exeter alumnus of the Class of 1983.

◆ A delegation from Aalborg University including professors Lone Dirckinck-Holmfeld, Research Professor at the Dept. of Communication, and Arne Remmen, Head of the Dept. of Development & Planning, visited Bangladesh in February 2007 to consult with academic, government and business leaders in the country. This trip was a follow-up to an agreement signed last October between Aalborg University and the Asian University for Women to collaborate on a graduate program in Computer Science and Information Technology at AUW.

◆ Kamal Ahmad and Support Foundation staff recently traveled to Tokyo, Japan for a weeklong trip from May 14 to 18. They met with AUW friends and supporters in the area, and also attended events at the Asia Society's 17th Asian Corporate Conference.

◆ Kathy Matsui and Robby Feldman, members of AUW's regional support committee in Japan, were speakers at the Asia Society's 17th Asian Corporate Conference in Tokyo held on May 16-18. They served on a panel entitled "Confronting Asia's Demographics Problem: New Strategies, Shifting Realities." Kathy is also a member of the AUWSF Board of Directors; Robby, a former Board member, is an inaugural member of the AUW Advisory Council to the Governing Boards.

◆ The AUW 2007 Regional Symposium was held at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Center in Dhaka on May 24. The highlight of the event was a presentation of the AUW campus master plan by project architect Christopher Mulvey. The symposium featured a keynote lecture entitled "A University of One's Own: Envisioning Education and Empowerment" —delivered by Dr. Rukmini Bhaya Nair, distinguished Professor of Linguistics and Head of the Dept. of Humanities & Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi. Also speaking at the event were M. Osman Farruk, former Minister of Education of Bangladesh, and Mrs. Rokia Afzal Rahman, President of the Women Entrepreneurs Association of Bangladesh.

◆ Zarina Hossain has accepted her new appointment as Deputy Director for Logistics and Community Outreach for the Access Academy. A respected architect and urban planner, Ms. Hossain is a longtime resident of Chittagong and a high profile advocate of sustainable development. She has been involved with AUW since its early planning stages and will serve as a project manager for many of AUW's community and construction projects.

◆ Navjeet Bal, Esq. recently joined the AUW Support Foundation staff as Vice President for Legal Affairs and Chief Operating Officer. Navjeet joins the Foundation after sixteen years at the Boston Law Firm Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C. She previously worked for AUW for several years in a pro-bono capacity.