

Asian University for Women

Quarterly Newsletter from the A UW Support Foundation

Letter from the President



Over five years ago, in May of 2001, I introduced the Asian University for Women to a group of advisors at the United Nations, explaining how a center for academic excellence like

AUW could produce the enlightened leaders necessary to improve the status of women in developing regions of the world such as South and Southeast Asia and, in turn, help to enact real and sustainable change in these emerging economies.

AUW has come a long way since then, achieving a number of significant milestones and forming a worldwide network of friends and supporters that have helped turn what was once an idea into a dynamic, concrete initiative.

2007 presents what is perhaps the most crucial year in AUW's development—the campus master plan will be completed, key academic

leadership and faculty positions will be installed, and the curriculum and student-life programs will take shape, all in preparation to welcome the first class of students in 2008.

In the midst of all this activity, I try never to lose sight of the importance of AUW's mission in the larger global context, or of the core premises that have guided me since that 2001 planning meeting—and earlier. At a time when values of meritocracy, secularism, and tolerance are receding in the face of encroaching violence and corruption, AUW's emphasis on academic freedom, diversity, and women's empowerment serves as a beacon for hope and change. By

opening its doors to gifted women from all socio-economic classes, religious and ethnic backgrounds, AUW will veritably demonstrate that no class or group in society has a monopoly on talent.

I hope you enjoy reading about our progress.

Kamal Ahmad
President & CEO, AUWSF

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Moshe Safdie to Design Campus Master Plan

The architectural firm of Moshe Safdie and Associates (MSA) has agreed to serve as the master planner for the AUW Campus in Chittagong, Bangladesh.

Moshe Safdie, designer of the groundbreaking Montreal housing complex Habitat '67, has brought his visionary style to a broad range of projects over the course of his career including the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem; the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa; Salt Lake City Public Library in Utah; Khalsa Memorial

Complex, the National Museum of the Sikhs in Anandapur Sahib, India; Marina Bay Sands, an integrated resort in Singapore; and numerous other landmark sites.

"Given its isolation from the dense urban fabric of Chittagong, the [AUW] campus must possess a certain element of self-sufficiency," observed Safdie, "likened to a microcosm of a village or small town, the campus' classrooms, lecture halls and libraries will be complemented by performing arts and sports facili-

ties, convenience shops and the range of places for social interaction."

Slated to be completed in March of 2007, the master plan will provide a coherent design vision for AUW, guiding the campus' various phases of development over the course of the next decade. The campus will also serve as a model for ecologically sound building practices in the region.

"Formed by a series of valleys and ridges, the unusual site provides a



Above: Westernmost valley of the A UW site, looking South (pre-monsoon)

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Below: Map of Chittagong, showing location of the A UW site to the north-west



clue for the design—a sequence of continuous courtyards and water basins in the valley will act as the principal organizing device for academic structures and

a linear development atop the ridges for the residential facilities.” explained Safdie.

Above all, the campus design will bring together A UW’s diverse constituencies. “The design will facilitate and encourage the interaction between students, faculty and the surrounding community,” commented Safdie, “the focal points for this interaction, within the plan, will be the urban living rooms where a variety of indoor and outdoor facilities will create a sense of community.”

The A UW Support Foundation’s Chittagong project office has been directly coordinating with Moshe Safdie and his colleagues, helping to familiarize them with

the local site and climactic considerations, as well as construction methods and procedures. The Chittagong staff also has been active in preparing for the development of the campus plan, including preparation of base maps of the site, overseeing topographical surveys, identifying parameters for running utility lines to the campus, confirming site boundaries, fencing the perimeter of the campus site, and establishing security at the entrance and other key points.

The master plan is scheduled to be completed in the early spring for review and approval by the A UW Governing Boards.

Japan Foundation Backs Support for A UW

Supporters of the Asian University for Women (A UW) in Japan now have an added incentive to join the international effort to establish a world-class residential learning community for gifted women across South, Southeast and West Asia.

For the next three years, donors in Japan will enjoy tax-deductions on their gifts to A UW through a partnership launched with the Japan Foundation. The Tokyo-based semi-governmental public organization announced that as part of its Designated Donations Program it would now accept up to US \$10 million worth of monetary donations on behalf of the A UW Support Foundation, a US-registered non-profit.

“The A UW initiative is so important to me because I firmly believe that providing women

across Asia with an opportunity for higher education will pave the way for more open minds and open societies,” explained Kathy Matsui, an AUWSF board member in Tokyo. “A UW will be a beacon of light for what can be done on a multilateral basis and will lead the way towards greater cooperation across the region. That’s a goal that we share with the Japan Foundation, and we are grateful that they have lent their support through this program.”

Toshiki Ando, a director of the Fund Management Office at the Japan Foundation, affirmed the sponsorship of the A UW Support Foundation: “We are delighted to support A UW’s outreach efforts in Japan. The vision of the Asian University for Women resonates powerfully with the Japan Foundation’s aims to promote intercultural

exchange in order to build mutual understanding and dialogue with different nations in the region.”

The application to the Japan Foundation was made possible through the Friends of A UW Japan, a group of Tokyo-based volunteers who represent Japanese academia, civil society and the business community. The group has been leading efforts to raise awareness of the project, working to build A UW’s support base in the country, and facilitating partnerships with foundations and academic institutions.



JAPAN FOUNDATION

“Japan’s investment in education is undoubtedly a cause for the country’s success,” said Yasko Tashiro, a member of Friends of A UW Japan. “Japan’s partnership with A UW will send a powerful reminder about the ability of education to unlock the

full potential of young people for economic and social development.”

The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 to undertake international cultural exchange in order to promote transfers of

Japanese culture, art, language and learning.

More information about donating to A UW in Japan is available online at www.asian-university.org or by calling Amy Paradis at 617-301-4055

WorldTeach to Partner with A UW

WorldTeach, a non-profit affiliated with the Center for International Development at Harvard University, is partnering with A UW to provide volunteer teachers for A UW’s Access Academy, a 12-month pre-collegiate program designed to strengthen students’ facilities in mathematics, computer science, oral and written English, and provide support in auxiliary areas as needed—preparing young women for the rigors of the A UW curriculum. The Access Academy will target students primarily from socially and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds who show exceptional promise. All students in the program will attend on full aca-

demical scholarship, including tuition, room and board, and health care.

Founded in 1986 by a group of Harvard students, WorldTeach was developed in response to the need for educational assistance in developing countries. Since its founding, WorldTeach has worked diligently to place thousands of volunteers in places as far away as Namibia and as close as Costa Rica with the main goal of not only teaching, but serving, learning and volunteering overseas.

“The Asian University for Women, especially identifying the underserved from that re-

gion of the world, is such a fascinating and important project. WorldTeach is eager to support A UW in any way it can,” said Helen Claire Sievers, WorldTeach’s Executive Director.

In addition to providing instruction in the Access Academy’s core areas, teachers recruited by WorldTeach are working closely with A UW to recruit, interview, select and train additional volunteers.

More information on WorldTeach is available on their website at: www.worldteach.org



Kathy Matsui, Member, AUWSF Board of Directors and Friends of A UW Japan

“...providing women across Asia with an opportunity for higher education will pave the way for more open minds and open societies”

Notes & News

◆ A UW has begun to develop the slate for the University’s Board of Trustees and has engaged two prominent Indian business leaders in this capacity: Ratan Tata, Chairman of Tata Group, and Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairman and Managing Director of Biocon Limited.

◆ A two-day planning workshop on the Access Academy was held on January 27-28, 2007 at the AUWSF Chittagong Office. Participating in the meeting were regional academics and leaders,

including Dr. Firdous Azim from BRAC University, Bangladesh, Dr. Roop Rekha Verma from University of Lucknow, India, Dr. Regina Pappa from Alagappa University, India, and Dr. Hoon Eng Khoo and Dr. Zubair Amin from National University of Singapore.

◆ On February 1, 2007 Jack Meyer, Chairman of the A UW Support Foundation, spoke about A UW at a conference on philanthropy sponsored by the Boston Foundation, the premier

community foundation of the City of Boston.

◆ AUWSF recently announced the formation of an Advisory Council to the Governing Boards, members of which include A UW’s most active and committed volunteers. They will provide advice and recommendations to the University’s senior academic and administrative leadership on matters related to strategic planning, in addition to serving as ambassadors and advocates for A UW in order to

raise awareness and support for the University.

◆ Meeting of the A UW governing boards, including the International Support Committee and the AUWSF Board of Directors, will take place in New York on March 21-22, 2007.

◆ In May 2007, Kamal Ahmad, President & CEO of the A UW Support Foundation is scheduled to travel on a trip to Tokyo, Japan to meet with A UW supporters in the area.

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Visit Us Online!

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The Asian University for Women seeks to graduate women who are skilled and innovative professionals, service-oriented leaders in the businesses and communities in which they work and live, and promoters of intercultural understanding and sustainable development in Asia and throughout the world.



We're Moving!

On April 1, 2007 the Cambridge offices of the Asian University for Women Support Foundation will relocate to 1100 Massachusetts Avenue — just one block south from our previous address at 2 Arrow Street.

Corporate Foundations Create Opportunities for Women in Asia

A few years ago, a 16 year-old girl from Chittagong, Bangladesh made news by achieving the highest score in the world on her Mathematics O-Levels. In Pakistan, three young women from Khalsa College for Women, took the top three positions in the BBA examination of Punjab University. Vijayalakshmi Bidari had the great distinction of becoming the first woman from South India to top the Civil Service Examination in the history of the civil services in India — and the third woman ever to achieve the highest score on this test. There are many stories of young women from across Asia succeeding like never before — but their stories are noteworthy because these women are still the exceptions to the rule.

Organizations like the Nike Foundation and the Goldman Sachs Foundation have partnered with the Asian University for Women to help expand educational opportunities for gifted young women like these through their support of AUW's Access Academy.

The Nike Foundation's grant will enable five Access Academy students to attend on full scholarship, covering room, board, travel,

tuition, health care and other necessary incidentals during their course of study.

"The Nike Foundation is very excited about enabling girls from educationally disadvantaged communities in Asia to participate in the one-year residential Access Program at the Asian University for Women and eventually matriculate there. Girls from rural, refugee and marginalized communities often lack access to education, but will have the opportunity to thrive at the university level through this innovative program," remarked Maria Eitel, president of the Foundation.

The Nike Foundation envisions girls and young women as powerful change agents in the developing world and works with organizations worldwide to raise awareness and incite action to remove the barriers to health, education, economic opportunity and justice facing adolescent girls today.

Another key supporter of the Access Academy is the Goldman Sachs Foundation. Committed to promoting excellence and innovation in education and improving lifelong productivity

of young people worldwide, the Foundation is providing seed funding for AUW's Access Academy, supporting student scholarships as well as curriculum development and faculty recruitment for the program.

"We are delighted to be on the ground floor of such an exciting project. We share AUW's commitment to creating opportunities for women who will become service oriented leaders and who will promote intercultural understanding and sustainable human and economic development in Asia and throughout the world," said Stephanie Bell-Rose, president of the Goldman Sachs Foundation.

Both foundations are part of a growing network of AUW supporters who are helping to advance the University.