

Asian University for Women

Newsletter from the A UW Support Foundation

Letter from Dr. Dil Afroze Quader



Leaving Dhaka was a wrenching decision. I was born, bred and educated in that city. I raised a family and built a successful academic career there. And of course, there

was my garden.

Thus when Kamal Ahmad, president and chief executive officer of the A UW Support Foundation, first called to propose the idea of my joining the Asian University of Women as the executive director of the Access Academy—a program designed to prepare young women from underserved communities for

the rigors of A UW’s curriculum—I was intrigued but hesitant, asking myself, “Why uproot my life to start anew in Chittagong?”

However, when I toured the campus site in Chittagong several months later and spoke with the dedicated individuals who were working tirelessly to bring all facets of the program together, the position suddenly became very real to me and I realized that I could contribute so much more there than I had been in Dhaka.

Now that I am installed as the Academy’s Executive Director, I witness my educational values and experience reflected in every aspect of the program. As a dedicated teacher

of English Literature and Second Language Development for many years, I envision the program building and improving young women’s abilities to communicate, helping them find their own voice, not just in their studies, but in their relations with their fellow students, bridging different cultures, mores, social classes and languages to form a cohesive whole.

The challenges posed by “difference” in this context, however, do not elude me. As professor and former head of the Institute of Modern Languages at Dhaka University and through my experience granting financial aid to a diverse range of applicants as a director of the Asian Scholarship Foundation, I have

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Access Academy’s “Dream Team” in Place

This summer the Support Foundation finished assembling its “dream team” to design and lead A UW’s Access Academy as well as admissions and recruitment for the entire University. Motivated by the desire to expand educational opportunities for young women, this experienced multi-national group of individuals put on hold successful professional and academic careers—and some even uprooted themselves and their families from their home countries and cities—to give shape to this unprecedented program.

Dr. Dil Afroze Quader, Executive Director: Heading up the Academy is executive director, Dr. Dil Afroze Quader. In her decision to join A UW, Quader took an extended leave from her position as a professor and former director of Dhaka University’s Institute of Modern Languages, where she taught courses in applied linguistics and TESOL. Educated at Dhaka University as well as the Universities of London and Edinburgh, Quader, in addition to her academic duties, serves as a director of the Asian Scholarship Foundation (ASF) in Bangkok and as treas-

urer of the Bangladesh English Language Teachers’ Association. As the Academy’s new executive director, Dr. Quader brings her dedication to pedagogy and Teaching English as a Second Language to all aspects of the program, as well as her role—along with her husband Major General Ghulam Quader—as live-in house master for the Academy’s residential quarters.

Dr. M. B. Regina Papa, Executive Director for Admissions and Recruitment:

“A UW is the mirror image of my dreams and possibilities—my life bears a testimony to the A UW principle that a well conceived quality education will bring unbelievable changes in the life of a woman, her family and community,” commented Dr. Regina Papa, on her decision to direct admissions and recruitment for the entire University.



And Papa’s impressive career is indeed a reflection of A UW’s vision. Bringing forty

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experienced times when issues of social class and ethnic differences have reared their ugly heads, and that is why I find the mission of AUW, in its endeavor to bring students together from all walks of life, so crucial to help eradicate this “fear of the other.”

I, along with the other members of the University’s impressive management team—whom you’ll read more about in this issue—have made important strides in our first few months but have much to do ahead in preparation to welcome our inaugural cohort of 115 students in March. We must refine and complete our recruitment and enrollment of talented young women from Bangladesh and surrounding countries; finish transforming our newly leased facility in Chittagong into

an inspiring learning environment and home for the Academy’s students, teachers and administration; as well as finalize the program’s curriculum, academic schedule and recruitment and training of volunteer teachers, among other tasks.

We have much to accomplish in the months ahead, but we finally have the capability and breadth of experience to reach our goals. The University members hail from different cities and countries and bring with them different skills, expertise and focus. However, we have all come together at this one moment for the same purpose: to help grant educational opportunities to gifted young women who have had the courage, intelligence and presence to overcome adversity and challenge in their

lives, and in turn, have the potential to become beacons of change in their region.

I look forward to updating you on our progress and adventures in the months ahead.

— Dil Afroze Quader
Chittagong, Bangladesh

The AUW Access Academy is a pre-collegiate program that will provide promising students from underserved communities throughout the region with foundational skills needed to help them enter the University proper. Students admitted into the Academy will be selected through the University’s admissions program and identified as young women who demonstrate exceptional potential, talent and intellect but who would benefit from additional coursework prior to commencing their undergraduate studies.



Access Academy Leadership

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years of experience in higher education to the University, Papa was professor and head of the Department of Women’s Studies at Alagappa University in India before joining AUW. A graduate of the University of Madras (one of India’s oldest universities), she earned her doctorate from Madurai Kamaraj University and went on to establish the first Women’s Studies Department in India at Alagappa, as well as becoming the first woman registrar of a major university in India.

Over the course of Papa’s career, women’s studies and women’s development have served as the primary platform for her work. As well as teaching courses in gender theory and research, she has run numerous action-oriented research projects such as a technology centre for rural girls and a free legal aid centre for women.

In the course of only a few months, Papa and her colleagues have hit the ground running by finalizing the design of the recruitment plan; designating and training recruitment coordinators in the target countries of Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka; and pilot testing the recruitment plan in Sri Lanka, among myriad other activities.

Professor Rehana Alam Khan, Deputy Director for Admissions: Professor Rehana Khan has recently come on board to support Dr. Papa in admissions. Prior to joining AUW, Khan was on the faculty of the School of Liberal Arts & Science, Independent University, Bangladesh at its Chittagong campus, where she taught English reading, writing and advanced academic skills. Khan, in addition to her teaching responsibilities, has been linked to several non-governmental organizations that



Spotlight on Recruiting in Sri Lanka

In August, Dr. Regina Papa spent a week in Sri Lanka on a fact-finding mission for Access Academy student recruitment in the country.

Local conditions within each country—and even regions or states within national borders—often vary greatly and the Access Academy’s student recruitment plan involves working with knowledgeable local consultants to tailor country recruitment strategies according to the landscape and needs of each community rather than relying on a single global blueprint.

The case of Sri Lanka—where schools appear to be segregated by community and/or religion (e.g. Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim)—presents a challenge and an opportunity for the Access Academy’s student recruitment plans. AUW is working with the Sewalanka Foundation, one of the country’s most effective NGOs, to identify several target high-performing high schools in disadvantaged areas that will represent a cross-section of the various groups and to obtain advice on methods to integrate a potentially diverse group of Sri Lankan students.

address maternal and general health for women from disadvantaged backgrounds such as Marie Stopes Clinical Societies, Marie Stopes Bangladesh Ltd. and Integrated Health Care.

When asked about her motivation to join A UW, Khan replied, "In my previous role I was committed to helping women from marginalized backgrounds exercise the right to decide their physical and personal wellbeing; A UW will enable me to help such women attain intellectual and professional expertise."

Ms. Zarina Hossain, Deputy Director for



Operations, Logistics and Community Relations: "Creating opportunities for education has always been my passion," commented Ms. Zarina Hossain who has been involved with

A UW since its early planning stages. "The idea of the Asian University for Women is something many of us have been dreaming of—giving concrete shape to this idea is exciting and challenging and meeting this challenge inspired me to join the Academy."

Educated at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand, Hossain is an architect and planner by training, an advocate for sustainable development, and has been involved in numerous development projects throughout Bangladesh. In her new role at the Access Academy, she oversees a broad range of responsibilities such as facilities planning and management, security, room and board arrangements, health services planning and management, and community relations and cultural life for the program. Over the last few months, however, most of Hossain's focus has been on securing and preparing a recently leased building in Chittagong to serve as the Access

Academy's interim home for the next four years.



The Goldman Sachs Foundation

The A UW Support Foundation wishes to express its gratitude to The Goldman Sachs Foundation for supporting the launch of the Access Academy. The Academy's lead funder, The Goldman Sachs Foundation is a global philanthropic organization that promotes excellence and innovation in education and works to improve the academic performance and lifelong productivity of young people worldwide through a combination of strategic partnerships, grants, loans private sector investments, and the development of professional talent from Goldman Sachs.

Meet Kate Meehan: Access Academy Teacher

"I can think of nothing more rewarding than being able to help marginalized communities achieve success, and it seems that the foundations of the Access Academy enable the participating women to do just that," commented WorldTeach volunteer Kate Meehan on her motivation for choosing to teach and train students in the Access Academy's inaugural class.

One of fifteen expected volunteers recruited by WorldTeach to work with A UW's Access Academy students, Meehan, a 2007 graduate of the University of Virginia, is no stranger to working and volunteering in some of the most challenging developing regions of the world. During the summer of 2006 she spent two months working with a community organization in Northern Ugandan IDP Camps (camps for Internally Displaced Persons), researching the impact of displacement on children in war-torn nations and engaging in projects to improve conditions for families who call these make-shift settlements home.

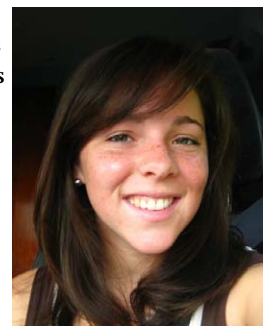
"Before working in Uganda, my interests focused much more on helping young chil-

dren, but what moved me most about my experience in these camps was my contact with young adults, especially women who were at an age to take on considerable responsibility and enact positive change in their society and in their families' lives. This factor played an important role in my decision to help young women grow and succeed at the Access Academy," explained Meehan.

Meehan, along with the other WorldTeach volunteers, will arrive in Chittagong in mid February—a month before the Access Academy opens its doors to students—to receive teacher training and to become oriented with the surrounding area and culture. Contracted

"...allowing teachers to not only play a larger role in students' development, but creating an opportunity for teachers to become better educators."

for two years, volunteer teachers will teach five days a week, four hours per day, helping gifted students build and reinforce their knowledge and skills in areas that their



previous institutions may not have been able to cover effectively, or at all, such as content-oriented English language studies, with a significant emphasis on writing and verbal expression; advanced pre-calculus math; quantitative reasoning, computer skills training; as well as additional proficiencies. The ultimate goal of all of this preparation is to ensure that these young women successfully enter into the University proper in the fall of 2009.

Teachers will also see to it that the program is not all work and no play, integrating extra-curricular activities such as music, athletics as well as performing and fine arts into the curriculum. Meehan, an avid photographer,

would like to share her hobby with her Access Academy students, teaching them to capture and document their own surroundings through photography, segueing into studies of activist-photographers who use their craft as a tool for social justice.

Commenting on the project more broadly, Meehan stated, "One of the greatest strengths I see thus far with the Support Foundation, Access Academy and WorldTeach staff is the flexibility they're building into the program," commented Meehan. "They really want teachers' input . . . recognizing that the more input there is from the people working directly with students in the classroom, the better the product will be."

Abbie Bennet, the program director at WorldTeach who is overseeing the Access Academy project, echoed Meehan's sentiments, "What's unique about this project is that it's truly a collaborative effort between WorldTeach's volunteers and the Access Academy staff and local community, allowing teachers to not only play a larger role in students' development, but creating an opportunity for teachers to become better educators."

After her 18-month stint in Bangladesh, Meehan plans to return to school for a law degree as well as a masters in public health, in the hope of one day pursuing a career in international development.



WorldTeach, a non-profit affiliated with the Center for International Development at Harvard University, is partnering with A UW to identify, recruit, and train teachers for the Access Academy. WorldTeach was founded in 1986 by a group of Harvard students and developed in response to the need for educational assistance in developing countries. More information on WorldTeach is available on its website: www.worldteach.org.

Professors James Scott and Celia Lowe Launch Planning for AUW's Social Science Curriculum

James Scott is a busy man. In addition to holding Yale University's highest academic rank—the Sterling Professorship—in Political Science, Scott is a professor of anthropology as well as director of the Agrarian Studies Program, an experimental, interdisciplinary effort to reshape how future scholars understand rural life and society. Focusing his research on peasants in developing countries, Scott has published several groundbreaking works over the course of his career: *Political Ideology in Malaysia: Reality and the Beliefs of the Elite*; *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*; and most recently, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, among others. When he is not writing, lecturing or traveling back and forth to Southeast Asia to further his research, Scott also serves on the board of Asia Watch and is a member of the Council on Southeast Asia Studies, in addition to his involvement with numerous other organizations.

As if all these activities were not enough already, Scott has recently managed to cram yet one more commitment into his hectic schedule: serving as chair of AUWSF's Social Science Curriculum Advisory Group. "I needed one more thing to do in my life like I needed a hole in the head," jokingly com-



AUW Social Science Roundtable at the University of Washington—Seattle, on October 7, 2007.

mented Scott on joining the AUW initiative. "But I couldn't resist the promise and importance of the University's mission or forego the unique opportunity to help design an entire academic program from the ground up."

Equally as instrumental in AUWSF's Social Science planning, Celia Lowe, associate pro-

fessor of anthropology and director of the Institute of Transnational Studies at the University of Washington, is serving as consultant to the Advisory Group. With research interests spanning a number of areas including biosecurity, post-colonial theory, science studies, nationalism, identity, in addition to Southeast Asia, Lowe has published several works in her field: "Recognizing Scholarly

AUWSF Social Science Roundtable Participants

Kamal Ahmad, president & chief executive officer, AUWSF, USA

Kiko Benitez, assistant professor of comparative literature, University of Washington, USA (Phillippine Studies)

Mary Callahan, associate professor of international studies, University of Washington, USA (Burma Studies)

Hang Bich Duong, Population Council, Hanoi, Vietnam (Vietnam & Laos Studies)

Hoon Eng Khoo, vice president for academic planning, A UW

Pingkaew Laungaramsri, professor of anthropology, Chang Mai University, Thailand (Thai Studies)

Celia Lowe, associate professor of anthropology, University of Washington, and A UW Social Science Consultant, USA (Indonesia Studies)

Amara Pongsapich, director, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand (Thai Studies)

Priti Ramamurthy, assistant professor of women's studies, University of Washington, USA (South Asia Studies)

James Scott, Sterling Professor of Political Science, Yale University and chair, A UW Social Science Curriculum Advisory Group, USA (Malaysia and Burma Studies)

Ratana Tosakul, assistant professor, Institute of Language & Culture for Rural Development, Mahidol University, Thailand (Thai Studies)

Research Assistants:

Yu Huang, Department of Anthropology, University of Washington, USA (China Studies)

Evi Sutrisno, Department of Anthropology, University of Washington, USA (Indonesia Studies)

Subjects: Collaboration, Area Studies, and the Politics of Nature," in *Knowing Southeast Asian Subjects* (2007); *Wild Profusion: Biodiversity Conservation in an Indonesian Archipelago* (2006); and "The Power of People: An Interview with Chayan Vaddhanaphuti" in *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique*, a special issue of "Intellectuals and New Social Movements" (2004).

When asked about her involvement in the Advisory Group, Lowe commented, "The goal of social science is to understand and explain a range of social behaviors that touch every aspect of our society and individual lives. It is exciting to be on the ground level of a project like A UW—designing a curriculum that not only meets this overall goal, but equips students with the analytical abilities to grapple with complex issues in their communities, regions and beyond."

The Social Science Curriculum Advisory Group is just one of several planning committees that are in the process of shaping the Asian University for Women's undergraduate and graduate programs. In addition to Social Science, these advisory groups—comprised of academics and field experts like Scott and Lowe—are currently planning the University's curricula in the thematic areas of information science; arts, humanities and languages; physics; math; life sciences and chemistry; leadership, entrepreneurship and innovation; marginalization and inequality; as well as studies in music, theatre, dance, studio art and media. Together, these areas will imbue A UW graduates with knowledge and skills that are indispensable in today's globalized world.

Each thematic area has a com-

mittee staffed by a consultant who is charged with crafting a white paper to define the curricular framework, outline competency objectives, provide a list of illustrative course offerings, explain pedagogical methods, delineate staffing requirements, and recommend possible sources of faculty and strategies for recruitment. The committee chair is tasked with providing guidance to the consultant in the preparation of the relevant white paper and facilitating input in this process from other members of the group as well as other experts. Once the white papers for each academic area are produced, they will be reviewed and refined over the course of the next several months by the vice president of academic planning, Dr. Hoon Eng Khoo, as well as by the Vice-Chancellor and all committee chairs to ensure a sense of integration and connection among disciplines in A UW's curriculum.

"Calibrating models of traditional disciplinary learning with those that illuminate the importance of interdisciplinary approaches..."

Recently setting this intricate plan into action, Professors Scott and Lowe gathered an accomplished and multinational group of academics and experts for a roundtable discussion on the shape and direction of A UW's Social Science Curriculum at the University of Washington in Seattle. Centered on a white paper authored by Lowe, the morning's proceedings explored a cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary array of social science models as well as defining the core compe-



tencies to be gained by A UW students from such a program, including, among other goals, an appreciation for cultural and social diversity and common features of the human experience, as well as familiarity and fluency in theoretical explanations and evaluating policy related research.

The defining motif that emerged out of the meeting—and that will continue to resonate throughout all of the University's academic planning—was the notion of disciplinary versus interdisciplinary models of study. Participants emphasized that interdisciplinary approaches can yield results only when they are built upon a solid disciplinary understanding; otherwise they run the risk of being fashionable in appearance but feeble in their educational value. Moreover, the cross currents of disciplines cannot be fully appreciated by A UW students without a depth of knowledge and understanding in individual fields.

"Calibrating models of traditional disciplinary learning with those that illuminate the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to the problems of contemporary society is emerging as one of the key objectives of every committee," remarked Dr. Khoo, who is charged with overseeing the curriculum planning process. "A UW is honored and grateful to have groundbreaking scholars such as James Scott and Celia Lowe help structure and provide a thoughtful analysis of the University's core academic programs."

AUWSF Partners with BRAC to Ensure Transparency and Accountability in University's Development

This fall the Asian University for Women Support Foundation (AUWSF) took a considerable step forward not only in developing a center of academic excellence for gifted young women, but ensuring it is done by the most transparent and accountable means possible. On September 18, 2007, Jack Meyer, AUWSF Chairman and senior managing partner of Convexity Capital Management, met with BRAC's Chairperson and founder, Fazle Hassan Abed, in Boston to finalize BRAC's generous decision to serve as the AUW Support Foundation's internal auditor in a voluntary capacity.

When selecting an organization to help AUWSF ensure its institutional integrity, BRAC (formerly known as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) emerged as the leading choice for many reasons. In a country where corruption has permeated almost every strata of society—from paying bribes to guarantee a child's entry into a supposedly "free" primary school to the awarding of large government contracts—BRAC, in its three-and-a-half decades of existence, has managed to operate above the social and economic discord that has long hindered Bangladesh, to become one of the most effective and well regarded international development organizations in the world. With Abed at its helm, BRAC has helped Bangladesh's poorest help themselves through innovative and integrated programs in the areas of micro-finance, education, health care, women's empowerment, and agricultural development, among other sectors.

But what is almost as striking as what BRAC has done is how it has done it. With an annual budget of nearly \$500 million and a span of programs serving millions of people, BRAC has managed its large-scale operations transparently and with full accountability as well as created benchmarks to ensure that programs are hitting their intended marks. And Abed and his colleagues' efforts have not gone unnoticed by the international community: for the last three years, BRAC has been awarded, among numerous other honors, the Financial Transparency Award by the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), a



Jack Meyer, chairman of AUWSF, and Fazle Hassan Abed, founder and chairperson of BRAC, signing the Memorandum of Understanding

consortium of 33 public and private international development agencies working together to expand access to financial services to the poor in developing countries.

Abed, an accountant by training and former executive at Shell, has also been acknowledged on an individual level for his work with BRAC, receiving the Olof Palme Award of Sweden and the Gates Award for Global Health. An active figure in the international development community, he also serves on the UN Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor (CLEP), among a number of other organizational boards and committees.

Under the agreement between BRAC and AUWSF, BRAC's Internal Audit Department, over the next three years, will bring its stellar financial and operational track record to bear on the Support Foundation by providing regular examinations and evaluations of mechanisms put in place to ensure the reliability and transparency of financial and operational information; compliance with policies, procedures, laws and regulations;

and the safeguarding of assets. BRAC will also investigate how effectively and efficiently the Support Foundation and the University are meeting their programmatic and operational objectives. Disclosure on findings will be in the form of annual reports submitted to the audit committee of the AUWSF and AUW Boards.

When asked about the AUWSF-BRAC partnership, Fazle Hassan Abed, who is a member of the AUW Support Foundation's Bangladesh Advisory Board, commented, "BRAC is honored to help AUW in its mission to educate gifted young women and help them become leaders and activists in the region. Together, institutions like ours can demonstrate that educational and humanitarian efforts can be managed effectively and transparently even in the one of the most troubled areas of the world."

Echoing Abed's positive sentiments, Jack Meyer added, "Preserving the University's integrity is paramount at this nascent stage, especially in a region that has struggled to extricate itself from years of corruption. We are honored that BRAC—an organization that has become a model of success, accountability and effectiveness in both the region and the international community—has agreed to help us reach this goal."

The BRAC and AUWSF Memorandum of Understanding is available for viewing online at: www.asian-university.org/pdf/BRAC_AUWSF_MOU.pdf

...women's institutions of higher learning must also endeavor to serve as forums where a new way of thinking or a new code of ethics—especially in the context of women's rights—could be realized

Envisioning a “University of One’s Own”: Keynote Speaker Rukmini Bhaya Nair Remarks on Contemporary Women’s Education at AUW Regional Symposium



What is the role of a women’s university in the twenty-first century? In front of a packed auditorium at Dhaka’s Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre, Dr. Rukmini Bhaya Nair, renowned poet and head of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences and professor of Linguistics and English at the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, attempted to address this question during her keynote presentation at the Asian University for Women’s Regional Symposium in May.

One of several memorable discussions that afternoon showcasing the vision, plans and importance of the fledgling University, Dr. Nair’s talk, titled “Envisioning a University of One’s Own: Envisioning Education and Empowerment,” elegantly interwove theories and ideas from intellectual and literary luminaries Virginia Woolf, Martha Nussbaum, Amartya Sen and others to explain what institutions like AUW must do to not only cultivate women’s intellectual and leadership potential, but also to enable them to construct a new code of ethics in which their rights as women might be fully realized and refined.

Citing Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* as her muse, Nair described contemporary women’s universities as enlargements of this “Room,” affording today’s young women what Woolf herself very much desired: a separate space “where the inequities and oppressions and, above all, the exclusions of the real world are not replicated as they would be in a much more conventional university.”

Of course a room, or rather, “a university of one’s own” is not solely sufficient to eradicate these inequities. So how does a women’s university in the twenty-first century begin to address the oppressions and exclusions that have relegated many South Asian women to society’s periphery? Nair emphasized that

the most important task for institutions like AUW is to interpret and define—philosophically, socially and legally—“the right to dream,” a concept that one of India’s foremost writers, Mahasweta Devi, recently declared as “the first fundamental right for all human beings.” Unfortunately this right has so seldom been granted to women that they have been left, as Devi explained, “to dream other people’s dreams.” Thus, if women are given a space they fully own in which to dream, a place absent of society’s distorted views of their worth, they could begin to see things differently and begin to change the way things look in the world.

Exercising her own right to dream, Nair shared her personal vision of a place within a university such as AUW in which women could learn, reflect and advance their literacy in silence and leisure: the library. Regarding the library as the heart of the University, she used her description of this ideal learning environment as a segue into a discussion of how women, by gaining access to such a space, could begin to accelerate their natural tendency toward language acquisition and fluency to become the preeminent writers, orators and intellectuals of their cultures—positions now held primarily by men—as well as to keep pace with new ideas and technologies rapidly transforming society.

“Yet we should still want more from our university,” Nair further commented, noting that women’s institutions of higher learning must also endeavor to serve as forums where a new way of thinking or a new code of ethics—especially in the context of women’s rights—could be realized. Briefly touching



upon Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum’s examinations of a capabilities approach to the social choice theory of economics followed by Martha Chen’s study of this theory through a cultural lens, she illuminated the interaction between the economic incentives and cultural norms on which the feminist language of rights is based. “It is in this particular area—ethics—where universities like AUW can play host to some of the most exciting theoretical debates of the future for oppressed groups such as women,” said Nair. These examinations, in turn, will grant students the social, economic and political fluency to improve the conditions and treatment of women regionally and globally.

Ending her remarks on an inspirational note, Nair explained that AUW will ultimately succeed because it has conviction and a clear mandate, like so many of the great universities that have come before it. Also, like the women it will educate, AUW is attempting to “dream the dream,” to make its ambitious agenda into a reality. Finally, as AUW is chartering a new educational course and direction for women in the region, Nair, quoting Marie Curie, left the audience and University supporters with some very sage advice: “Nothing is to be feared, it is only to be understood.” The Asian University, on its journey to engage a more modern vision of a women’s university, embodies this point perfectly.

The full text of Rukmini Bhaya Nair’s talk is available for download from the AUW website at: www.asian-university.org/pdf/Dr_Rukmini_Nair_Speech.pdf

Speakers Emphasize Importance of Women's Education in Regional and International Development at A UW Reception in Tokyo

An exhibit examining the art and architecture of twentieth-century design visionary Le Corbusier served as an elegant backdrop for a reception highlighting the vision and importance of A UW at Tokyo's Mori Art Museum on September 11. Hosted by Support Foundation Board Member Kathy Matsui, Chief Japan Equity Strategist and co-director of Pan-Asian Investment Research for Goldman Sachs (Japan), the event—intended to garner support for A UW—welcomed more than 100 prominent guests hailing from the academic, corporate, governmental and non-profit sectors. Mrs. Yoshiko Mori, chairperson of the Mori Art Museum, was present at the occasion.

Leading off an impressive program, the Bangladesh Ambassador to Japan, His Excellency Mr. Ashraf-ud-Doula, opened the evening on a solemn and reflective note, paying tribute to the “3000 innocent people including 50 Bangladeshis” who perished in the tragic events that took place six years ago on 9/11. He further noted that the effects of this catastrophe are still very much evident in the conflicts, fear and mistrust that comprise the current state of world affairs. “Yet the resilience of human species is such that our quest for attaining greater heights of advancement and refinement of knowledge has always conquered all the challenges it has confronted,” commented the ambassador, explaining that it was with this belief in mind that A UW's founders devised a blueprint to foster international understanding and tolerance through the education and empowerment of women in Asia.

Following Ashraf-ud-Doula's introduction, Kathy Matsui provided an overview of A UW's

mission and programs and emphasized the importance of Japan's involvement in such a project. “In a globalized world, it is critical to have social and economic development throughout Japan's neighboring region,” remarked Matsui. “By supporting A UW, Japan helps contribute to a regional and therefore, global environment for peace.”

The evening's featured speakers, Drs. Sawako Takeuchi, Rasha Al-Sabah, and Nancy Dye, approached the significance of A UW and women's education more broadly from a range of perspectives. Takeuchi, a professor at Kyoto University's Graduate School of Engineering and ambassador and special advisor to Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, echoed Matsui's point about the importance of Japan supporting A UW. Using her broad international experience as a touchstone, Takeuchi also remarked on the importance of women's education in fostering socio-economic development throughout South Asia and the Middle East.

Under-secretary of the Kuwait Ministry of Higher Education and a member of A UW's International Support Committee, Dr. Rasha Al-Sabah, who earned her doctorate from Yale University, brought her own country's experience to bear on the importance of women's education. She explained that granting Kuwaiti women access to higher education in the 1960s expanded educational opportunities not only for women in her country but for women throughout the Gulf region. This development, Al-Sabah remarked, “enabled successive generations of women graduates from universities and institutions of higher learning to enter the national work force...and eventually to occupy leadership positions within the government.”

Dr. Nancy Dye, president emerita of Oberlin College in the United States and senior advisor to the A UW Support Foundation, rounded out the program, sharing her view-



Left to Right: Ms. Kathy Matsui, Mrs. Yoshiko Mori and Dr. Nancy Dye at the A UW Reception (Mori Art Museum, Tokyo)

point on a range of issues vis-à-vis women's education in developing nations. Most importantly, she emphasized the significance of liberal education and pluralism in the A UW curriculum, commenting that “such an undergraduate education encourages the development of independent minds capable of reasoning well, relying upon evidence, solving problems and working effectively for social justice—skills that will enable graduates to continue to learn throughout their lives.”

The energy and enthusiasm emanating from the presenters that evening was infectious. Attendee Krishen Mehta, A UW supporter and partner at PriceWaterhouseCoopers, commented, “Hearing such an accomplished group of individuals speak on the importance of A UW and the profound impact it will have on developing nations and the world is inspiring. I know that people will walk away from tonight's event with a greater understanding of the role of women's education in international development and why supporting A UW is so critical not only to the advancement of women but to the entire Asian region.”

For more information on A UW's outreach efforts in Japan and how to support the University, contact Tomoko Saunders at: tomoko.saunders@asian-university.org



Postcards from Bangladesh » A UW Senior Advisor Nancy Dye Shares Experiences and Impressions from Whirlwind Visit

When Dr. Nancy Dye, AUWSF Senior Advisor and president emerita of Oberlin College, and her husband, Dr. Griffith Dye, arrived in Chittagong, they did what anyone would do on their first night in an unfamiliar city—attend the wedding of total strangers. “The bride and groom’s family were actually friends of our host Zarina Hossain, deputy director of operations, logistics and community relations for A UW’s Access Academy,” explained Dye. “So when Zarina invited us to accompany her that night, we were delighted, thinking, ‘what better way to immerse ourselves into the life and social networks of the local community?’”

And so went Dr. Dye’s five-day whirlwind tour of Bangladesh, a trip that involved a broad range of engagements, ranging from meetings with high profile individuals like BRAC’s Chairperson Fazle Hassan Abed to beneficiaries of Grameen’s micro-credit programs who have only recently lifted themselves out of abject poverty

When asked what elements of her trip left the greatest impression, Dye answered, “Overall, it was the abundance of creativity, especially in how individuals and organizations in Bangladesh are grappling with the issues of poverty and development.”

In no part of her visit was this element more apparent than the day she visited a village of women who were borrowers of Muhammad Yunus’s Grameen Bank, a Bangladesh-based organization which pioneered micro-credit. “I met so many women whose stories were inspirational, so many who were visibly empowered by this program” commented Dye. “Some individuals, who at one time had been begging on the streets, explained how they had borrowed a series of loans to build up their businesses. One woman had even borrowed a loan to send her son to university.”

In addition to getting a feel for the cultural norms and institutions of Bangladesh, Dye, who became involved with A UW more than a year ago, spent much of her time spreading the word on the fledgling University and consulting with local educational leaders and members of A UW’s Bangladesh Advisory

Board. She also visited the campus site and newly leased facilities that will house the Access Academy.

The former Oberlin President also spent an afternoon at BRAC University in Dhaka, meeting with BRAC leader and visionary Fazle Hassan Abed and delivering a lecture on the importance of liberal education and pluralism in the undergraduate experience. Drawing from her thirteen years as president of one of the United States’ preeminent liberal arts colleges, Dye discussed the importance of liberal education on a residential campus, not just inside the classroom but outside as well. Worlds apart from the rote learning that takes place in so many higher learning institutions throughout Asia and the world, the liberal education envisioned for A UW encourages independent thinking, problem solving and a set of intellectual and social skills that will ensure a lifetime of learning.

The importance of social diversity and pluralism also figured prominently in her talk. An internationalist and advocate for cross-cultural understanding, Dye explained how many of her initiatives at Oberlin were directed toward internationalizing the campus, expanding study-abroad programs and bringing students from all walks of life, social classes and cultures together. Dr. Dye mentioned that she was most surprised when “Oberlin students from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh mentioned that they had rarely encountered individuals from other countries within their region until they attended college in the United States.” With this experience in mind, she explained why it was so important for institutions like A UW to foster cross-cultural ties and understanding in a region where ethnic and nationalistic tensions run high.

After a brisk five-day schedule crammed with events and meetings, all the while braving Bangladesh’s rainy season, Dye—an historian of modern American history and an experienced world traveler—boarded yet another plane with her husband, this time to Tokyo to continue her good work on behalf of A UW.



Nancy Dye, Zareena Hossain and Dil Afroze Quader with students at a girls' school



Prof. Jamilur Reza Choudhury, vice chancellor of BRAC University, Dhaka, introduces Dr. Nancy Dye before a lecture at BRAC



Dr. Nancy Dye and Dr. Griff Dye visiting the A UW campus site

When asked what was next on her agenda for the Asian University for Women Support Foundation, she answered, “I am scheduled to return to Bangladesh in the next few months—I look forward to seeing the University’s progress and returning with a more enlightened understanding and familiarity with the culture and people, and, most importantly, with a full set of rain gear.”

Pike and Forster Endow a Scholarship at AUW

Kathleen Pike has devoted much of her life to improving the mental and physical wellbeing of women. As a professor of psychology at Temple University, Japan Campus, as well as a faculty member at both Keio University in Tokyo and Columbia University in New York, Dr. Pike has spent her career attempting to solve the complex puzzle of factors that trigger eating disorders in girls and women.

Pike's interests in improving women's lives are not confined to the clinical realm, but extend to the educational and international as well. For nearly a decade, she and her family have lived in Japan and have had the opportunity to travel and experience the cultures and scenic beauty of many countries throughout the Asian region; however, they have also witnessed the abject poverty and despair—especially experienced by women and children—in these areas caused by environmental and societal circumstances that are eminently changeable.

The desire to contribute to a better future for such developing nations combined with her commitment to education was what attracted her and her husband, Louis Forster, to AUW's mission and ultimately inspired their decision to endow a scholarship at the Uni-

versity. Their gift of \$250 thousand, which will generate additional matching support from the Gates Foundation Challenge Grant, will guarantee generations of promising young women access to quality education regardless of their financial abilities. The scholarship will be named in honor of Pike's mother, Mary Johnson, who, Kathleen commented, "has worked tirelessly to support higher education for all her children—daughters and sons alike."

When asked about her and her husband's reasons for supporting AUW, Pike replied, "In my view a society cannot be strong if it fails to provide opportunities of education to all members of society, especially to women. And by education, I mean not only reading, writing, and arithmetic, but education from a holistic perspective—including learning to care for ourselves, our family, and our world, as well as learning to recognize where there is pain, suffering and injustice. Education must also illuminate that each of us can do something to repair the world and acquire the skills to effect such change. It is in this spirit that we support AUW. It is our hope that graduates of AUW will become leaders of educational, political, economic and social initiatives throughout the region."



Forster and Pike with their children

Residing in Tokyo with her family, Pike continues her clinical research, leading the first large-scale study of eating disorders among Japanese women. She also has been a tireless volunteer and advocate for AUW, serving as a member of AUW Friends of Japan and most recently, being elected to the Support Foundation's Board of Directors. Earlier this year, she traveled to Chittagong to tour the campus site and meet with AUW affiliates, an experience that reinforced her commitment to the fledgling University. Pike's husband, Louis Forster, is currently president and managing director of Cerberus Japan, a division of Cerberus Capital Management L.P., one of the world's leading private investment firms.

Notes & News

◆ Over the past few months AUWSF has welcomed the following three new members to its Advisory Committee on Campus Planning and Design: **Murray Metcalfe**, senior advisor and managing director of the private equity firm Lee Munder Capital Group; **Rick Schubart**, Bates-Russell Distinguished Professor of Global Education and Chair of the Department of History, Phillips Exeter Academy; **Sheikh Rahman**, president and chief executive officer, SAR Engineering Inc., based in Quincy, Massachusetts.

◆ AUWSF wishes to congratulate

Mohsen Mostafavi, a member of AUWSF's Advisory Committee on Campus Planning and Design, on his recent appointment as dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

◆ **Kathy Matsui**, a member of the Support Foundation's Board of Directors and AUW Friends of Japan, was recently featured in *Forbes Life: Executive Woman* magazine. The article discussed Matsui's rise to the top at Goldman Sachs Asia, being rated Institutional Investor's top Japan strategist in 2000, 2001 and 2006 and the challenges of balancing a

world-class career with family life.

◆ **Aalborg University** in Denmark has recently hired MA **Jesper Lauritsen** to facilitate its partnership with the Asian University for Women in the development of AUW's Masters Program in Computer Science. With program planning already underway, Lauritsen will be focusing on fundraising for the project and coordinating program development moving forward. His academic background lies in the field of administration and social science, with a particular interest in international relations and devel-

opment.

◆ In October, **Alice Hogan** joined the AUW Support Foundation as its chief administrative officer. Prior to AUWSF, Hogan spent over 20 years at the National Science Foundation (NSF) in Washington, D.C., serving in a number of capacities, including as founding program director for ADVANCE (a program designed to increase participation and advancement of women in academic science), as senior program manager of U.S.-China Cooperative Research and as a senior policy analyst in the White House Office

of Science and Technology, among other positions. Before her tenure at NSF, Hogan worked at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for several years. Receiving her Bachelor's and Master's degree in Asian Studies from Cornell University and the University of Michigan, respectively, she has also been a fellow at the Kennedy School of Government's Women and Public Policy Program and served as an advisory board member for the American Council on Education's Office of Women in Higher Education.

◆ **David Burson** has recently been appointed senior advisor for campus planning and development at AUWSF. Educated at Carnegie-Mellon University, Burson has practiced architecture for over 30 years, focusing on planning, design and project management in both private and public sector practice. He currently serves as a senior project manager

with Partners HealthCare Real Estate and Facilities in conjunction with his appointment at AUWSF. Prior to his appointment with Partners HealthCare, he worked as a Project Management Consultant and then Senior Project Director with the Massachusetts State College Building Authority, from 2002 until the Spring of 2006. Awarded numerous honors for his work, Burson served as architectural principal for the programming and planning of two new urban transit stations for the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation in New Delhi, India.

◆ Earlier this fall **Tomoko Saunders** assumed the role of development specialist (Japan) for AUWSF, a position responsible for strengthening and managing the activities of the Foundation as it relates to fundraising, event planning and media outreach in Japan, as well as Japanese companies in the United States. A graduate of Hitotsubashi Univer-

sity in Tokyo, Saunders, prior to joining AUW, was a planning executive in the Strategic Planning Division of the international marketing communications firm of McCann Erickson in Japan.

◆ Broadening its international support base, AUWSF has recently formed the **Australian Friends of AUW**. The committee is helping to raise awareness of the University in Australia as well as facilitate consultative partnerships between local universities and AUW in the areas of university administration, faculty recruitment, and curriculum development. Founding members of the support group include **Joan Lefroy, Meredith Doig, Campbell Bairstow** and **Mary Hawkins**. Mrs. Lefroy is co-founder of the Bruce Lefroy Centre for Genetic Health Research at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and is active on other boards and charitable organizations. Dr. Doig is a professional company

director and Principal of Midlothian Consulting as well as serving in numerous board capacities, including as a Councillor of the University of Melbourne and as a moderator with the Cranlana Programme, an initiative of the Myer Foundation, that focuses on developing executive leadership through intensive discussions on Ethics and the Good Society. Campbell Bairstow is the general manager, alumni relations at the University of Melbourne, Australia. He is an experienced educator and executive, and has held senior volunteer positions including as the chairman of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Western Australia and as the Australasian President of the Association of Alumni and Development Professionals in Education. Hawkins is vice president of the International Women's Development Agency, and head of Technology, Sustainability and Community Programs at ANZ.

Opportunities to Support AUW »

We encourage you to make a difference by contributing to AUW and helping to educate and produce successive generations of professional and civic-minded women leaders for the world's developing nations. Below are a selection of gift opportunities, but please learn more by calling (617) 914-0500 or emailing info@asian-university.org.

Ensuring Academic Excellence

- ◆ **Access Academy Teaching Fellowships—\$25,000:** Support recent college graduates who will work as full-time teachers in the Access Academy.
- ◆ **Faculty Development Fund—\$100,000:** Establish a spend-down faculty development fund to be used in support of costs associated with faculty hiring, salary, and other expenses related to the acquisition of high-caliber faculty.

- ◆ **Academic Development Fund—\$100,000+:** Establish a fund to be used for academic priorities such as recruitment and curriculum development.
- ◆ **Endowed Professorship—\$1 million:** Endow and name in perpetuity one senior professor at the Asian University for Women.

Providing Opportunity to the Most Promising Young Talent

- ◆ **Access Academy Scholarships—\$15,000:** Support a talented young woman through the course of her twelve-month pre-collegiate bridge program.
- ◆ **Five-Year Current Use Scholarship—\$50,000:** Provide current-use funding to support one student over the course of her five-year academic program at AUW.
- ◆ **Endowed Scholarship—\$250,000:** Establish in perpetuity an endowed

scholarship to be awarded to a deserving student.

Building a Community

- ◆ **Campus Development Fund—\$100,000+:** Support the development of AUW's campus for a fully residential academic community in Chittagong, Bangladesh.
- ◆ **Library Acquisition Fund—\$500,000:** Create a fund or acquisition and development of library resources.
- ◆ **Campus Design & Construction—\$1 million+:** A gift to support construction during this founding period would serve as the cornerstone of the University's development.

For a full list and description of gift opportunities, please visit the following webpage: www.asian-university.org/pages/giftopps.htm

AUW Support Foundation Unveils New Look

When building a university for women from the ground up, many crucial elements come to mind—recruiting students, faculty and key leadership, constructing a campus, developing a curriculum. But designing a new visual identifier?

Well, not exactly.

But in an effort to better articulate AUW's mission, values and goals, the Support Foundation overhauled its messaging and creative design on its website and printed materials. As a result, AUW Support Foundation staff and board members have spent the last several months discussing the importance of symbols, logotypes, color palettes and language alongside such critical issues as campus design and curriculum development—a complex exercise that has culminated into the overarching decision to trade the former visual identifier—blades of rice—for the lotus flower.

“But why spend valuable time gauging the visual impact of lotus flowers and mandalas

when there are students to be recruited and buildings to be constructed?” one might ask. An explanation may lie in American historian, professor and writer Daniel Boorstin's view that “an image is not simply a trademark, a design, a slogan or an easily remembered picture. It is a studiously crafted personality profile of an individual, institution, corporation, product or service.”

Thus it is essential for AUW not only to create a striking physical presence, such as its campus, but to design an image which accurately embodies its mission, values and programs effectively—enabling the University to resonate in the hearts and minds of potential supporters, students, faculty and other key constituencies that are unable to experience AUW firsthand.

However, creating a visual identifier that reflects the uniqueness of an organization like AUW is a difficult and intricate process in which, quoting designer Charles Eames, “the



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details are not simply the details—they make the design.” The details incorporated into AUWSF's new logo perfectly exemplify this point: the symbol of the lotus or water-lily, a native flower of South and Southeast Asia, connotes growth and energy, and its position above the logotype represents leadership. The logotype “ASIAN UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN” in all capitals symbolizes confidence, leadership and academic stature. Lastly, the color palette—dark red and mustard—is an amalgamation of the colors found in many of the South and Southeast Asian flags, giving it a regionally grounded presence.

Over the next several months, we look forward to presenting AUW's new look not only in its newsletter, but also on its website and in its broad range of outreach materials: stay tuned!

**Asian University for Women
Support Foundation**
1100 Massachusetts Ave, Suite 300
Cambridge, MA 02138, USA
Phone: 1-617-914-0500

House No. 7, Rd No. 2, Khulshi Hills
Chittagong, Bangladesh
Phone: 880-31-2551682
E-mail: info@asian-university.org
Web: www.asian-university.org

