



# ASIAN UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

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CAN UNIVERSITIES SHAPE SOCIETY?



REFLECTIONS, IDEAS AND DREAMS



CHATTOGRAM, BANGLADESH

JANUARY 21 – 22, 2023





## ASIAN UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

# Can Universities Shape Society? Reflections, Ideas and Dreams

CHATTOGRAM, BANGLADESH • JANUARY 21-22, 2023

This conference commemorates a life of hope of a young woman named Mahsa Amini. Barely 22 years old at the time of her death, Mahsa's life was brutally cut short on September 16, 2022 when she died in a Tehran hospital after being arrested by the "Morality Police" of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Aspiring to become a lawyer, Mahsa became a victim of unjust laws. Instead of safeguarding a citizen from danger, the state itself became the perpetrator of murder of this young woman. Her alleged crime: her *hijab* was not adequate; some unruly strands of her hair uncontrollably sneaked out of her *hijab*. We condemn the forces that caused Mahsa's death and join women and men around the world in seeking justice for Mahsa and freedom for women in Iran and everywhere else where justice and equality continue to elude them.

We also honor another Iranian woman, the mother of a daughter, Maryam Mirzakhani. Born in Tehran in 1977, Maryam Mirzakhani, studied at Sharif University and then went on to do her PhD at Harvard University and, subsequently, became a professor of Mathematics at Stanford University. Maryam Mirzakhani succumbed to breast cancer in July 2017 at the Stanford Hospital at the young age of 40. By then, she had already earned the Fields Medal, the highest honor of achievement in Mathematics. With her family's consent and her academic advisor's encouragement, AUW will establish the Maryam Mirzakhani Chair in Mathematics to be held by an outstanding female mathematician.



## Day 1: Saturday, January 21, 2023

### AUW PERMANENT CAMPUS SITE

TIME	PROGRAM
2:00 pm - 3:15 pm	<p><b>OPENING PLENARY: CAN UNIVERSITIES SHAPE SOCIETIES?</b></p> <p><i>Moderators:</i> <b>Kamal Ahmad</b> and <b>Rubana Huq</b>, Asian University for Women</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Professor John Sexton</b>, President Emeritus, New York University</li> <li>2. <b>Dr. Bryan Penprase</b>, Professor of Physics &amp; Astronomy, Soka University</li> <li>3. <b>Professor Rupa Viswanath</b>, Professor of Indian Religions at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen</li> <li>4. <b>Professor Maithree Wickramasinghe</b>, AUW Trustee, Professor of English, University of Kelaniya</li> <li>5. <b>Professor Yujin Yaguchi</b>, Vice President (Global Education), Deputy Director, Division for Global Campus Initiatives, Professor, Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies, The University of Tokyo</li> <li>6. <b>Ms. Kat Fotovat</b>, Acting Ambassador-at-Large, The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, Office of Global Women's Issues</li> </ol>
3:15 pm - 3:30 pm	<p><b>REFLECTIONS BY STUDENTS, FACULTY &amp; STAFF ON AUW'S 15 YEARS</b> (Video Presentation)</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> <b>Dr. Sangita Rayamajhi</b>, Director (Professor) at the Center for Advanced Studies in South Asia (Nepal) and Former Professor of Literature, AUW</p>
3:30 pm	<b>Refreshments</b> (tea/coffee)
6:30 pm	<p><b>Dinner</b> (By Invitation Only)</p> <p><b>LAUNCH OF AUW/HSBC SCHOOL OF APPAREL AND RETAIL MANAGEMENT</b></p>

## Day 2: Sunday, January 22, 2023

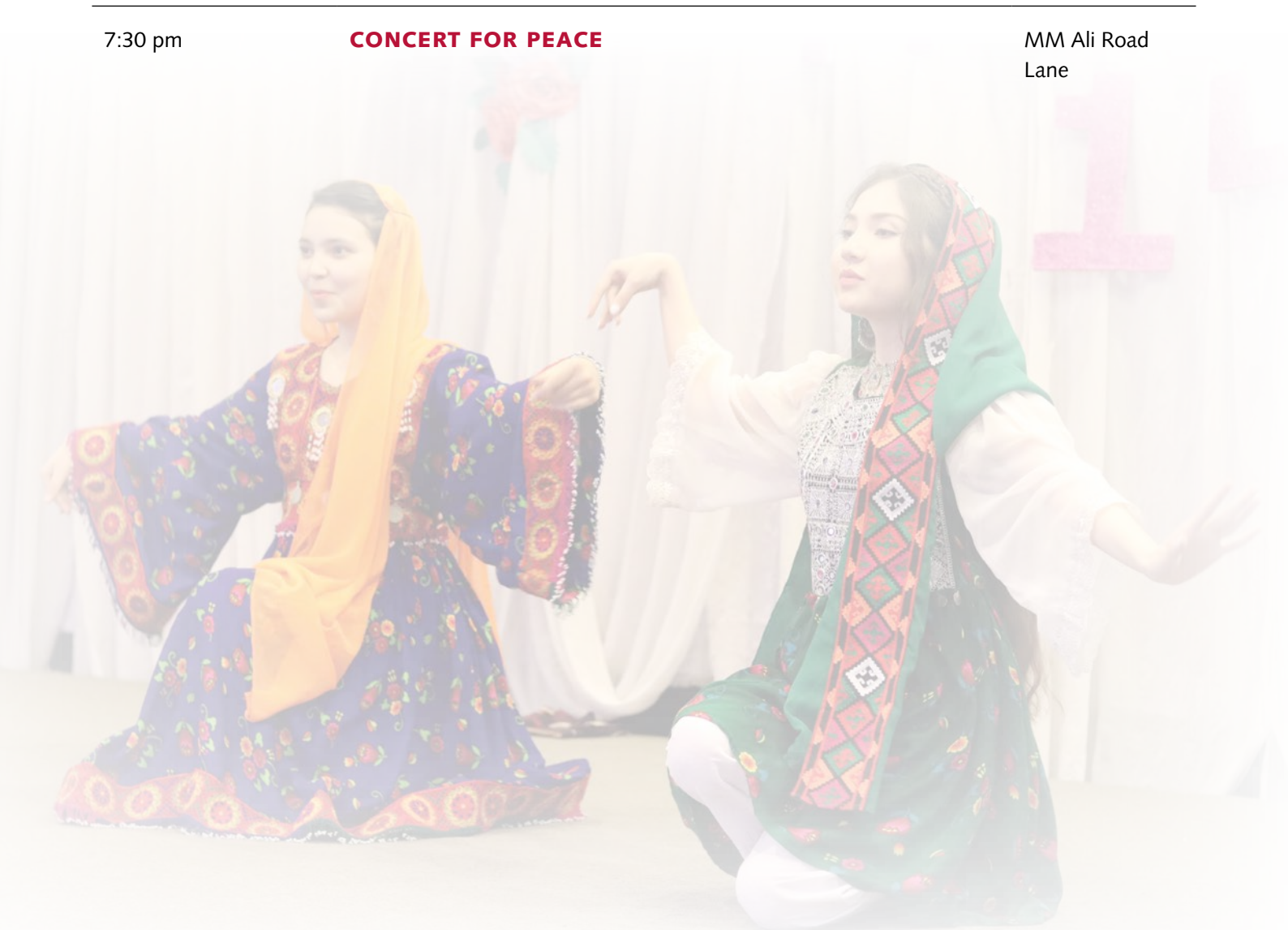
### RADISSON HOTEL CHITTAGONG

TIME	PROGRAM	VENUE
9:30 – 10:00 am	<p><b>REMEMBERING MAHSA AMINI; IRANIAN CONSTITUTION AND STATE POWER AND PRACTICES</b></p> <p><i>Moderator: Kamal Ahmad, AUW Founder</i></p> <p><i>Speakers (via video):</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Professor Abbas Milani</b>, Stanford University</li> <li>2. <b>Ms. Afsaneh Beschloss</b>, Founder &amp; CEO, Rock Creek Capital</li> </ol>	Mezban (Level 1)
10:00 – 11:30 am	<p><b>THE CASE OF THE SUBCONTINENT'S DALITS: EXTENT &amp; NATURE OF THEIR OPPRESSION AND WAYS TO OVERCOME IT</b></p> <p><i>Moderator: Dr. Beena Khurana, Dean of Arts and Sciences, AUW</i></p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Professor Rupa Viswanath</b>, Professor of Indian Religions at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen</li> <li>2. <b>Ms. Sonu Rani Das</b>, Women's Affairs Secretary, Bangladesh Dalit &amp; Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM)</li> <li>3. <b>Dr. Maher Spurgeon</b>, Director of South Asia Programs, United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia</li> <li>4. <b>Dr. Sangita Rayamajhi</b>, Former Professor of Literature and Associate Dean, AUW</li> <li>5. <b>Ms. Girija Shivakumar</b>, Strategic Communications Specialist and Media Consultant</li> </ol>	Mohona 1 (Level 4)
10:00 – 11:30 am	<p><b>FUNCTIONS OF A UNIVERSITY IN OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p><i>Moderator: Dr. Rubana Huq, AUW Vice Chancellor</i></p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Ms. Kathy Matsui</b>, General Partner, MPower Partners, former Goldman Sachs Japan Vice Chair</li> <li>2. <b>Dr. Mariët Westermann</b>, Vice Chancellor, NYU Abu Dhabi</li> <li>3. <b>Dr. Sonajharia Minz</b>, Vice Chancellor, Sido Kanhu Murmu University India</li> </ol>	Mezban (Level 1)

TIME	PROGRAM	VENUE
10:00 - 11:30 am	<p><b>WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TRANSFORMING GIRLS' EDUCATION</b></p> <p><i>Moderator: Dr. David Taylor, Dean of Humanities, AUW</i></p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Dr. Glenn DeVoogd</b>, Professor, California State University, Dominguez Hills</li> <li>2. <b>Dr. Amy Thompson</b>, Woodburn Professor of Applied Linguistics and Chair, Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics; Director of International Relations and Strategic Planning for Eberly College of Arts and Sciences, West Virginia University</li> <li>3. <b>Dr. Svetlana Bochaver</b>, Product Manager, Marketing &amp; Comms for Education, Yandex (Russia)</li> <li>4. <b>Ms. Karen DeVoogd</b>, Conflict Resolution Educator Trainer for the Domestic Harmonizer Program (DHP), Whitaker Peace &amp; Development Initiative (WPDI)</li> <li>5. <b>Ms. Fatima Qasemi</b>, Masters Student, AUW</li> <li>6. <b>Ms. Zulikha Malekzai</b>, Masters Student, AUW</li> </ol>	Mohona 2 (Level 4)
10:00 - 11:30 am	<p><b>MODELS OF PARTNERSHIP TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE</b></p> <p><i>Moderator: Mr. Jack Meyer, Chair, AUW Support Foundation &amp; Ms. Mashiya Sharif '2019, Corporate Communications Manager, AIA Hong Kong</i></p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Dr. Tim DeVoogd</b>, AUW Trustee, Professor of Psychology &amp; Neurobiology and Behavior, Cornell University</li> <li>2. <b>Ms. Heather Harms</b>, Director of Global Programs, The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State</li> <li>3. <b>Dr. John Storm</b>, University of Aberdeen</li> <li>4. <b>Professor Yujin Yaguchi</b>, Vice President (Global Education), Deputy Director, Division for Global Campus Initiatives, Professor, Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies, The University of Tokyo</li> </ol>	Mohona 3 (Level 4)
11:30 am	<b>Refreshments</b> (tea/coffee)	

TIME	PROGRAM	VENUE
11:30 – 1:00 pm <b>SESSION 1</b>	<p><b>RETHINKING GLOBAL APPROACHES TO AFGHANISTAN: MEETING HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND SECURING RIGHTS IN AN UNCERTAIN ENVIRONMENT – A CONVERSATION</b></p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Honorable Mr. Michael Posner</b>, Former US Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Rights and Labor and Professor of Ethics and Finance, Stern School of Business, New York University</li> <li>2. <b>(via Video) HE Tomas Niklasson</b>, EU's Special Envoy for Afghanistan</li> </ol>	Mezban (Level 1)
11:30 – 1:00 pm <b>SESSION 2</b>	<p><b>RISING GLOBAL AUTHORITARIANISM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR CITIZENSHIP AND CONFLICT</b></p> <p><i>Moderator: Mr. Kamal Ahmad</i>, Founder, AUW</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>(via video) Professor Larry Jay Diamond</b>, Mosbacher Senior Fellow in Global Democracy at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and Professor, by courtesy, of Sociology and of Political Science, Stanford University</li> <li>2. <b>Former Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen</b>, Denmark</li> <li>3. <b>Chancellor Cherie Blair</b>, AUW</li> </ol>	Mohona 1 (Level 4)
1:00 – 2:00 pm	<b>Lunch break</b>	
2:00 – 3:30 pm	<p><b>OPPRESSION AND TERROR OF STATELESSNESS: HUMAN DIMENSION OF DISPLACEMENT AND EXILE</b> Kashmiri, Rohingya, Yemeni, Syrian and Afghan AUW Students Speak</p> <p><i>Moderator: HE Ambassador Lilly Nicholls</i>, High Commissioner of Canada to Bangladesh</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Mr. Saifullah Muhammad</b>, Executive Director, Rohingya Centre of Canada</li> <li>2. <b>Ms. Hala Alshaar</b>, Student, AUW</li> <li>3. <b>Ms. Nusaibah Ghaleb Alnahari</b>, Student, AUW</li> <li>4. <b>Ms. Mahdia Ahmadi</b>, Student, AUW</li> <li>5. <b>Ms. Tofrida Rahman</b>, Student, AUW</li> <li>6. <b>Ms. Falak Shabir</b>, Student, AUW</li> </ol>	Mezban (Level 1)

TIME	PROGRAM	VENUE
3:30 – 4:00 pm	<p><b>CONCLUDING SESSION: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?</b></p> <p><i>Keynote: Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen &amp; AUW Chancellor Cherie Blair</i></p> <p>To be joined by AUW Choir</p>	Mezban (Level 1)
6:00 – 7:30 pm	<p><b>Dinner</b></p> <p><b>UNIVERSITY AS RESPONSIBLE COMMUNITY: AUW RESPONDS TO AFGHANISTAN</b></p> <p><i>Moderator: Mr. Andrew Schroeder, Vice President for Research and Analysis, Direct Relief, a global medical aid NGO</i></p> <p><i>Speakers (via Zoom):</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Ms. Nilab Ibrahimy</b>, Brown University</li> <li>2. <b>Ms. Batool Behnam</b>, Cornell University</li> <li>3. <b>Ms. Samira Panahi</b>, Arizona State University</li> <li>4. <b>Ms. Frough Tahiry</b>, Arizona State University</li> </ol>	MM Ali Road Rooftop with simultaneous broadcast at the gym
7:30 pm	<p><b>CONCERT FOR PEACE</b></p>	MM Ali Road Lane

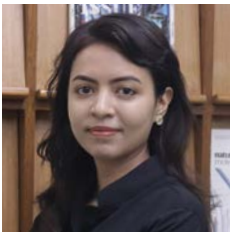




## BIOGRAPHIES



**Mr. Kamal Ahmad** is the Founder of the Asian University for Women. He was educated at the Philips Exeter Academy, Harvard College, and the University of Michigan Law School.



**Ms. Mahdia Ahmadi**, *Masters Student, AUW*, is currently a member of the International Women Peace Group (IWPG) and works in Delegate Affairs at the AUW International Model United Nations. She has taught English for four years in various countries and continues teaching English on a voluntary basis at different academies in Afghanistan. Ms. Ahmadi holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Finance, from COMSTATS University Islamabad and will be graduating with a Master's in Education from AUW. Recognizing the dire need for educational opportunities for Afghan girls, her plans after graduating from AUW include building a secondary school for girls where she can give women a chance to complete their studies.



**Ms. Nusaibah Ghaleb Alnahari**, *AUW Class of 2023, Bioinformatics*, grew up in Yemen, Hudaidah. As a result of the war, she and her family were forced to leave the city in 2018 and settle in Yemen's capital, Sana'a. An active member of the AUW community, Ms. Alnahari is a junior PR manager for the Bioinformatics Club and treasurer of the Poetry Club. She also loves volunteering at AUW functions in order to explore aspects of life outside academics. Ms. Alnahari's goal after AUW is to continue her education and pursue Master's and PhD degrees.



**Ms. Hala Alshaar**, *AUW Class of 2024, Bioinformatics*, is from Hama, Syria. She is the youngest of seven siblings. In addition to her own academic work at AUW, she has served as a teaching assistant for Precalculus and worked with a disability rights program. Ms. Alshaar has chosen to pursue a Bioinformatics major since it will draw upon her computational skills and her interest in the natural sciences. She hopes to continue working in the field after her graduation from AUW.





**Ms. Batool Behnam**, *AUW Class of 2019, Environmental Science*, is a master's student at Cornell University's School of Public Health, concentrating on Global Health. Ms. Behnam is interested in research, teaching and community services. Once the only girl in her entire secondary school, Ms. Behnam's dream has always been to reduce inequalities among communities, support girls' education, and convince the people around her that it is worth investing in girls' and women's education.



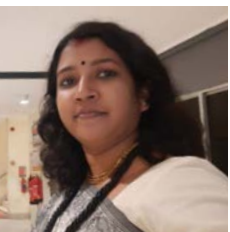
**Ms. Afsaneh Beschloss**, *Founder & CEO, Rock Creek Capital*, previously served as the Managing Director and Partner at the Carlyle Group. She was Treasurer and Chief Investment Officer of the World Bank and also worked at J.P. Morgan. Ms. Beschloss has advised governments, central banks, and regulatory agencies on global public policy and financial policy as well as energy. She led the World Bank's energy investments and policy work on areas including sustainable investing, renewable energy, power, and infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions and founded its Natural Gas Group as a transitional fuel.



**Mrs. Cherie Blair**, *CBE, KC, AUW Chancellor, AUW Council of Patrons*, is a leading international lawyer and committed campaigner for women's rights. She is the Founder of the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, established in 2008 to help women build small and growing businesses in developing and emerging markets, enabling them to contribute to their economies and have a stronger voice in their societies. She is also the Founder and Chair of Omnia Strategy LLP, a law firm through which she represents clients in international arbitrations and legal cases. Her husband, Tony Blair, was Prime Minister from 1997 to 2007.



**Dr. Svetlana Bochaver**, *Product Manager, Marketing & Comms for Education, Yandex (Russia)*, oversees the end-to-end implementation of product delivery projects. She previously worked as a Research Fellow, Project Manager at the Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Science, where she recruited and led teams focused on multi-national research and educational projects, authored 30 research papers, presented in over 30 academic conferences, and designed 3 PhD Education programs for the Russian Academy of Sciences.



**Ms. Sonu Rani Das**, *Women's Affairs Secretary, Bangladesh Dalit & Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM)*, and one of the rising leaders of the Bangladesh Dalit movement, was born and raised in a cleaner's colony in Narayanganj district. After experiencing extreme patriarchy in her life, she was driven to improve the fate of millions of Dalit women. She became a member of multiple Dalit-led organizations and forums, and in 2008, was nominated as Secretary of Women Affairs at the *Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement*. She believes that no Dalit woman will be free from the shackles of age long patriarchal practice unless they are mobilized and empowered to raise their voice. Through her work she has been recognized by international organizations and participated at advocacy events around the world.



**Dr. Glenn DeVoogd**, *California State University, Dominguez Hills*, works to promote educational programs that foster literacy instruction. He has taught a range of courses in education primarily focused on literacy instruction, but also in the areas of disability and educational administration. Dr. DeVoogd has written over 30 publications primarily in the area of critical comprehension of texts, but has also published about reading instruction, children's literature, and on the use of technology as a tool for instruction in teacher education. In 2020, Dr. DeVoogd and his co-author, Dr. Maureen McLaughlin, were recognized by the International Literacy Association for two articles they published that addressed the challenges of teaching during the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism. He was given a faculty career award for Excellence in Education in 2012 from Fresno State University.

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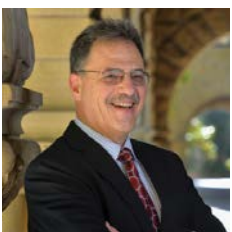
**Ms. Karen DeVoogd**, *the Conflict Resolution Educator Trainer for the Domestic Harmonizer Program (DHP) at the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI)*, has worked on the DHP since 2016 to create the program's curriculum, deliver in-person and virtual training to schools, and support teachers and students in applying skills of conflict resolution and restorative practices. Prior to joining WPDI, Ms. DeVoogd held a series of leadership roles in the field of conflict resolution education in California and nationally. She was previously a faculty instructor with the system-wide California State University multiple subject teacher credential program, CalStateTEACH through the CSU Chancellor's Office and CSU Fresno. In this role, she supported new teachers in meeting California Credentialing Program Standards for Multiple Subject preparation. She possesses a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction and a Bachelors in Elementary Education, both from Michigan State University.

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**Dr. Tim DeVoogd**, *AUW Trustee, Professor of Psychology & Neurobiology and Behavior, Cornell University*, studies neuroanatomical effects of learning, looking at neural consequences of song learning and spatial learning in songbirds. In his professional life, he has chosen research collaborations and teaching commitments that have brought him into close contact with scientists and students in more than a dozen countries (sabbaticals at Oxford, University of Cape Town, and National University of Singapore). In Qatar, Singapore and South Africa, he has taught students for whom English was not their first language. Through these interactions, he became interested in scientific exchange as a vehicle for understanding.

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**Professor Larry Jay Diamond**, *Mosbacher Senior Fellow in Global Democracy at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and Professor, by courtesy, of Sociology and of Political Science, Stanford University*, leads FSI's Program on Arab Reform and Democracy, based at the Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law, which he directed for more than six years. He also co-leads with (Eileen Donahoe) the Global Digital Policy Incubator, based at FSI's Cyber Policy Center. Professor Diamond is also a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institutions, where he leads the programs on China's Global Sharp Power and on Taiwan in the Indo-Pacific Region.

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**Ms. Kat Fotovat**, *Acting Ambassador-at-Large, The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State*, leads a team of gender experts promoting gender equality efforts including support of women, peace, and security, countering violent extremism, promoting women's economic empowerment, and combating gender-based violence. She has over 20 years of experience advocating gender and human rights globally, specifically in conflict and post-conflict settings. Previously, she was Director for the Office of Communications, Policy, and Partnerships, in the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations where she oversaw an expert team that provided policy and strategy guidance to respond to atrocities, fragility, increase global stability and peacebuilding, and integrating women, peace, and security efforts in areas of conflict.



**Ms. Heather Harms**, *Director of Global Programs, The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State*, is responsible for assistance programs that advance women's empowerment and full participation in political, economic, and social life. She has overseen gender equality, human rights, governance, and civilian security programs in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Western Hemisphere. Prior to joining the Department, Ms. Harms worked for the Public International Law and Policy Group on rule of law programming in Kosovo. She holds a J.D. from George Washington University Law School and a B.A. in International Studies from the University of Washington.



**Dr. Rubana Huq**, *AUW Vice Chancellor*, earned wide prominence as the first female president of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association (BGMEA). She is a published poet who earned her PhD in Literature from India's Jadavpur University. She played a significant role launching AUW's *Pathways for Promise* program, which enables exceptionally talented workers from Bangladesh's ready-made garment factories to enroll at AUW. She was named as one of BBC's top 100 women in the world in 2013 and again in 2014. Dr. Huq is also a Visiting Fellow at the Stern School of Business at New York University and the Asia Center at Harvard University.



**Ms. Nilab Ibrahimy**, *AUW Class of 2020, Politics, Philosophy & Economics*, is currently a Master of Public Affairs candidate at Brown University. She graduated from AUW with a bachelor's degree in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics. Previously, she worked with Moore Afghanistan, a full-member firm of Moore Global. Ms. Ibrahimy also worked with a team to set up a make-shift school for the recent Afghan evacuees on a military base in Wisconsin. She hopes to pursue a career in educational policy for refugees around the world.

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**Dr. Beena Khurana**, *Dean of Arts and Sciences, AUW*, has successfully contributed to teaching, research, and administration in various educational institutions in the US (Rutgers University, UC Berkeley, Cornell University, California Institute of Technology, California Polytechnic State University) and UK (Sussex University). She is passionate about students and focuses intensely on creating rewarding and meaningful educational experiences. In addition to her leadership role on the faculty, Dr. Khurana teaches an introductory course on psychology.

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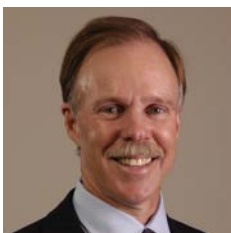
**Ms. Zulikha Malekzai**, *Masters Student, AUW*, is currently enrolled in the Master of Arts in Education program at AUW. She completed her undergraduate degree in Public Policy and Administration at Kabul University in 2017. From 2018 to 2019, she held the position of Research Assistant Intern at the Ministry of Finance before being promoted to Research Assistant in 2020. In this most recent role, she was responsible for preparing work plans, conducting reviews, arranging meetings, and analyzing primary and secondary data.

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**Ms. Kathy Matsui**, *a Co-Founder of AUW*, is General Partner, MPower Partners, former Goldman Sachs Japan Vice Chair, was ranked No. 1 in Japan Equity Strategy by *Institutional Investor* magazine and was chosen by *The Wall Street Journal* as one of the "10 Women to Watch in Asia" for her ground-breaking "Womenomics" research. She serves as an external board director of Fast Retailing Inc., adjunct professor at Kyoto University's Graduate School of Management, Co-Chair of the US-Japan Council Board of Directors, and board member of the AUW Support Foundation.

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**Mr. Jack Meyer**, *a Co-Founder of AUW*, is AUW Support Foundation Chairman, AUW Board of Trustees Vice Chair, Former Senior Managing Partner at Convexity Capital Management L.P. located in Boston. He co-founded the firm with managing partners, Dave Mittelman and Maurice Samuels in July 2005. Before Convexity, Mr. Meyer was President and CEO of Harvard Management Company, which manages the University's endowment assets, pension funds, charitable trusts and pooled income funds totaling in excess of \$31 billion by the end of his term. He is the Chair of the Boston Ballet and is on the Board of Directors of The Boston Foundation.

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**Professor Abbas Milani**, *Stanford University*, is the Hamid and Christina Moghadam Director of Iranian Studies at Stanford University and a Professor (by courtesy) in the Stanford Global Studies Division. He is also one of the founding co-directors of the Iran Democracy Project and a research fellow at the Hoover Institution. His expertise includes U.S.-Iran relations as well as Iranian cultural, political, and security issues. He taught at Tehran University's Faculty of Law and Political Science until 1986, where he was also a member of the Board of Directors of the university's Center for International Relations. After moving to the United States, he was the Chair of the Political Science Department at the Notre Dame de Namur University for 14 years.

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**Dr. Sonajharia Minz**, *Vice Chancellor, Sido Kanhu Murmu University*, is an Indian academician and an Adivasi activist. She worked as an assistant professor in the Department of Computer Science at Madurai Kamaraj University in 1991 and the Barkatullah University of Bhopal in 1990. In 1992, Dr. Minz became assistant professor of Computer Science at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Later, she was appointed Associate Professor in 1997 and was promoted as professor in the School of Computer & Systems Sciences at Jawaharlal Nehru University.



**Mr. Saifullah Muhammad**, *Executive Director, Rohingya Centre of Canada*, is a young Rohingya activist who has spent years advocating for the refugees and persecuted minorities. During his studies at the Conestoga College, he helped found the 'Canadian Rohingya Development Initiative' to expose the Rohingya genocide to the world stage and to create an innovative educational platform for the refugee youths all over the world. He has recently established the "Rohingya Centre of Canada" in downtown Kitchener to serve the refugees and newcomers better particularly the Rohingya community in Canada and beyond.



**HE Ambassador Lilly Nicholls**, *High Commissioner of Canada to Bangladesh*, works with her team to provide information to Canadians living in or visiting Bangladesh, including health and safety information, Canadian education opportunities, Canadian products and services, and visa and immigration services. She previously served as the Director of Development Research and Learning of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. She has 30 years of experience forging collaborative partnerships and promoting innovative solutions in the international sphere.



**HE Tomas Niklasson**, *EU's Special Envoy for Afghanistan*, works to strengthen engagement and relations with Afghanistan. He, along with the Special Envoys for Afghanistan of other countries, is committed to addressing the humanitarian, economic, and social crises in Afghanistan that have affected public safety, employment, women and girls' access to education, and much more. In his position, he emphasizes the need to support Afghans with basic services, such as education, health, and livelihoods.



**Ms. Samira Panahi**, *AUW Class of 2020, Economics*, is the youngest daughter in her family, and the first to enter higher education. Ms. Panahi is committed to pursuing her goals. As she states, "As a woman you need to be brave to surpass society's expectations and live the way you want." Described by her teachers as a creative mind and a "brilliant photographer," Ms. Panahi's strengths lie in artistic pursuits, particularly music, photography, film, and graphic design.



**Dr. Bryan Penprase**, *Professor of Physics & Astronomy, Soka University*, develops strategic partnerships and builds collaborations with universities and colleges to advance undergraduate education and research. He previously served as Dean of Faculty for three years, in which he created new academic programs, and managed the curriculum design, hiring and implementation of a new Concentration in Life Sciences. Dr. Penprase formerly served for 20 years as a professor of Physics and Astronomy at Pomona College, where he served as a department chair, and was the inaugural co-director the Liberal Arts Consortium for Online Learning.

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**Honorable Mr. Michael Posner**, *Former US Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Rights and Labor and Professor of Ethics and Finance, Stern School of Business, New York University*, serves as the Director of the Center for Business and Human Rights at the Stern School of Business, the first-ever human rights center at a business school. Prior to joining NYU Stern, Mr. Posner served in the Obama Administration from 2009 to 2013 as Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. In 2010 he chaired the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. From 1978 to 2009, he led Human Rights First, a New York-based human rights advocacy organization.

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**Ms. Fatima Qasemi**, *Masters Student, AUW*, is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Education at AUW. She graduated from Loman High School in Ghazni, Afghanistan before completing a BA in Journalism, Psychology and English Language in 2019 at the Indian Academy Degree College in Bangalore, India. Along with obtaining a diploma in Human Rights Studies in 2020, Ms. Qasemi has experience working as an Administrative Officer at Gawharshad University, Afghanistan and as the Secretariat of the Computer Science Faculty of Gharjistan University where she was responsible for monthly and annual reports, preparing semester timetables, hosting academic conferences, and handling all student-related issues.

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**Former Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen**, *Denmark*, served as Prime Minister from 1993 to 2001. After receiving a degree in economics from the University of Copenhagen in 1971, Mr. Rasmussen worked for the Danish Trade Union Council until 1986. He became its chief economist in 1980. He served as the managing director of the Employees' Capital Pension Fund and as chairman of Lalandia Invest from 1986 to 1988. In 1987 he became deputy chairman of the Social Democrats and in 1988 a member of the Folketing, or parliament. He became the leader of the Social Democrats in 1992.

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**Dr. Sangita Rayamajhi**, *Former Professor of Literature, AUW*, is considered a pioneering scholar of women's studies in Nepal where she taught for over twenty years at Tribhuvan University prior to joining AUW. Her teaching interests range from gender and sexuality to American, British and non-Western fiction to theatre and film studies. While experiencing the adverse effects of Nepal's political instability as a woman in academia, the University of Alabama offered to host Dr. Rayamajhi as a visiting scholar with the support of the Scholar Rescue Fund, where she delivered a variety of public lectures. After her fellowship ended, she accepted a position with AUW. She now works at the Center for Advanced Studies in South Asia.



**Mr. Andrew Schroeder**, *Direct Relief*, is the Vice President for Research and Analysis at the global medical aid NGO. He is also the co-director of the CrisisReady project on private data for public good, co-hosted between Direct Relief and Harvard Data Science initiative. Mr. Schroeder is also the co-founder of WeRobotics, a global non-profit organization which builds local capacity in robotics and AI for humanitarian aid, public health, and environmental protection. He received his PhD in Social and Cultural Analysis from New York University, and his master's in Public Policy and Science and Technology Policy from the Ford School at the University of Michigan.



**Professor John Sexton**, *President Emeritus, New York University*, served as the fifteenth president of New York University from 2002 through 2015. He joined NYU School of Law's faculty in 1981 and was named the Law School's dean in 1988. He is NYU's Benjamin F. Butler Professor of Law and Dean Emeritus of the Law School. Milestones of his tenure include growth of NYU's global network, including campuses in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai; a merger with Polytechnic University, now the NYU Tandon School of Engineering; and the largest increase in Arts and Science faculty in the University's history.



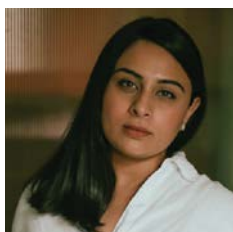
**Ms. Falak Shabir**, *AUW Class of 2024, Environmental Sciences*, was born in Indian-administered Kashmir. She is currently working as a Research Assistant at the Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Health at AUW. She is also a Millennial Fellow as part of the United Nations Millennium Fellowship, an online mathematics tutor with Third Space Learning (UK), and an intern at the Institute of Wellbeing, Bangladesh. Since arriving at the university, Ms. Shabir has co-founded several campus clubs including the AUW Queer-Straight Alliance Club and the AUW Environmental Sciences Club. Her long-term goal is to collaborate with local universities in Kashmir to undertake research and build local capacity.

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**Ms. Mashiya Sharif**, *AUW Class of 2019, Economics*. Following her internship at insurance group AIA in Hong Kong, her career has continued to progress at the world's largest life insurer. She is currently a Corporate Communications Manager at AIA Group where her role focuses on employee communications, sponsorship activations and producing live c-suite showcases. She is passionate about D&I which led her to contribute as a core team member to an employee group, The NetWork, that focuses on women empowerment and LGBTQ+ initiatives.

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**Ms. Girija Shivakumar**, *Strategic Communications Specialist and Media Consultant*, is an award-winning journalist and strategic communications consultant with over ten years of experience working on issues of gender and development in Asia, Europe and the United States. Currently, Ms. Shivakumar works at The Financial Times on their strategic partnerships. She has consulted with a range of global organizations including Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (Singapore), Women Political Leaders (Brussels), Tina Brown Live Media and with the 'Women in the World' Summit, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, UN Women, APCO Worldwide and the World Bank Group.

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**Dr. Maher Spurgeon**, *Director of South Asia Programs, United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia*, has been a regional program consultant for the South Asia region since 2015. In this role, he works with colleges and universities of South Asia to promote whole person education by visiting, coaching and guiding them, and enabling them to apply for grants from the United Board. Before joining the United Board, he worked as an associate professor of philosophy and the chaplain of Madras Christian College for more than 20 years.

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**Dr. John Storm**, *University of Aberdeen*, merging the academic and corporate worlds together, is the Executive MBA Programme Director at the University of Aberdeen, concurrently holding positions at Emlyon Business School, SKEMA Business School and the Asia-Europe Business School. He lived and worked in China for 10 years prior to returning to Scotland in early 2020. He is an experienced entrepreneur with 15 years of practice in strategic planning and leading teams across 30 countries. He is also Co-Founder of Outlander Consulting, a training organization that focuses on delivering character and leadership training in South-East Asia; an Associate Facilitator at Amplity Health, the UK's largest provider of training solutions to global healthcare companies; and Mentor for Asian Projects with the Global Learning Collective.

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**Ms. Frough Tahiry**, *AUW Class of 2021, Economics*, is currently pursuing a master's degree in Business Analytics at Arizona State University. At ASU, she is the founder and president of the Afghan Students Association. The association has similar goals to ASU's recently opened Center of Muslim Experience, which aims to "to serve the Muslim student population and educate others on Islam". Apart from her studies, she interns at H2O.ai, where she has an opportunity to utilize her business analytics skillset.

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**Dr. David Taylor**, *Dean of Humanities, AUW*. Before joining AUW, Dr. Taylor taught at the School of Oriental and African Studies at University of London and later became Pro-Director of Teaching and Learning from 1998 to 2002. He then joined Aga Khan University in Karachi as Vice-Provost for Academic Development from 2002 to 2008. He also served as Interim Provost from 2003 to 2008. Later, he was appointed Director of the Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations in London from 2013 to 2017. In addition to his leadership role on the faculty, Dr. Taylor leads a final year Capstone course.



**Dr. Amy Thompson**, *West Virginia University*, is the Director of International Relations and Strategic Planning for Eberly College of Arts and Sciences. She also serves as Professor of Applied Linguistics and Chair for World Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics at the University. Her professional identity primarily revolves around Individual Differences in Language Learning and the interaction of these Individual Differences and multilingualism.



**Ms. Tofrida Rahman**, *AUW Class of 2023, Public Health*, grew up in Rakhine State in Myanmar. While there, she worked as a Therapeutic Feeding Program Agent as well as a Sanitation & Hygiene Promoter at Action Contre Le Faim (ACF). She also served as Community Assistant Supervisor for the World Food Program (WFP) and taught for the UNCHR Community Social Service for Education Program. In 2017, she and her family fled to a refugee camp in Bangladesh to escape mounting conflict in the region. Since 2021, she has worked for the Rohingya Development Network (RWDN) in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh as an Online Event and Management Intern, and in this capacity has collaborated primarily on COVID-19 related concerns in Rohingya refugee communities.



**Professor Rupa Viswanath**, *Professor of Indian Religions at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies at the University of Göttingen, Germany, and Fellow of Lucy Cavendish College at the University of Cambridge*. Prior to arriving in Göttingen in 2011, she taught in the South Asia Studies Department at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research and teaching address histories of slavery and unfreedom in colonial South Asia, agrarian change, comparative historical sociologies of race and caste, race and welfare regimes, minorities and political representation, religion and governance, and violence and democratic practice. Her first book is titled, *The Pariah Problem: Caste, Religion and the Social in Modern India* (Columbia University Press, 2014). Professor Viswanath is current Director of the International Center of Advanced Study: Metamorphoses of the Political.



**Dr. Mariët Westermann**, *Vice Chancellor, NYU Abu Dhabi*, oversees all academic, administrative, and operational affairs. She previously served as Executive Vice President at the Mellon Foundation, where she oversaw all grantmaking programs and launched initiatives that strengthen liberal arts education, research and graduate education in the arts and humanities, and access, diversity, and equity in universities and cultural institutions. Prior to joining the Mellon Foundation, she was a member of faculty at NYU, first as director and Paulette Goddard Professor at the Institute of Fine Arts and then as the first provost of NYU Abu Dhabi.



**Professor Maithree Wickramasinghe**, *AUW Trustee, Professor of English, University of Kelaniya*, has written extensively on gender mainstreaming, sexual and gender-based violence, women and development as well as feminist research methodology. She is the founding Director of the Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. She is also a Visiting Professor at the School of Education and Social Work, University of Sussex, United Kingdom.



**Professor Yujin Yaguchi**, *Vice President (Global Education), Deputy Director, Division for Global Campus Initiatives, Professor, Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies, The University of Tokyo*, has published and lectured on the issues of U.S.-Japan cultural relations, with particular attention to indigeneity, immigration, historical memories, tourism and colonialism in Hawai'i. He has also been active in efforts to globalize higher education in Japan. He was a founding member of the first-ever English-medium undergraduate degree program (PEAK) at the University of Tokyo and served as the director of its admissions office.



## ABOUT ASIAN UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN (AUW)

Founded in 2008 and located in Chittagong, Bangladesh, AUW is the first of its kind: a regional institution dedicated to women's education and leadership development through liberal arts and sciences education. It is international in outlook but rooted in the contexts and aspirations of the people of Asia. Chartered by the Parliament of Bangladesh, AUW exists solely to support a rising network of women leaders, entrepreneurs, and changemakers from across the region. It seeks out women who show significant academic achievement and potential, demonstrate courage and a sense of outrage at injustice, and are empathic to the woes of other people.

1322 students from 18 countries currently attend AUW: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Syria, Timor Leste, Vietnam, and Yemen. More than 85% of AUW students are on full or near-full scholarships funded by supporters from around the world. AUW offers both undergraduate and graduate programs. The University has graduated over a thousand students to date. A majority of AUW graduates secure employment in the private or public sectors in their home countries while about 25% go on to pursue graduate studies. Some of our graduates have pursued or are currently pursuing graduate studies at Oxford, Cambridge, Sussex, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, New York University, Columbia, Duke, Brandeis and Tufts, among others. To learn more about Asian University for Women, please visit: [asian-university.org](http://asian-university.org)



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