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AFGHANISTAN

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FACT SHEET

American University of Afghanistan (AUAF)

OVERVIEW

Afghanistan's higher education system suffered tremendously following the Soviet occupation of 1979 and the subsequent wars and civil conflicts of the 1980s and 1990s. Even with the return of representative government and greater stability, higher education in Afghanistan has seen a lack of investment and development. To address this need, the United States Government—through USAID—joined the Ministry of Higher Education, Afghan business leaders, and private donors in Afghanistan and abroad to establish the American University of Afghanistan.

AUAF is the only private, independent, not-for-profit university in Afghanistan. Operating on the U.S. liberal arts model, the university offers programs in business administration, information technology and computer science, political science, and public administration. AUAF's English-based curriculum provides a world-class education to Afghanistan's next generation of leaders. More than 60 percent of its undergraduate faculty holds doctoral degrees. AUAF prizes free expression, tolerance, mutual respect, critical inquiry, and academic rigor. It teaches those values within the Afghan cultural context and the protections afforded by the Constitution of Afghanistan.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- Offer undergraduate degree programs in business, information technology and computer science, and political science and public administration
- Provide the Foundation Studies Program (FSP), a college preparatory experience for high school graduates to improve their English reading, speaking, and writing skills to the level needed for admission to AUAF's undergraduate programs
- Deliver professional development training for employees of ministries, businesses, and non-government organizations, and to the public through short-term customized courses
- Provide equal educational opportunity for women in its regular academic programs as well as through specialized training
- Offer a campus environment that is safe, supportive, and intellectually challenging, with the types of services and facilities that students would expect on a U.S. campus

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Expanded enrollment tenfold in four years, from 53 students in the FSP when AUAF opened in 2006, to 789 in the FSP and undergraduate programs (with 20 percent women) for the spring semester 2011
- Provided professional training to 1,675 employees of ministries and other organizations
- Renovated the current campus with seven major academic and student services buildings
- Developed a campus plan for building its new state-of-the-art educational facilities on a 75-acre site provided by the Afghan government, with construction to begin this academic year