



# ASIAN UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

**Search for Principal Gifts Officer**  
**Asian University for Women Support Foundation**  
**Cambridge, Massachusetts**

## **THE SEARCH**

Based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Asian University for Women Support Foundation (AUWSF) is a 501c3 that serves as the principal fundraising and development arm of the Asian University for Women (AUW) in Bangladesh. AUWSF is seeking a passionate and seasoned principal gifts officer to grow the highest-level philanthropic support for its critical mission of graduating women to be skilled and innovative professionals and service-oriented leaders in the businesses and communities in which they work and live.

Reporting to the President & CEO, the ideal candidate is a creative, focused, self-starter, and high-performing individual who thrives in an entrepreneurial and collaborative environment. They will embody a blend of intellectual curiosity, strong social acumen, a profound sense of accountability, and a bias toward action. They will demonstrate exceptional communication skills and seamlessly navigate interpersonal interactions with keen emotional intelligence. Additionally, the principal gifts officer will have a solid track record in resource mobilization, personally securing significant five and six-figure gifts while offering strategic counsel to senior leadership. They will also broaden and diversify funding sources, introduce new organizational systems and frameworks, and harness data-driven insights to inform strategic decision-making.

The incoming principal gifts officer will serve as a vital ambassador for AUW, effectively conveying the organization's message, voice, and vision to diverse audiences. Equally crucial, they will demonstrate unwavering dedication to AUW's mission and possess an understanding and appreciation of the institution's history, achievements, and future aspirations.

AUWSF has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in conducting this search. As indicated at the end of this document, all inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to Isaacson, Miller, and will be held in the strictest of confidence.

## **ASIAN UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN (AUW)**

The first of its kind, AUW was founded in 2008. The University is an independent, regional institution dedicated to excellence, women's education, and leadership development through liberal arts and sciences education - that strengthens their skills in critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. It is international in outlook but rooted in the contexts and aspirations of the people of Asia. AUW was established to address two of the most pressing concerns in the developing world: first, the quality of university education, and second, women's lack of access to education, particularly higher education. Numerous studies have demonstrated that educating women produces solid returns on investment, including improved maternal and child health, gender inequality, an emphasis on education within the family, and strong civic and economic participation. By offering promising young women a high-quality tertiary education that develops critical thinking and leadership, AUW aims to graduate skilled and capable women who will return to their communities and help break the endemic cycle of poverty and social exclusion that restricts opportunities for generations of women and their families.

Located in Chittagong, Bangladesh, AUW currently serves 1,629 students representing 15 countries. Chartered by the Parliament of Bangladesh, AUW exists to educate and empower a rising network of women leaders through the transformative power of an American-style liberal arts and sciences education. Open to women from all walks of life, AUW particularly encourages women who are the first in their families to get a university education. AUW proudly graduates women bent on changing their society irrespective of their backgrounds, who aim to be promoters of intercultural understanding and sustainable human and economic development in Asia and throughout the world.

The concept of establishing the Asian University for Women (AUW) was originated by Kamal Ahmad during his undergraduate years at Harvard College in the mid-1980s. A partnership with The World Bank/UNESCO Task Force on Higher Education & Society provided the springboard to formally launch the idea. An International Support Committee for the Asian University for Women was set up with Task Force Member and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh and First Lady of Denmark Lone Dybkjaer as Co-Chairs. In 2000, First Lady Dybkjaer and Mr. Ahmad presented the AUW proposal to the Government of Bangladesh, and the process of building support internationally began.

The AUW Support Foundation was formally established in 2002 to usher AUW into its operational stages and support women's education, empowerment, and leadership development across Asia and the Middle East. Critical support from philanthropists and leading aid organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation soon followed. The foundation is governed by a Board of Directors, several of whom also serve on the AUW Board of Trustees. Once AUWSF was incorporated, a series of studies were conducted to develop academic, organizational, and financial plans for the University, which ultimately culminated in the 2005 publication of AUW's [Plan of Operations](#). In 2006, AUW reached a milestone in its development when the parliament of Bangladesh ratified the AUW Charter. In addition to safeguarding the independence of AUW from outside interference, the AUW Charter also included a provision for a land

grant from the government of Bangladesh of 137 acres for AUW's permanent campus in the rolling hills of Chittagong. Since then, the government has given AUW additional lands totaling 140 acres.

AUW welcomed its first students to its temporary campus in 2008, and enrollment has continued to increase tremendously. All classes and daily activities operate out of leased facilities in downtown Chittagong. However, AUW's current temporary space will not be suitable as the student body grows and the University looks to expand upon its program offerings. Therefore, a permanent campus plan was developed, and the first phase was led by the world-renowned architectural firm Moshe Safdie and Associates. AUW then enlisted Renzo Piano to conceptualize the later designs. Phase I of construction focuses on the Campus Center and has been underway since May 2022.

For more information, visit: <https://asian-university.org/>

## MISSION

AUW seeks to offer high-quality education to young women drawn from diverse national, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. It is open to young women of talent and commitment from all sections of society who want to work for a just and peaceful world. AUW aims to recruit at least half of its student body from underprivileged groups across Asia, especially those displaced by war or political upheaval.

AUW seeks to graduate women who will be skilled and innovative professionals, service-oriented leaders in the businesses and communities where they will work and live, and promoters of intercultural understanding and sustainable human and economic development in Asia and worldwide.

AUW's mission is to:

- Provide a vibrant and diverse residential learning community where highly talented women from many cultural and religious backgrounds can grow both intellectually and personally, treating diversity as something to be cherished and respected;
- Create an awareness among students and graduates of their future as global citizens and of the importance of democratic values;
- Create a student-focused learning environment where the humanities and natural and social sciences establish a broad base of inquiry;
- Focus student learning on the acquisition of intellectual abilities, reflective personal growth, leadership abilities, and service-oriented outlook.

## STUDENT BODY

AUW currently serves 1,629 students from 15 countries. At full capacity, AUW anticipates a student body of 3,000 with a student-to-faculty ratio of 12:1 and an average class size of 20 -25. The University's merit-based admissions system ensures that the most talented and promising young women enroll at AUW,

regardless of their ability to pay. This process results in an incredible diversity of socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities, and life experiences.

AUW students are motivated, enthusiastic, and highly intelligent. They have received full funding to attend international conferences, published investigative articles in online journals, organized workshops for other women in their home communities, designed summer projects centered upon peace and conflict studies, and more. AUW students live and study together in an atmosphere of mutual discovery and collaborative exchanges. The University has particularly sought to serve historically marginalized groups such as the Rohingya people and Dalit communities across South Asia, as well as welcoming students fleeing from the Taliban in Afghanistan and other displaced communities.

Funded by government and foundation grants, corporate sponsors, and individual donors, 77% of AUW students are on full scholarships, and 23% receive partial funding. The University has graduated over 1,522 students to date, many of whom were first to go to university. A majority of AUW graduates secure employment in the private and public sectors in their home countries, while about 30% go on to pursue graduate studies at other institutions of higher learning, including Oxford, Cambridge, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, Columbia, Duke, Brandeis, and Tufts, among others. AUW graduates are motivated through shared goals to envision large-scale change, address pressing social, political, and economic issues, and promote gender equality in their home countries and around the world.

## **THE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

### **Pre-Undergraduate**

AUW's pre-undergraduate program is a two-year-long academic bridge program that prepares students from underprivileged communities for a rigorous university education. The tailored curriculum addresses the various needs of students in terms of academic preparation, social and cultural adjustment, youth mentorship, counseling, technological skills, and recreation. The program encourages young women to be assertive, confident, and culturally sensitive through these comprehensive efforts.

Students are selected through AUW's admissions program and are identified as young women who demonstrate exceptional potential, talent, and intellect but who would benefit from additional coursework prior to commencing their undergraduate studies. Successful completion of the pre-undergraduate program leads to admission to the Asian University for Women bachelor's program.

For more information, visit: <https://asian-university.org/academic-programs/pre-undergraduate-programs/>

### **Undergraduate Study**

AUW's distinctive educational model combines the best of Western and Asian academic traditions to offer an innovative curriculum that fosters independence of thought, instills ethical leadership, and encourages students to link theoretical understanding with contemporary issues facing Asia and the world. The undergraduate curriculum consists of a core curriculum, a major, and elective courses. The core curriculum follows a "modes of thought and reasoning" model and requires students to take courses in social analysis, ethical reasoning, literature, civilization studies, and the arts, science, mathematics, writing and rhetoric intensive seminars, and regional challenges in Asia and women shaping society. Students in the undergraduate program choose from seven majors: Biochemistry, Molecular Biology & Biophysics (B.S.); Economics (B.S.); Environmental Sciences (B.S.); Humanities (B.A.); Computer Science (B.S.); Politics, Philosophy & Economics (B.A.); and Public Health (B.S.).

AUW's undergraduate curriculum is reinforced by summer experiences designed to implement what is learned in the classroom, including summer internships, study abroad programs, and faculty-supervised undergraduate research projects. For students interested in internships, World Bank, TATA, Oasis Cure Hospital, Phnom Penh Post, and HSBC Bank are among the many possibilities open to AUW students.

AUW is currently seeking accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. All instruction at AUW is conducted in English.

### **Graduate Study**

While the undergraduate program provides a broad level of knowledge and a focus on critical thinking, the graduate studies are tailored toward professional success and career progression. AUW currently offers two master's programs: an M.A. in Education and an M.S. in Apparel and Retail Management, which began in 2022 and 2023, respectively. In addition, a third M.S. in Drug Discovery Science and Bioinformatics will be offered in the Fall of 2024.

### **FACULTY**

Competitively recruited from all over the world, AUW has a total of 124 highly qualified faculty, and nearly 90% hold Ph.D. degrees from prestigious universities worldwide, including McGill University, Oxford University, Tufts University, the University of Chicago, and the Indian Institute of Technology. A number of lecturers, adjunct professors, and visiting fellows also teach at AUW. A listing of AUW faculty can be found at <https://asian-university.org/academic-programs/faculty/>

### **GOVERNANCE**

AUW is governed by an independent Board of Trustees, currently chaired by Dr. Dipu Moni Physician, Minister of Social Welfare and former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Education, Government of Bangladesh.

The University also enjoys the support of several major government, business, and academia leaders, collectively known as the AUW Council of Patrons. Patrons are responsible for communicating AUW's vision to the broadest public and advocating its ideals whenever possible. Under the provisions of the Charter, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh is the Chief Patron.

## **AUWSF LEADERSHIP**

### **Kamal Ahmad**

Founder, AUW/President and CEO, AUWSF

Kamal is a leader skilled in translating bold ideas into transformative policies and actions. In his current role as President and CEO, Kamal spearheaded a global effort that has successfully mobilized nearly \$50 million in support of the University.

Growing up as a teenager in Bangladesh, Ahmad founded at age 14 a series of highly successful internationally funded alternative schools for children who worked as domestic help. As a freshman at Harvard College, he also founded and ran the Overseas Development Network – a national network of 70 campus student groups dedicated to engagement in and promotion of grassroots international development.

Prior to launching the Asian University for Women, Kamal combined a career in international development with private law practice. He conceived and co-directed the World Bank/UNESCO Task Force on Higher Education & Society and served on the staff of a number of international development organizations, including the World Bank, the Rockefeller Foundation, and UNICEF. He also served as a jury member for the Cartier Award for Women's Entrepreneurship.

He has a substantive background in global affairs, management of international development, human rights, protection of refugees, education, public health, rule of law, and economic development. His track record demonstrates over 20 successful years of operating at the highest levels to deliver creative solutions to persistent challenges and novel ways of garnering public-private partnerships for civic purposes.

Ahmad is a recipient of a number of awards, including United Nations Gold Peace Medal & Citation Scroll, given by the Paul G. Hoffman Awards Fund for outstandingly significant work in national and international development; Time magazine College Achievement Award; Global Leader for Tomorrow Award from the World Economic Forum; and the John Phillips Award from his alma mater, the Phillips Exeter Academy.

Ahmad holds a B.A. from Harvard College and a J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School. He is admitted to practice law in the State of New York.

## **Jack Meyer**

Founding Chair, Board of Directors, AUWSF

Prior to AUWSF, Jack was a Senior Managing Partner at Convexity Capital Management L.P. located in Boston. Before Convexity, Jack was President and CEO of Harvard Management Company (HMC), 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. Prior to HMC, Jack was Treasurer and Chief Investment Officer of the Rockefeller Foundation, where he managed the Foundation's endowment, valued at \$2 billion. Before the Foundation, he was Deputy Controller of New York City, where he managed \$20 billion in total assets, including the City's pension funds, sinking funds, and treasury funds. He also held various investment management positions with Lionel D. Edie, a New York City investment firm, and at Brown Brothers Harriman & Co. Jack currently serves as the Chair of the Boston Ballet. He was also on the Board of Directors of The Boston Foundation. Previously, he served as a Director of the Investment Responsibility Research Council, and on the investment committees of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Massachusetts State Pension Fund, and the Atlantic Foundation. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from Denison University. In 2004 Denison awarded him an honorary doctorate degree. He received his master's in business administration from Harvard Business School.

## **PHILANTHROPY AT AUW**

AUW has made great strides since its inception. Establishing a first-rate university in a developing country and maintaining a student body that attends AUW almost entirely on scholarship poses a unique set of challenges, not the least of which is sustainability. Since its inception, AUWSF has successfully raised nearly \$200 million from its network of supporters in the US and abroad, including foundations, governments, and individual donors. The 140-acre land grant provided by the Government of Bangladesh for the University's permanent campus has been valued at \$50 million.

To take AUW to the next stage of development requires significant investment in infrastructure projects and additional support for high-quality faculty and student recruitment. Current philanthropic priorities at AUW include securing \$50 million for Phase I of the construction of the permanent campus, continuing to secure scholarship funding for future students, and building an endowment for AUW.

AUW depends on active support in the U.S., Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the UK. Plans are underway to expand its networks in each jurisdiction and introduce new support groups. Volunteer support is essential for continuing the successful operation of AUW. Its annual target for non-capital items is \$15 million.

## **ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL GIFTS OFFICER**

The principal gifts officer will develop annual and ongoing strategies to solicit philanthropic support from individuals capable of gifts of \$100,000 and higher in support of AUW priorities and other special

initiatives. This externally facing role will spend considerable time out of the office cultivating and soliciting donors and principal gift prospects, often collaborating with senior leadership. The selected candidate will have the opportunity to play a role in providing a critical pathway to leadership development, economic progress, and social and political equality.

## **KEY OBJECTIVES AND QUALIFICATIONS**

*The following are the broad objectives for the position:*

- Identify and onboard prospects and actively manage a portfolio with specific cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship strategies for each assigned prospect. This involves thoughtfully planning and carrying out frequent travel.
- Strategically engage and leverage the executive leadership, senior management team, and/or faculty in donor development activities when appropriate, using their time and talent effectively and providing all necessary briefings.
- Implement timely and effective follow-up and follow-through for all levels of engagement, including donor meetings, event attendance, campus visits, etc.
- Proactively seek out new prospects through referrals, networking, event follow-up, and other outreach efforts.
- Develop an understanding and working knowledge of AUW's mission and priorities and effectively articulate the case for support and gift impact.
- Incorporate AUW's values and the ethics of professional fundraising in all aspects of work performance.

*The successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications, characteristics, skills, and personal qualities:*

- Adept at cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding principal and transformational gifts, with a significant track record of revenue-generation success, depth of knowledge, and best practices in all key areas of development.
- Strong communication skills (both verbal and written) with the ability to translate and convey critical information, as well as AUWSF's mission and priorities, to diverse audiences with clarity and eloquence.
- A strong lived commitment to advancing racial equity and anti-racism and an understanding of the dynamics of difference and privilege.



- Flexible and adaptable style; a leader who can positively impact both strategic and tactical fundraising initiatives.
- High energy with a collaborative spirit; inspirational to donors, the AUWSF Board of Directors, and colleagues.
- Demonstrated cultural competence and an inclusive approach; the ability to build trusting relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Proven ability to develop and manage productive relationships; successfully building strong and lasting relationships; personal experience in strategizing, presenting, negotiating, and closing high-level gifts.
- Exceptional organizational and project management skills, including the ability to plan, schedule, and carry out multiple simultaneous projects to a successful conclusion.
- A commitment to data-driven decision-making and the ability to communicate metrics effectively to a broad audience.
- Proficiency in active listening and persuasive communication across a broad spectrum of stakeholders, and adept at aligning individuals' passions with foundation objectives.
- A self-motivated professional who can passionately model AUWSF's mission and vision, willing to take calculated risks while demonstrating high standards of professional ethics, protecting the institution's reputation, leveraging brand assets, and balancing creativity and structure to achieve goals.
- Willing to travel frequently.
- A bachelor's degree is required.

### **Compensation and Location**

Compensation for this position will be competitive and commensurate with experience, with a salary range estimated at \$150,000. The foundation also provides generous and comprehensive benefits. The AUWSF office is based in Brookline, Massachusetts.

### **Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations**

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications (including resumes and two- to three-page letters of interest to the hiring committee, responding to the challenges and opportunities outlined above), should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/asian-university-women-support-foundation/principal-gifts-officer>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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Equal employment opportunity is a fundamental principle at the Asian University for Women Support Foundation, where employment and promotional opportunities are based on individual capabilities and qualifications without regard to race, color, religion, gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation/affectional preference, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, disability, veteran status, or any other protected characteristic as established by law.