

The Initiative To Educate Afghan Women

NEWS & Events

From the Founder

Our Initiative to Educate Afghan Women family will be growing next year! The new schools that will be offering scholarships are Duke, Middlebury, Mt. Holyoke, and the University of Richmond. Simmons will welcome two more students and President Susan Cole at Montclair will honor her commitment to offer another scholarship next year. There are twelve women from Afghanistan receiving their undergraduate education around the US this year: we will proudly have twenty women in the program in Fall 2005! I interviewed thirty candidates via satellite in Kabul. Many of the women were top in their high schools. The candidates needed high academic ability combined with strong English and a commitment to return to their country after graduation. The women joining us next year are as strong as the women presently in the program. They are intelligent, well spoken, resilient and eager to bring their education back to Afghanistan so they may serve as role models, and work to help their country's reconstruction.

The growth of this program is due to the volunteerism and support of many people around the US. Without volunteers like Libby, Nina, Glyn, Peggy, Margie, Ginny and others we would not be able to advance this organization as quickly as it continues to grow! Financially this mission is helped by so many individuals around the US. We must thank a very enlightened and generous man in Boston who will be very helpful in caring for the Simmons students. Although I am somewhat concerned about this year with regard to funding, I do believe that individuals will continue to step forward and support the education of the deserving women of Afghanistan.

This newsletter does a bit of bragging about this year's awards and accomplishments of our students. Many of the women accomplished grades of 3.5 or better. Adela achieved a 4.0 for her first semester at Simmons. This is remarkable considering she was schooled in the basement and then started her own school to educate others secretly! Nadima was just elected as Mock Trial

club vice president. This is certainly an accomplishment since Nadima arrived with her eyes down, very quiet and shy.

I hear on campus that it is best not to debate with Nadima!

The time is near when the semester will end and the students will be heading home for the summer. We are thrilled that First Lady Laura Bush has asked us to visit with her at the White House before the students return home. The Treasury Department is hosting a lunch following our visit with Mrs. Bush. Everyone recognizes that these are the future leaders of Afghanistan, and therefore they want to meet the IEAW students!

Next year we will be graduating the first group of IEAW students. We Americans can feel very proud that we helped in educating the next generation of the women of Afghanistan.

Thank you all for helping to make this program a success! I request your support next year as the IEAW grows.

Paula Nirschel



Gul and Anahita with Kennesaw's new flag



Reconstruction in Afghanistan

Roger Williams University and their Center for Macro Projects and Diplomacy this year explored post conflict reconstruction of Afghanistan, Bosnia and Southeast Asia. The RWU Initiative students contributed to and attended. Fatima Gailani, Director of the Red Crescent of Afghanistan, and Anwar Ahady, Minister of Finance, were the key speakers for Afghanistan. Mahbooba submitted three papers to the conference which were reviewed by the very high level people from around the world that were in attendance.

Awards, Initiations and Brothers

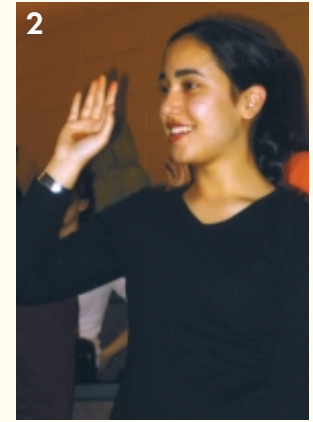
Sousan Rahimi was one of 21 students at the University of Montana, and one of six foreign students, who received this year's "diversity advisory counsel students achievement" award.

Nadima and Arezo won the student project awards for their discipline at RWU this year.

Nadima was just elected the Vice President of Mock Trial club at RWU! This group came in 5th in their division this year. Nadima is hoping for Law School Fall 2006.

Mahbooba and Arezo were initiated into the business fraternity Delta Sigma Pi. They feel honored to be brothers of this very prestigious organization!

1. President George Dennison with Sousan and Teresa Branch, VP of Student Affairs
2. Nadima being sworn in
3. Maling Ebrahimpour, Dean of Roger Williams University's Gabelli School of Business, with Mahbooba and Arezo
4. Nadima and Arezo with their awards



Friends

The IEAW has been an ever evolving group of new friends brought together with the common goal of educating the next generation of Afghan women in Afghanistan!

Shown are 3 photos of new friends. First photo shows Boston supporters having dinner at Helmand with the Simmons Students. These Boston "friends" have been with Paula Nirschel from the beginning of the IEAW and remain actively involved. Second picture is Libby, a Manhattan supporter, the Montclair students and founder visiting over dinner near the university. Third photo is with Alberto Fernandez. During the first two years, and while working at the State Department in Kabul, Alberto interviewed and helped students with travel/visas. Without his help our students would not be here now!





Arezo, Dr. Hosseini, Mahbooba, and Nadima

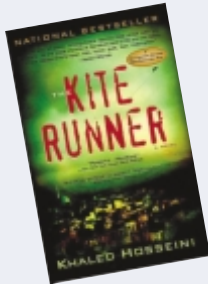
The Kite Runner

Khaled Hosseini, the author of *The Kite Runner* spoke at RWU in May.

The event was co-sponsored by the IEAW and Reading Across Rhode Island, which Mrs. Nirschel co-chaired this year.

Khaled was born in Afghanistan in 1965 and left before the Soviet invasion.

The Kite Runner is partially based on memories from his youth and “kite running” but also on ethnic differences and hope for his country. The author is a very warm and engaging individual and speaker. The IEAW students and board members enjoyed a private dinner with the author following the event.



IEAW board members and students with Dr. Hosseini



Iraqi Students Visit

A group of Iraqi students visited Roger Williams University in March. President Nirschel arranged for this delegation, which is the first group of Iraqi students to visit the US in thirty five years! Their time was spent on campus experiencing normal campus activities. They also went to NYC with the president and others to tour our great city. The IEAW students and the Iraqi students attended a dinner at the university residence. Following is a quote from Mahbooba following the intimate dinner, “I want to thank you both for this opportunity to bring the world together! I feel like I have known these students for years. I am finding no difference between an Iraqi, American, or Afghani as is shown in the media. I wish everyone in this world had a better chance of getting to know each other. That would be the perfect world.”

In The News

Often our communities and universities have articles of interest in their publications regarding the IEAW students.

Two recent articles appeared in Simmons monthly magazine and The Rhode Island Monthly magazine. Both tell more great stories about our students, their resiliency, motivation and high academic ability.

Feel free to read the Simmons article on our web site: www.ieaw.org



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Adela and Amnesty International

Adela Raz and five other Simmons students were chosen to attend the annual Amnesty International Conference in Texas. It has

always been a dream of Adela's to participate in a large Amnesty International gathering. Very helpful to Adela was the workshop on Refugees Law and Implementation.



Ms. Hawa and Simmons Students

The speaker that she learned so much from was Ms. Hawa from Somalia, winner of the 2005 Amnesty International Award. Her speech taught Adela that "any woman in any part of the world can help other women in need anywhere." Ms. Hawa stressed that there are no borders toward help and assistance and no differentiation of people based on their language, religion and ethnicity. Adela was encouraged to work harder for her country and to not give up when there are obstacles to growth.



State House Visit

Montclair State students, Alean and Forozan, were treated to a NJ State House visit. The International office at Montclair arranged for this most interesting trip.

They very much enjoyed and were impressed by the private tour and conversation with Senator Diane Allen,



Diane Allen, New Jersey Senator, with Montclair students

Commissioner Susan Bass Levin and Kelly Heck Spokeswoman/ Press Secretary for Governor Codey.

Contributions are received through our web site at www.ieaw.org

Requests for information regarding the Initiative should be addressed to Paula Nirschel at the following e-mail: pnirschel@ieaw.org

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Calendar of Events

May 2005

Students and founder to visit First Lady Laura Bush and the Treasury Department

Students return home

June 2005

Texas fundraisers

Summer 2005

Founder to travel to Afghanistan to meet new students' families



Providence Fundraiser