



Bringing Back Education in Afghanistan

When Kabul University reopened after the fall of the Taliban in March 2002, Purdue University professors Kevin McNamara and Zarjon Baha were invited to attend the opening with Purdue alum Dennis Engi. They met faculty who had no lab experience, statistical training, or computer skills. There were no labs or equipment and few teaching materials. But students were flocking back, and that inspired McNamara to action.

After that first visit, McNamara developed a program that took 10 Purdue faculty members to Afghanistan and involved more than 50 Purdue faculty and staff in related activities. Currently, four Purdue staff members are on long-term assignment there and 12 Afghan University junior faculty members are working on graduate degrees at Purdue.

Purdue-initiated activities include:

- Redevelopment of university programs in agriculture, education, and engineering.
- Visits to Purdue by 16 Afghan University faculty members to discuss advancements in higher education, staff capacity building, and curriculum modernization.
- Donation and shipping of 160 desktop computers (valued at \$100,000) and textbooks (valued at \$5,000) and other teaching materials to Kabul.
- Partnership in a U.S. Department of Agriculture/U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Education Capacity Building Project to redevelop university-level agricultural education in Afghanistan. This included renovating facilities, setting up a teaching farm, offering staff development, and helping junior staff members earn master's degrees.
- A faculty exchange program (now in its fourth year) for mid-career Afghan professors proficient in English.



Kevin McNamara, Purdue Advancing Afghan Agriculture Alliance, discusses wheat rust problems with farmers in the Shamali plain area north of Kabul (top). Dan Egel, Purdue Advancing Afghan Agriculture Alliance, talks with an Afghan farmer about managing pests in vegetable production. (above).





Joern Seigies, Purdue Advancing Afghan Agriculture Alliance, talks with USAID staff about student farm development at Kabul University (left). Dan Egel, Purdue University, shares information about pest management with students at Kabul University.

- Establishment of the USAID-funded Advancing Afghan Agriculture Alliance, which links development of co- and extra-curricular activities to graduate education for junior faculty members. Through this program, bright, young Afghans go to other countries for basic education in agriculture, then return and teach.
- Collaboration with staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) to begin linking MAIL to the education system.
- Collaboration with nongovernmental organizations (Mercy Corps, Catholic Relief Services, Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit, and others) to link them to MAIL and universities through activities such as the national livestock assessment.
- Establishment of the Purdue/USAID Afghan Merit Scholar Program (with an \$800,000 Purdue contribution) for joint Afghan faculty master's education in agriculture at Purdue.
- An integrated, agriculture training program for National Guard Agricultural Development Teams deployed to work as agricultural outreach specialists on one-year tours of duty in Afghanistan.
- Development of curriculum, course materials, and teaching aids for vocational agriculture high schools, as well as teacher training for new schools in Kandahar and Helmand provinces.

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Additional Purdue Programs

[National Guard Afghan Agriculture Development Team Training Program](#)
[Afghan Faculty Exchange Program](#)
[Plant Diagnostic Training Program for Afghan A4 Program](#)
[Purdue/USAID Afghan Merit Scholar Program](#)
[A4 Faculty of Veterinary Science Support Program](#)
[Purdue Vocational Agriculture High School Curriculum Development](#)
[Afghan Livestock Assessment Workshop](#)