



Quarterly

# AIOU News & Views

Volume 02 Issue 01

## French diplomat visits AIOU

Andre De Bussy, Counselor for cooperation and cultural affairs, French Embassy visited AIOU and met VC Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui to explore avenues of promoting French language in Pakistan through distance and online learning system. He also appreciated the AIOU for successfully running French language program and assured their support for upgrading it through technical and academic input.

Dr. Siddiqui sought the support of the Embassy for developing state-of-the-art software for teaching French language as well as having University's collaboration with its counterparts in France in education sector. Andre De Bussy assured that the embassy will look into the proposals to achieve the desired objectives.

Dr. Siddiqui briefed the delegate about the AIOU's ongoing and future plans promoting foreign languages such as Chinese, German and Arabic. The University is already successfully running French online program which has benefited many students.

## UK Open University Works with AIOU To Boost Up Quality Education

A two-member delegation of World's first Open University established In United Kingdom in 1969 visited AIOU to share its expertise and experience to boost up accessible quality education. The visit, sponsored by British Council in Islamabad was aimed at helping the AIOU in carrying out its consolidation plan, improving its academic ranking and providing best possible services to the students.

Senior British academicians Dr. Nicholas Richard Watson and Mrs. Anna Childs on their arrival at the University's main campus were welcomed by VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui. The delegation was apprised of the AIOU's future development plan that includes promoting innovative applied research, updating curriculum and course materials, professional development, strengthening students' support system and improving delivery system through smart use of technology. Dr. Siddiqui in his welcome remarks praised UK Open University for its solid contribution in establishing AIOU in 1974 at its initial stage. UK OU first in the world and AIOU in first in Asia maintained close liaison for many years in popularizing Open Distance learning. The idea of establishing Open University in Pakistan under an Act of Parliament was in line with UK Open University. The AIOU, Dr. Siddiqui said has achieved its stipulated targets in bringing a large number of country's population in the educational net. Now, the University was focusing on research work and promoting E-learning. "We are working on a plan to convert AIOU into E-learning University through a gradual process," he added. Dr. Siddiqui further said they have taken it as their mission to transform the life of the people through education and now they are actively engaged in proving affordable and accessible education to the people through technology-supported distance learning. The delegation lauded the AIOU's achievements in the recent years and noted that it made significance progress in all relevant fields. It hoped their visit will be productive one in helping to achieve future goals. Dr. Siddiqui further said they were looking forward to resume their previous collaboration with UK OU making the non-formal education more effective in conducting research work on society-related issues and enhancing literacy rate in the country.

The delegation was given detailed presentation on the University's working. It took round of various departments to get first-hand knowledge of the University's recent developments.

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## International Seminar on ODL

Two-day International seminar formulated draft outlines of National Policy on Open Distance Learning (ODL). The seminar was jointly organized by HEC and AIOU. It was attended by prominent educationists from home and abroad. The draft outlines were finalized after two-day long deliberations by the nine Focus Groups which were specially set up for the purpose. The AIOU being the pioneer of ODL system played a leading role in taking the step forward towards the National Policy, in collaboration with the Virtual University.

VC Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui announced that the draft document will be circulated among the stakeholders for seeking their necessary input before presenting it to the HEC for further action. The document will also be sent to Commonwealth of Learning (ODL) and other Universities abroad for their professional feedback. Contd. on page.....10

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## Allama Iqbal Open University emerges as major user of digital technology

Students of AIOU have emerged as major user of digital technology getting access to their academic programs, courses and other relevant information through internet. The University's 1.3 million students mainly depend on digital citizen system that connect them with their tutors and educational sources through online and open distance learning, this was acknowledged at a panel discussion that was held to evaluate a survey conducted on the use of information technology by a team of University of Edinburgh, UK. The discussion was arranged by the British Council to assess and promote digital citizenship in Pakistan. Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority Dr. Syed Ismail Shah presided over the discussion session. University's official Zahid Majeed told the participants that VC Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui has taken various initiatives to introduce massive open online courses that are taught through information technology and automation system. Now most of the information about the admission, examination and issuance of degree is being provided to the students through internet or cell text message. The participants were told that AIOU's 44 regional Campuses have been equipped with digital facility. They are maintaining contact with their students through media-based network as well. The University was focusing on E-learning for imparting higher education, including MPhil and PhD.

## Information Minister visits AIOU's Stall

Students, community members and official dignitaries lauded the role of AIOU in fighting out illiteracy and promoting higher education through distance learning system. During their visit to the University's stall set up at an educational expo, they said this mega University successfully implemented its charter on mass literacy and meeting the education need of the people through its diversified educational academic programs.

They included, Information Minister Senator Pervaiz Rashid, advisor to the Prime Minister on history and culture Irfan Siddiqui besides large number of students from various educational institutions. They hoped that the University would keep up its constant efforts, bringing affordable quality education at the door-step of the people.

Information Minister said that AIOU has made remarkable contribution in providing educational facility to the people of less developed regions and marginalized section of the society. He hoped that the University will maintain quality in its academic programs while enhancing its enrollment at country level. PM Advisor, Irfan Siddiqui appreciated the multiple approach of the AIOU towards education focusing more on social economic needs of the people. The number of people taking benefit of the University's network was increasing day by day and this reflects confidence and trust which it enjoy among the people, he added.

The visiting students took keen interest in the educational programs being offered by the University in its ongoing admissions and collected prospectuses for their enrollment.

VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui on the occasion assured that the University will provide best possible educational services to the students. He also talked about the incentives being provided to those students who cannot afford educational expenses.

## AIOU launched tree plantation campaign

AIOU launched spring tree plantation campaign in order to motivate its students and the Faculty members to plant trees at their respective work and residential places.

VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui inaugurated month-long campaign by planting a sapling in the compound of University's main Campus.



Around 50 saplings were planted on the first-day. The University has arranged similar tree-Plantation events at its 44 regional campuses across the country.

Dr. Siddiqui advised the regional heads to involve the maximum number of students in tree plantation drive. The AIOU, being the mega educational institution with 1.3 million students wished to play a leading role in developing green Pakistan. AIOU, he added has included in its educational curriculum the content related to climate change and the significance of plantation. VC lauded the efforts of the University's gardeners for the making the campaign successful. The University regularly takes part in various flowers' competitions at the local level, winning top positions.



## AIOU introduces DCS system for retired employees

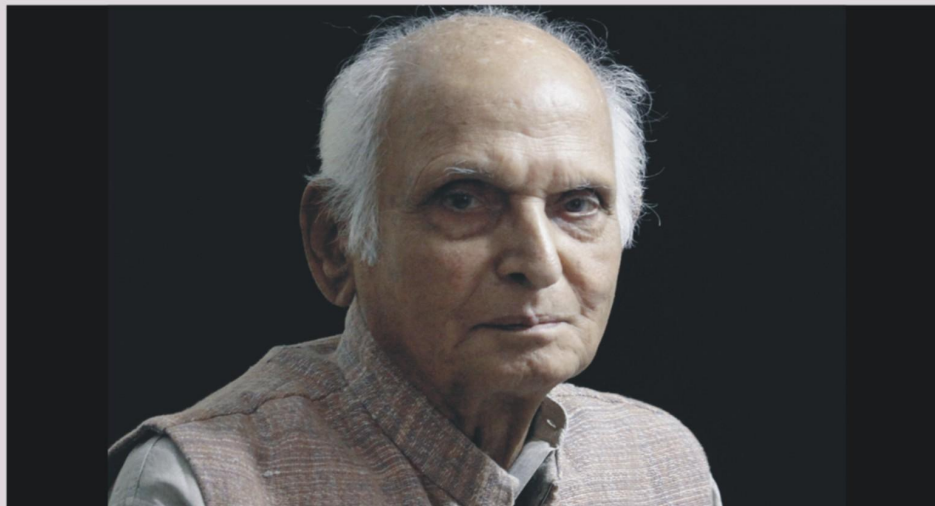
The University has introduced direct credit system (DCS) for the convenience of its retired employees enabling them to receive their monthly pension through bank accounts. Monthly pension of the retired employees is now being directly credited to their respective banks' accounts, said VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui. While crediting the pension, the employees are also being informed through SMS message as well. This facilitates the employees to draw their pension even through ATM. Comfort of retired employees is highly important for him since, they are the people who spent their life-time for the development of this University. Today the University has achieved most respectable position among the people and that was the result of their hard work.

The University has set-up a 'Facilitation Lounge' at the University's main campus for the retired employees as well for their occasional sitting and get-togethers. The facilitation Center has been named as 'Welcome Home Lounge.' This, Dr. Siddiqui said was established in recognition of their services, giving them due respect. The retired officers who rendered outstanding services are the precious assets for the University and we would benefit from their experiences, he added. It may be mentioned that the AIOU is first one in the education circles, which adopted DCS system and set up a well-furnished separate space for their sitting in the office even after their retirement.



## AIOU pays tributes to late 'Intizar Hussain'

The Department of Urdu, AIOU will conduct a PhD level research on the life of the leading Urdu Writer 'Intizar Hussain'. Two research scholars at MPhil level have already been engaged, doing research on his columns, aimed at promoting academic knowledge of students about the people who achieved distinction in their fields. It was the duty of educational institutions to keep remember those who delivered the best in their respective fields, this was stated by VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui while speaking at the condolence reference held at AIOU to pay tribute to late Intizar Hussain for his valuable and impressive role as a fiction writer.



He noted that Intizar Hussain was a great person always having smile on his face and top of that a best human-being, he had his own unique way of writing which made him different from others. He wrote short stories, novels and poetry in Urdu, and also columns for leading newspapers. He had command over English and Urdu languages. Intizar Hussain was widely recognized as one of the greatest Urdu writers in history, Dr. Siddiqui added. His death has left a huge gap in the literary circle of the sub-continent that would be felt till centuries to come. He will be remembered long for his literary work, he added. He was a towering personality in fiction writing who had been working with dignity and grace throughout his life.

The function was arranged by the varsity in connection with its series. 'Mat samjo ham nay bohla daiya'. The speakers included Chairman Department of Urdu, IIUI, Dr. Kamran Kazmi, Chairman Department of Urdu, AIOU Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir and others. The AIOU has been turned into Centre of academic, culture and literary activities in order to promote social and democratic values and keep the young generation informed about the sacrifices and contribution of their elders who spent their life for the noble cause. The participants prayed for the departed soul.

## Condolence reference for Bacha Khan University tragedy

AIOU held a condolence reference for tragic incident of Bacha Khan University. Vice Chancellor Dr. Shahid Siddiqui, Deans and officers of the University were present on the occasion who strongly condemned the brutal and cowardly act of terrorism and prayed for the departed souls. Expressing sympathies with the affected families, Dr. Siddiqui said they fully stand by them in their hour of grief.

## Graduate Studies coordination office set up

AIOU set up a full-fledged coordination office of Graduates Studies to streamline the admission, examination and mailing process of higher-level academic programs, including MA, MSc, MPhil and PhD. This is a major step forward towards timely and efficient handling of the post-graduate-level degree programs. It will improve coordination of different graduate programs' activities. A website will be launched soon containing all the required information regarding postgraduate studies. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui said the office will monitor timeline for major activities of graduate programs in consultation with the relevant departments. It has been assigned the task of ensuring timely completion of admissions, declaration of results and mailing of books, he added. This separate office will also be a source of strength for upgrading the quality of higher studies and improving University's academic ranking as well as promoting research-based activities, he added.

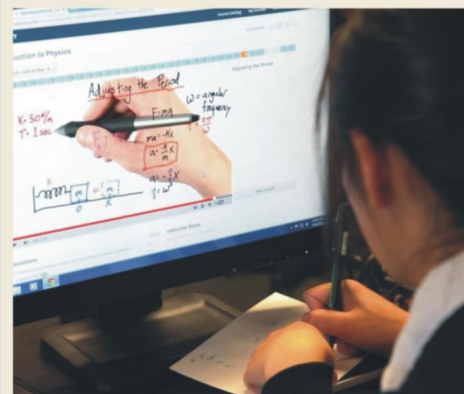
Dr. Naghmana Rashid said the office had been made functional as per direction of the Vice Chancellor. Its initial work proved very effectively in timely declaration of outgoing semester's results. This enabled the students to take admission in the next academic programs.

## British academicians to help in promoting Online education

Open University (OU) of United Kingdom will work with AIOU in evolving a long-term sustainable strategic plan to promote Open-Distance Learning and online education in Pakistan..

A two-member OU's team after conducting a scoping study of the AIOU's academic system during their stay here assured that they will give their necessary input and suggestions for preparing the plan that also help the University to achieve its future academic goals, strengthening students' support system, exams' evaluation process and tutors' teachings methods.

It endorsed the vision of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui in regard to University's further development and hoped that it will turn it into one of the best open-distance learning institutions in the World. The OU's team comprising Dr. Nicholas Richard Watson and Mrs. Anna Childs visited here to study the open learning system in Pakistan. The visit was sponsored by the British Council, Islamabad. In their interactive meeting held at the end of the visit, the team appreciated the



Achievements of AIOU in the education sector and the initiatives taken by Dr. Shahid Siddiqui in the recent year for promoting innovative applied research, updating curriculum, introducing automation in delivery system and focusing more on professional development of its Faculty and academic staff.

During the meeting, attended by senior academicians it was decided that the two Universities will resume their decades' old partnership in consolidating the Open Distance Learning system. UK OU first in the World and AIOU in first in Asia maintained close liaison for many years in popularizing Open Distance learning.

Dr. Siddiqui praised OU for its solid contribution and support in establishing the AIOU in 1974 at its initial stage. He said the AIOU has achieved its stipulated targets in bringing a large number of country's population in the educational net. Its annual enrollment has now reached to 1.3 million with a huge infrastructure network.

The delegation held separate meetings with Heads of various departments and pointed out certain areas which needed improvement. It appreciated the professional caliber of the University's Faculty and its serving departments.



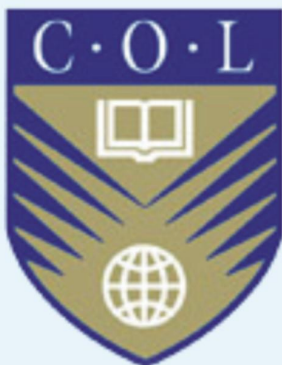
# Commonwealth of Learning-AIOU join hands

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) has decided in principle to provide multimedia support to AIOU for introduction of twelve skill-based courses in the field of multimedia, vocational and agriculture. Initially, two courses will be launched relating to audio-video recording and editing. In this connection, CEMCA will come up with technical and financial support while the courses have been developed by the University's Institute of Educational Technology (IET) in collaboration with Pakistan Television and Radio Pakistan. Addressing the courses' review-meeting, VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui said these courses will help develop expertise and necessary know-how for arranging vocational and technical training for youth and female section of the society. This, he said is part of University's consistent efforts to promote its collaboration with national and international institutions to equip its students with latest knowledge and technology. The AIOU, he said wanted to utilize its available potential and infrastructure strength for addressing socio-economic issues of the society through academic and research-based activities. Media, which has emerged as major social institution, will be the main source of promoting skill-based programs.

The proposed courses include audio-video recording and editing, video camera handling, still photography, graphic and set design, digital camera repairing and maintenance, refrigeration and air conditioning repairing and maintenance, cell phone repairing, commercial poultry farming, construction of poultry farm, poultry processing marketing and value addition.

While giving presentation on these courses Director IET Mukhtar Talpur and In-charge International Collaboration and Exchange Office Zahid Majeed said the ongoing interaction between CEMCA and AIOU have proved highly beneficial in introducing skill-based education in the country.

The CEMCA's representative Sanjgita Mishra, Programme Officer-Skills assured full support to AIOU in introducing professional courses for the benefit of common man.



## Delegates from ECO's members countries visit AIOU

Delegates belonging to postal services from eleven countries of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) visited the University and showed keen interest in developing cooperative partnership with the University in the area of professional development. The countries including Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan, Cambodia, Nepal, Vietnam and Thailand lauded the services being rendered by AIOU in education sector. Welcoming the delegates, VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui assured University's academic support to the officers of the postal services in enhancing their knowledge and skill through an online diploma course in post office's management. He briefed them about the University's role and working in imparting education to a large number of people through open distance learning system.

Wasim Zafar, a senior official of ECO's postal staff college who was heading the delegation welcomed Dr. Shahid Siddiqui's offer for launching joint academic program for professional benefit of postal services' employees. Delegation's representative Ms. Siritorn Rojanamaitree from Thailand thanked the VC for his offer of bilateral cooperation in the postal service sector. Earlier, in-charge international collaboration department Zahid Majeed gave a presentation on University's overall working. Registrar Dr. Muhammad Naeem Qureshi was also present on the occasion. The delegation took round of various departments of the University and lauded the its academic potential in meeting educational needs of the people.

## New student friendly website

The AIOU has introduced a new updated-website facilitating the students to have easy access and communication with the University in academic matters.

It is a students' friendly website which contains special features like information about tutors, assignments' schedules, books and degree tracking system. It also facilitates the students for submitting online application for admission. Fee calculated system for each academic program is also available in the new website ([www.aiou.edu.pk](http://www.aiou.edu.pk)), which has been developed in more professionally manner, taking advantage of the new technology. Through this website, the students will get update about the status of various academic programs. VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui who formally launched the website assured the students that they will have easy online interaction with the University for continuing their future study. It is a part of students' support system which is also aimed at reaching the door-steps of the students across the country, he added.

## AIOU's faculty and staff mourn suicide bombing in Lahore

Faculty and staff of the University mourned the killing of innocent people in suicide bombing in Lahore and prayed for the departed souls. They held a condolence meeting at the University's Main Campus and expressed sorrow and grief over the loss of precious human lives. Showing solidarity with the victims, VC Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui said all segments of society are shocked over the incident and wished to condemn the act of terrorism in strongest term. "We stand by the victims' families in hour of their grief and sadness," he added.





## Nigerian academicians visit AIU



Eleven-member delegation from Sokoto State University, Nigeria visited AIU and signed a Memorandum of Understanding for developing cooperative partnership in the field of research and professional development.

The MoU was signed by Vice Chancellor Sokoto University Prof. Nuhu O. Yaqub and VC Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui at a ceremony that was also attended by the academicians from both sides.

The Nigerian delegation comprising senior professors appreciated the AIU's efforts of providing affordable quality education to country's big population (1.3 million) through distance learning system. The Nigerian side accepted Dr. Shahid Siddiqui's offer of jointly organizing an international conference on social sciences next year.

The two Universities, under the MoU, will develop a framework of collaboration in the area of science, technology, humanity and capacity development. They will exchange variety of educational programs to promote knowledge and technical know-how for the benefit of their students.

It was decided that they will specially focus on conducting research-based study in the areas of common interest. The MoU also covered a mechanism for exchange of visits by students and faculty members to each other universities. The delegation that included Deputy VC Prof. Malami Buba and Registrar Amina G. Yusuf visited various departments of the University including Institute of Educational Technology and Print and Production Unit. They evinced keen interest in the Accessibility Centre set up at Central Library for visually impaired students.

## US AID funded-project on gender studies launched

A USAID-funded project under Gender Equity Program (GEP) of Aurat Foundation was launched at AIU to strengthen gender and women's studies for community development. Under this project, the AIU will provide research opportunities to students from seven different regions. Orientation workshops will be conducted over fifteen months, aimed at strengthening the university's Gender and Women's Studies Department to conduct research-based study. In these workshops, students and faculty will be sensitized on gender and pro women legislation.

VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui termed the project as highly important in capacity-building of the faculty and non-faculty staff on gender. He added that the university would soon introduce MPhil-level degree on gender and women studies in order to sensitize the community on a wider-level about gender's role in the country's overall socio-economic development. The launching ceremony was also addressed by the representatives of Aurat Foundation Mr. Naeema Mirza and Ms. Mahpara Shakil Ghouri who gave an overview of the organization's role and achievements in enhancing the respect and living conditions of women. They also spoke about their efforts to combat gender-based violence and promote women workers' welfare. Earlier, Dr. Riffat Haque, Chairperson Department of Gender Studies highlighted main features of the project and said they will soon offer need-based courses to expand the academic network on gender studies.

## Business Talks - Role of entrepreneurship in economic development of Pakistan

The third session of Business Talks was held in the Business Administration Department in which Mian Humayun Parvez, President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industries (RCCI) was the guest speaker. Speaker highlighted the role of entrepreneurship in the economic development of Pakistan. The session started with the brief introduction of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industries and later a detail deliberation was held about the local business dynamics.

The discussion ended with the commitment to explore opportunities for future collaboration between AIU and RCCI.

## Free education facilities for special students

AIU has upgraded education plan for the special students with maximum facilities including provision of study material through a computerized accessibility center. The is the only University in the country which provides education to physically handicapped and visually impaired persons free of cost from Matriculation to PhD level, said VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui while presiding over an academic review meeting. The number of enrolled students with the University in these categories immensely increased over the years. The university is providing free education to all types of special need students (Blind, Physically Handicapped, hearing Impaired and Social/Emotional Disturbed).

An Accessibility Center has also been established at the AIU's Central Library. It is the first-ever E-Learning facility being provided to this special category of people by any public sector educational institution free of cost. This is our humble effort to take care of handicapped people who wish to acquire knowledge in any particular field, he added. The center is equipped with computers, scanners, printers, different software through which needy students especially visually impaired could access e-content through internet.

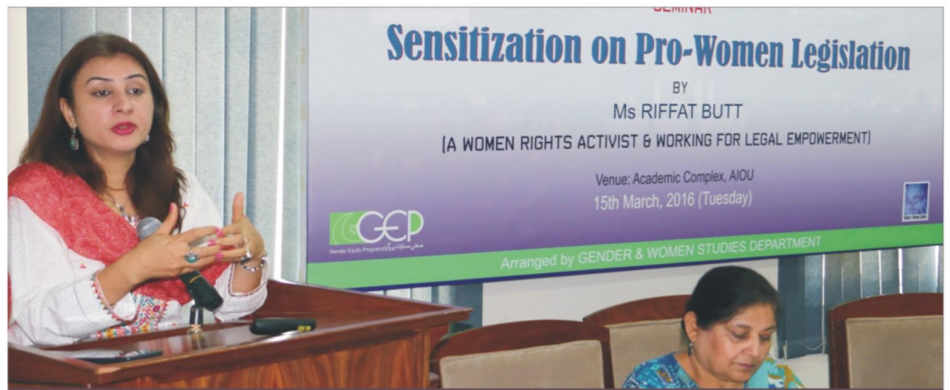
This facility is not confined to only AIU's students but all those who are interested to get themselves educated through E-learning. The needy students will be able to access HEC's digital resources, e-Books, research articles, journals, thesis and course material of their programs without any extra charges. The University will also arrange orientation and introductory sessions that can benefit them for their professional development and academic up-gradation. Dr. Siddiqui said it is matter of great pride for the AIU that, one of its Master-level students Ashraf Bhatti has been the part of the Pakistan Blind Cricket team. He was declared man-of-the-match in 2002 World blind cricket tournament. He was also doing the job of team coaching, he added.





## Tributes to Naat Khawan Bashir Hussain Nazim

Speakers at a function held at AIOU paid rich tributes to renowned Naat Khawan late Bashir Hussain Nazim, who made himself prominent as 'Ashaq-e-Rasool' through his writing and recitation. The speakers included Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui, well-known literary figures Prof. Fateha Muhammad Malik and Prof. Ahsan Akbar, besides his sons Brig. Dr. Mukarram and media person Mehtab Bashir. The function was arranged by Department of Mass Communication in connection with the University's series 'Mat samjo ham nay bohla daiya'. Nazim who had earned Presidential award 'Pride of Performance' for Naat recitations died in 2012. He authored several books in different languages. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui announced the University will produce PhD thesis on life and work of late Bashir Hussain Nazim. Eulogizing his qualities of head and heart, he said late Nazim has emerged himself as living personality who had been narrating Naats in a most inspiring and impressive manner. He was also a true lover of Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal who popularized his famous sayings through his poetry and columns. Prof. Fateha Muhammad Malik and Prof. Ahsan Akbar spoke about the qualities of Late Nazim, quoting their personal association with him.



## Speakers hail pro-women legislation

Speakers at a seminar here at AIOU underlined the need of promoting awareness about the pro-women legislation so that the female folk could better understand and protect their rights, available to them under the laws.

The seminar was arranged by the University's Gender and Women Studies Department under the auspices of USAID and Aurat Foundation, an NGO, in connection with the international women day. It was the part of the lectures' series undertaken on initiative of the Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui to sensitize the Faculty members and the students about laws, relating to their welfare. Human Rights Activist Ms. Riffat Butt was the key-note speaker who briefed the participants about the pro-women legislation introduced from 2004 to 2016.

The seminar was aimed at disseminating basic knowledge regarding legislature pertaining to prevention of gender-based violence. The speakers Dr. Riffat Haque, Chairperson Department of Women Studies and Dr. Samina Awan, Chairperson History Department AIOU asserted that the society's mindset about the rights of women should be changed through education and social-financial empowerment. Dignity and honour of women should be upheld in accordance with human rights, enshrined in the constitutions and the laws.

Ms. Riffat Butt noted presently there was a better realization of women's rights at the government's level. It reflected from the laws introduced during the last ten years. Legislation regarding honor-killing and the pro-women law recently adopted by the Punjab government were testimony to it. She added these days women in country feel more secured and have better understanding to seek their due rights through the court of law. She referred to the laws relating to domestic-violence and harassment of women at their work place and said these have enhanced females' respect and status in the society. The speakers appreciated VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui for laying special focus on females' education and arranging activities relating to socio-economic issues.

## Book on education policies by Dr. Shahid Siddiqui

Oxford University Press launched a first-ever book on Education policies of Pakistan written by eminent educationist and VC Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui. The book titled 'Politics, Projections, and Practices' presents detailed picture and characteristics of education policies introduced in the country from 1947 till now. The launching ceremony was held at Lok Virsa which was attended by a large number of students, teachers, researchers and book lovers.

Those who commented on the book and eulogized the author's skillful and scholarly writing included eminent educationist A.H. Nayyar and Haroona Jatoti, and Ameena Saiyid, Managing Director Oxford University Press Pakistan. Dr. Siddiqui in his book gave his in-depth analysis of the educational policies with his own academic input and recommendation as to how the policies could be best both in terms of quality and their implementation. Explaining the various features of the book, Dr. Siddiqui said, this book is an attempt to study the education policies in Pakistan in a critical and holistic manner. The book discusses in detail the rationale of education policy and the process of its planning. It offers sociopolitical context for education policies to understand their processes of planning and implementation. The book with 14 chapters selects major themes in education policies, e.g., vision and goals, Universal Primary Education, Literacy, Female Education, Language Issues, Higher Education, Technical and Vocational Education, Special Education, Religious and Madrassah Education, Curricula and Textbook, and Teachers and Teacher Education tracking each theme through policies from 1947 till 2009, when the last education policy was offered.

Speakers while commenting on the book said, this is a most thorough and comprehensive account of educational policies as they have historically emerged in Pakistan. It places these policies within the social, religious and economic context of Pakistan, and does so both critically and constructively. In pointing out the difficulties encountered, it also draws lessons, and therefore points to future direction of policy in the light of the well-researched evidence. This book reflects a profound knowledge of the educational system, and must be a key reference for everyone engaged in educational policy in Pakistan.

OXFORD

### Education Policies in Pakistan

Politics, Projections, and Practices

Shahid Siddiqui





## Teenage girls deprived of sunlight facilities: AIOU research report

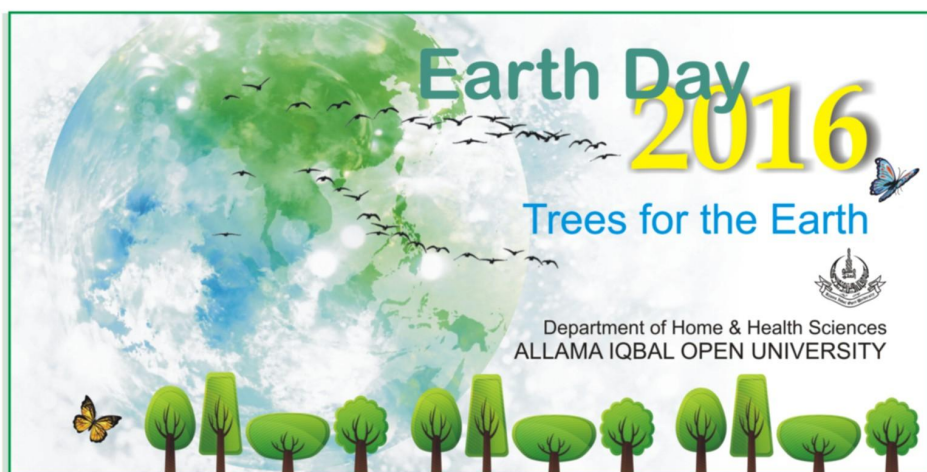
Ninety percent teenage or adolescent girls are deprived of open space (Sunlight facilities) in their schools in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, which sometimes expose them to serious diseases at their grown-up age, says a research study conducted by AIOU's Home and Health Sciences Department in collaboration with Pakistan Institute for Environment-Development Action Research (PIEDAR) through Pakistan Strategy Support Program (PSSP) under a USAID-funded project.

It was in line with directions of VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui who has opted to link the ongoing research process of the University with the society's issues and problems. He hoped that such a study would help provide useful input to policy-makers and relevant departments in future planning.

The research-finding was evaluated at a seminar held at the University's main campus which was addressed by Prof. Dr. Steve Davies, a senior official of International Food Policy Research Institute, Dean Sciences Prof. Dr. Naghama Rashid, Chairperson Department of Home and Health Sciences Prof. Dr. Nomana Anjum, Ayub Qutub, Executive Director PIEDAR and Assistant Prof. Ms. Hajra Ahmed.

In her presentation, Dr. Nomana Anjum explained that girls due to lack of open spaces in schools suffered from vitamin D's deficiency. Mostly private schools for low- and middle-income groups are located in converted residential units with limited space that deny children the opportunities for physical development. In contrast, most State schools have adequate school grounds. Sadly, it is observed that too few of these institutions encourage their students to fully utilize the existing school grounds, and none have developed their open spaces for creative and healthy sports.

Dr. Shahid Siddiqui appreciated the University's Home and Health Sciences Department for doing a productive work. He also thanked the relevant departments for their cooperation and support.



## AIOU celebrates World Earth Day

AIOU celebrated the World Earth Day, with the pledge that it would further intensify its research-based activities to save the planet from environmental hazards. A seminar and tree-plantation events were organized on the occasion, by the University's Department of Home and Health Sciences in collaboration with other local organizations.

VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui in his message on the occasion assured that AIOU will be a helping hand in providing academic support to the government to make the earth pollution-free. Various academic programs have been initiated to deal with issues relating to environmental problems and global warming as well, he added.

The speakers who addressed the seminar included eminent environmental scientists Dr. Amin Haider Malik, Muhammad Abid and Yousaf Riaz. They called for evolving a long-term well-thought strategy to overcome the problems like contamination of drinking water and de-forestation. They also underlined the need of utilizing all available resources for ensuring pollution-free environment and promoting tree plantation, both at individual and collective levels.

Dean Sciences Dr. Naghmana Rashid spoke about her research on water-waste management and effects of pesticide on soil. AIOU, she said will be taking some research-based projects on the earth and environment-related subjects.

Chairman Department of Home Sciences Dr. Nomana Anjum said the University will continue to take professional development programs for sustainable building designs, which could be environment-friendly. They have proposed a users' friendly architecture design, after extensive feasibility study, which provides a clear and safe environment to the people, she added. Registrar AIOU, Dr. Muhammad Naeem Qureshi was also present on occasion.

## Physics Department's Alumni Association formed

AIOU's first-ever Alumni Association consisting of students of Physics Department was formed to promote the cause of education.

Formation of the Association was announced at a function arranged by the Department. Welcoming the Association, VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui said it was his dream that the out-going students of this University should maintain liaison with the University for upholding good healthy traditions. He hoped their reunion after having been graduated from the University will be a source of strength for a better cause.

Dr. Siddiqui urged them to devote their energies and potential for the betterment of the country and addressing the socio-economic problems. He hoped they would work as ambassadors of the University for its image-building.

Earlier, Chairman of the Department Dr. Zafar Ilyas termed the formation of the Alumni Association a big step forward to promote the cause of education.





## Minister lauds AIOU's role in reaching remote regions



Minister of State for Education and Professional Training Baligh ur Rehman hoped the AIOU will keep up its leading role in reaching the country's remote regions for enhancing literacy rate.

The role of this Mega University is highly commendable in meeting the educational needs of South Punjab as well, he said while inaugurating the University's own building at Rahim Yar Khan. The building provides comprehensive faculties to the local students that include two Labs, one Library, conference halls, ten class rooms, video conferencing space and a mosque.

In his welcome address, VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui thanked the local philanthropist Chaudhry Munir Ahmed for his handsome donation for the Campus. He highlighted the University's achievements in developing its research-based network and bringing about qualitative improvements in its overall academic programs and services. The AIOU, he said has come out with various initiatives to strengthen students' support system and upgrading its infrastructure network.

The Minister further said that present government was paying full attention to increasing literacy rate and uplifting the standard of education in the country. He said AIOU has achieved a singular distinction, having largest academic and infrastructure network in the country, with 44-campuses and thousands of tutorial centers. He congratulated Dr. Shahid Siddiqui for achieving a milestone in the education sector through his new initiatives particularly in the field of research that linked with the society's socio-economic issues.



## Rawalpindi Region holds Mili Nagma and speeches' competition

Rawalpindi region held 'Mili Nagma' and speech competition among the local students. The event was organized in connection with Pakistan Day. It was aimed at promoting spirit of patriotism among the students.

The University has embarked upon series of activities to involve its students in Community welfare services. There are some other academic programs which are directly linked with the socio-economic issues of the society, said VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui while addressing the ceremony. He also appreciated the students for their excellent performance.

Dr. Siddiqui said extra curriculum activities are an important component of education. AIOU being the Mega University in the country is actively engaged in preparing its students to take part in socio-economic activities and serve the society in a best possible manner, he added.

Best students' awards in the competitions were secured by Shahnaz Akhtar, Saba Bano, Sher Ali, Hafiz Omair, Abdul Rehman Manawar and Taimour. Program Manager Radio Pakistan, Rawalpindi also addressed the event and called for greater role of youth in making the county strong and prosperous.



## AIOU signs agreement with YNOU to develop partnership in distance learning

AIOU has entered into an agreement with China's Yunnan Open University (YNOU) for establishing collaborative partnership in educational exchange programs. The two sides decided to benefit from each other expertise and experience for strengthening their respective Faculties in various disciplines. They also decided to cooperate in providing supporting material to students in their relevant fields. The agreement was signed by President of YNOU Du Junun and Director AIOU's international collaboration office Zahid Majeed, on behalf of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui at Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province.

Dr. Siddiqui in his message termed the agreement as highly important since it would be an opportunity to provide educational support to China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This is part of the University's plan to establish Chinese Language Centre at its main campus. The University wished to play its role in establishing 'Education Corridor' as well in line with CPEC, he said adding the two Universities could also provide intellectual input in pushing forward the President's Xi Jinping's initiative of One Belt One Road.

Under the agreement, the two Universities will provide online teaching and learning support services to their students and faculty members. It was also agreed that AIOU will include Chinese courses as electives in its teaching program so as to facilitate the students to learn Chinese language.

The Yunnan Open University offered three Chinese language learning projects for AIOU that include Chinese Preparatory Program for studying in China, Online Chinese Language undergraduate degree program and On-Line Tutoring program of HSK examination. Under the agreement, the AIOU will send excellent Chinese language learners and printing technology learners to YNOU for further study.

It may be mentioned here that AIOU has already signed an agreement with Sichuan University of China and it was looking forward for similar arrangement with the counterpart Educational Institutions in Yunnan region. The AIOU has also signed an agreement with Beijing Open University for promoting Chinese language and education exchange program.



## OIC's delegation visits AIOU

The Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and AIOU will strengthen their collaborative partnership to promote Arabic language and Islamic culture. This was stated by a senior officer of OIC Secretariat Abdula Manafi Matualo during his visit to AIOU.

The delegate was given detailed briefing on the OIC-funded project 'Regional Institute for Complimentary Education' (RICE) that is being implemented by Arabic Department. The project was started in collaboration of AIOU and OIC in 1984 in light of the decision taken by the OIC's Foreign Ministers' Conference in 1981.



Abdula Manafi who was accompanied by their professional officer Galib Huseynov will present a report to the OIC's Secretary General suggesting ways and means to further strengthen this project. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Shahid Siddiqui underlined the need of pooling available resources in the Muslim countries for acquiring knowledge and expertise to meet the socio-economic challenges of the contemporary world. In the present era, he added most important source for progress and development is knowledge. AIOU, he said will strengthen its partnership with the Muslim countries particularly in the field of research for achieving the goals, set by the OIC. The delegation was informed that the Arabic department has launched various programs for promoting Islamic culture in the non-Arabic countries. The University has planned to introduce the Associate degree for 'Imam and Khateeb' as well as in the disciplines of Islamic Banking and Islamic education. Head of the Department Dr. Ali Asghar Chishti thanked the delegation for its support.



## American Academicians visit AIOU

American Academicians along with officials of State department and US Embassy in Islamabad visited AIOU and appreciated its academic work. After having detailed discussion with VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui and taking round of various departments, they termed the AIOU's educational standard as highly impressive and students' supportive.

The visit took place under the 'Pakistan Distance Education Enhancement' project and collaborative partnership between AIOU and San Jose State University. The delegation included Project Director Prof. Mark Adams, Prof. Jason A. Laker, Dr. Muhammad Saleem, Ms. Natiqa Nadeem, Cultural Affairs specialist US embassy, Neal Morata, Deputy Cultural Affairs Officer and Richard Boyom from Washington D.C.

The two sides had very productive and lively talks for carrying out bilateral cooperation. According to Prof. Jason the two Universities had great potential to learn from each other. They could particularly share their experience about new educational methods and E-learning/online study. Prof Jason said he found Dr. Shahid Siddiqui as most impressive educationist who had visionary approach in educational field, hoping that the University will emerge as more powerful institution under his leadership.



## AIOU - NYA collaboration

The University will work with National Youth Assembly (NYA), a symbolic Parliament of about 23,000 young students, to promote healthy parliamentary and democratic traditions. This was stated by Dr. Shahid Siddiqui while addressing symbolic parliamentary session of NYA, held at AIOU.

The session was also addressed among others by Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Balochistan Provincial Minister Rehmat Saleh Baloch, renowned artist Jamal Shah, Senator Tala Mahmood, Rani Atiqa Ghazanfer of Hunza, Famida Jamali and NYA's President Hanan Ali Abbasi.

Dr. Siddiqui assured that AIOU will encourage its 1.3 million students to work with NYA for promoting healthy traditions. Underlying the positive and constructive role of youth in nation-building, he emphasized they should focus on promoting knowledge, positive attitude and professional skill.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed praised the role of NYA in motivating youth towards positive activities. The HEC, he said will ask Universities to set up Parliamentary societies at their campuses to understand and project democratic practices in their future life.

## Seminar to highlight new trends in e-learning

AIOU held a seminar to highlight new trends in E-learning and distance learning system. Dr. Moiz Uddin Ahmed of the University's Computer Science Department was key-note speaker who deliberated upon localized and adaptable E-learning practices. According to Dr. Moiz most of the existing e-learning systems support teaching with little focus on learning activities, therefore, there is a need to build e-learning models with more interactive and engaging features. He thanked the Vice Chancellor for his support enhancing the standard of education by incorporating technology as replacement of conventional mode of distance learning. The lecture was arranged under Research Colloquium Series at AIOU. It was attended by Faculty members and scholars. Mr. Mark Adams and Professor Mohammad Saleem from San Jose State University, USA also attended the lecture through video conferencing.





# Over 3.7 million students so far graduated from AIU



Over 3.7 million students have been graduated from AIU since its inception. This strength is highest in number as compared to any other University in the country and the Asian region as well, providing education under distance learning system.

The contribution of AIU in education and fighting out illiteracy is something unprecedented, said VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui while addressing an 'Open House' held at the University's main campus, which was specially organized to provide information and guidance to students on eve of admissions for semester spring, 2016.

A large number of AIU's graduated students made themselves prominent holding important positions in various public and private sector departments. The pride of this university is that mostly graduated are females, Dr. Siddiqui added. There are other marginalized groups of peoples benefited from this Mega university. It was succeeded in its main task of enhancing literacy rate in the country, mainly in the remote regions at the peoples' door-step. With affordable fee structure, it introduced around 1200 academic programs to meet the educational needs of the people.

The University provided access to millions of those people particularly females who were unable to join formal educational system due to financial constraints or social problems. It also proved most beneficial for on-job section of society, as it facilitated them to continue their education while earning their livelihood. 'We provide flexible education, covering all segment irrespective of their age and living-distance,' Dr. Siddiqui said students' support system has been strengthened that include an Access Centre for visually impaired students and special facilities for prisoners. There has been all-time record of admissions in the last semester, which reflects the confidence and trust of students.

## Training of IET's Professionals

Pakistan Television Corporation and AIU launched a joint three week TV production training program to enhance academic standard of the multi-media-based open-distance educational courses.

Under the plan, the PTV Training Academy will impart professional training to the producers and designers of AIU, which are engaged in development of the educational courses.

VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui announced on the occasion that the AIU will soon undertake a massive human resource professional development program for updating its academic and non-academic staff about the latest developments and techniques in their respective fields. A Task-Force has been set up to prepare the program that will cover University-funded professional training both at national and international level. It aimed at meeting the new challenges and update the staff about fast-growing changes. He thanked the PTV for its support in enhancing professional skill of their TV and Radio production staff.

Earlier, Director IET Mukhtar Ahmed Talpur highlighted the main features of the training program, hoping it will prove a milestone in the professional development of their staff. Director PTV Training Academy Muzammil Ahmad Khan hoped that their collaborative partnership will be beneficial for promoting the cause of education, through multi-media support.



### From page.01 International Seminar on ODL

The seminar was also attended by the President COL Prof. Asha S. Kanwar and Tan Sri Dato Prof. Gajaraj Dhanarajan, Chairman Board of Governors Wawasan Open University, Malaysia.

Rector Virtual University Dr. Naveed Malik gave a presentation on perception and problems of ODL. Its inaugural session was addressed by Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed.

The draft recommendations were presented by Dr. Nasir Mahmood which covered wide-ranging subjects including curriculum and content development, admission procedure, Institutional Design, Delivery modes and mechanisms, student support services, financial support to students, Evaluation, Assessment mechanism and human resource professional development.

The Focus Groups also recommended setting up ODL Council, ODL Quality Assurance Agency, National Academy of ODL professionals, Regulation of governance and administrative setup, ODL TV channel and a web portal for ODL.

Dr. Siddiqui further said the ODL policy will bring about fundamental improvements in the educational system through non-traditional mode of learning. It will help to realize the national dream ensuring access to quality education to All, he added.

Dr. Siddiqui extended special thanks to foreign and local guests, particularly Chairman HEC and President COL for their support in preparing the policy. The seminar also provided a mechanism of collaborative partnership among the relevant institutions.

Prof. Asha S. Kanwar in her key-note address spoke in detail on the ODL policy in international perspective. She said Pakistan is an active member of Commonwealth of Learning for promoting educational cause.

Prof. Gajaraj spoke on designing and developing of curriculum for open distance education. He asserted that the course-contents must be relevant to the students' needs that help them to earn their livelihood with respect and dignity.





## AIOU introduces a new model of open-schooling

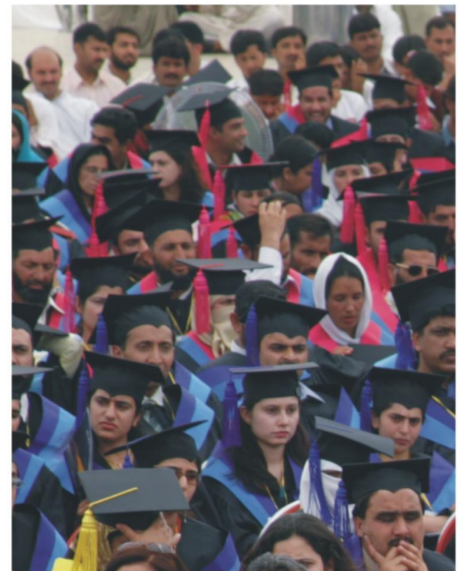
The University has introduced a new model of open-schooling mainly for dropout girl students, who could not continue their study due to social or financial constraints.

It is community-based model, with students and teachers with same locality. Course-contents have been developed in regional languages. The pilot project to this effect has successfully been implemented in cooperation with Plan international at Chakwal, Vehari and Tehsil Sajawal (Thatta District). A certificate-distribution ceremony of the project titled 'building skills for life' was held at Sajawal.

The AIOU had set non-formal centre at 12 Union Councils that were run by 24 part-time teachers of the respective area, with 656 middle-level female students. Total 571 students appeared in the exam, out them 429 were declared successful. The middle-level course was conducted in the Sindhi language. The AIOU took the lead preparing entire course for class sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth in the local language that facilitated the female students to get them educated.

VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui distributed certificates to the successful students. He said it was pilot project and now it could be adopted by local governments and private institutions to educate the drop-out students. It was matter of great pride that a large number of female population is beneficiary of AIOU's education. They are 57 percent of total enrolment, he added.

According to Dr. Tanzeela Nabeel, head of the project, the University will continue such female non-formal education programs to fight illiteracy in the country's less developed regions.



## Students' Admissions go all-time high

Students' registration in AIOU went all-time high in almost all the academic programs during the Autumn 2015 semester. This was the result of some far-reaching academic and administrative steps taken during last one year under the leadership of VC Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui. This reflected the trust and confidence, the University enjoyed among students of all ages.

In the efforts of reconstructing the soft-image of this mega University, greater focus was laid in strengthening delivery system, ensuring timely availability of books to students.

Transparency and efficiency were brought about in the admissions, examination, announcement of results and issuances of degrees through technology-based automation system.

Special attention was also paid to strengthening of Students' Support System. A number of scholarship schemes were announced to accommodate the students who were unable to carry on their education due to financial constraints.

Some new academic programs were also introduced to meet the requirements of all segments of society in their educational pursuits.

To build the AIOU as a first-class global University under distance learning system, academic interaction and cooperative partnership was built with national and international universities.

It is hoped that the University will maintain its upward trend in the new admissions of Spring 2016 semester.

Dr. Shahid Siddiqui has directed the regional offices to facilitate the students in the admission process.

Meanwhile, the University has also introduced 'fee installment scheme'. Under the scheme, the poor and deserving students around the country who are unable to deposit the whole fee of the semester could take benefit from this scheme.

## Student-Tutor Database

VC Dr. Shahid Siddiqui has directed the Islamabad Regional Campus to boost students' enrollment and enhance service quality and system efficiency. He has also directed the Islamabad Regional Campus to take the education opportunities to the marginalized communities in the rural areas of Islamabad.

Islamabad Regional Campus has developed a computerized system to intimate students about their tutors and study centers. The system reduced the cost by 75% as instead of each tutor intimating each student, now one intimation letter carries complete information of all tutors allocated to a student.

Moreover, the new system has completely eliminated the complaints. The Regional Campus is also developing a Tutor database. The database will be used to manage tutorship and tutors' performance. The Director, Regional Campus, Islamabad, Mr Shah Farrukh visited government schools and colleges in Bara Kahu, Chak Shahzad, Humak, Rawat, Talhar, Ternole, and Golra and launched the Admission Campaign for Semester Spring 2016.







## Ph.D/M.Phil / M.Sc (Hons)/TEFL dissertations and theses

AIOU students recently completed their dissertations / theses on the following topics:

Student's Name	Level	Thesis Topic
Ihsan Ullah	Ph.D	The Legend of Sassi-Punnu: A Comparative study of the poetic version by Hashim Shah and other poets
Qamar Sultana	Ph.D	Iqbal's Philosophy: From Idealism to Logical Positivism
Muhammad Umar Farooq	M.Phil	Impact of new Media on Conventional Media: Exploring trends among youth of Lahore.
Fahad Anis	M.Phil	Reliance of University Students on Information Communication Technology: Testing Knowledge Gap Hypothesis.
Hafiz Saadat Ali	M.Phil	Portrayal of Judicial Activism in Pakistan by Leading English Papers.
Muhammad Waqar Qureshi	M.Phil	Comparative Coverage of Sariki Province in National and Regional Newspapers: Exploring Frame and Slant.
Javeria Nazeer	M.Phil	Impact of Social Media Advertising on Behaviour of University students of Lahore.
Hafiz Qaiser Abbas	M.Phil	Content Analysis of Educational Broadcast in Pakistan ( A case Study of Voice of AIOU 91.6 PUFM 104.6 & The Voice of LCWU
Nusrat Niazi	M.Phil	Academic and Literary Contributions of Munawar Ali Malik
Javed Ishaque	M.Phil	Effects of Globalization on Teaching of Urdu (A Critical Review)
Muhammad Nawaz Sajid	M.Phil	Siraki Modern Poem after Sirai Conference 1975.
Dawood Khan Abbasi	M.Phil	Implications of Philip's Curve in the Economic of Pakistan (1981-2012)
Shahbaz Hussain	M.Phil	Critical Analysis of Sketch Writing of Mazher Mehmood Sherani.
Sami Ullah Khan	M.Phil	Lecturers of Amir-e-Hazbullah: Textual Criticism with footnotes and Annotations.
Naveed Iqbal	M.Phil	Sociology of News Production in Leading TV News Channels of Pakistan.
Muhammad Shahbaz Dar	M.Phil	Information seeking patterns of Internet use by Students.

