

Dear Fellow '90s Alumni,

I am writing to you as an alumna of The American University of Paris. Like you, I graduated from AUP in the 1990s. The University served to develop my educational and professional future as a young adult living in New York. I majored in art history, and it was in following the advice of my former professors that I initiated a decade-long stint working in education at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, also conducting graduate work in art history at Columbia University. Most recently, my time and energy have been split between caring for my young children and serving on school committees, including a school board that supports sustainable practices and initiatives.

The formative years I spent at AUP honed my commitment to supporting excellence in education. I was excited, therefore, to learn of the University's plan to establish a state-of-the-art facility on campus for its Department of Art History and Fine Arts. To my delight, I discovered that it would be in the former home of the AUP Library on rue de Monttessuy, in the heart of the 7th *arrondissement*. The redeveloped building is to be named The Monttessuy Center for the Arts. It will include classrooms, studios and a 70-seat auditorium for lectures, film screenings and performances.

I had the opportunity to tour new and renovated buildings on AUP's campus during the '90s alumni reunion in May 2018. Seeing what a difference these well-equipped facilities make to student life reaffirmed for me the importance of supporting such projects. During my visit, I also reconnected with friends; viewed the collections of the Musée Jacquemart-André with my former art history professor, Christine Baltay; and attended a 20th-anniversary gala to celebrate the achievements of the Global Nomads Group, a nonprofit founded by fellow '90s graduates. Such an exciting range of events reminded me of just how diverse and engaging the AUP community can be.

My weekend in Paris also included my fair share of croissants and morning lie-ins, giving me plenty of time to reflect on the opportunities that AUP has continued to bring me over time. I enjoy friendships with fellow alumni, near and far; they are kindred spirits whose unique life experiences, international career trajectories and globally focused perspectives – all hallmarks of an AUP education – provide me with a fount of wisdom and inspiration. This helps me to navigate the complexities and challenges of my own corner of the world.

I hope you will join me and my fellow art history alumna Monica Heslington '97 in making a “classes of the '90s” gift toward a classroom in The Monttessuy Center for the Arts. No amount is too small. Every contribution is a tangible gesture in support of the future of AUP as it inspires, connects and engages a new generation of students: global explorers whose creative talents will reimagine communication across disciplines and media, helping us view the world through a kinder, suppler lens.

Warmest regards,

Roxanne Collins Vanderbilt '95

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Siege social : 5, boulevard de La Tour-Maubourg, 75007 PARIS. France - Tel (33/1) 40 62 06 00 - www.aup.edu

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