

## WV Young Entrepreneur of the Year

Nesha Ashok Sanghavi – University Girls

Nominated by: Sam Payne, WV Small Business Development Center

The U.S. Small Business Administration's West Virginia District Director, Karen Friel is excited to announce Nesha Sanghavi, founder of University Girls, as the SBA West Virginia 2016 Young Entrepreneur of the Year. Sanghavi was nominated for the award by Sam Payne, Business Coach for the West Virginia Small Business Development Center.

Sanghavi, born and raised in Charleston where her company is located, founded the company immediately after graduating Magna Cum Laude from West Virginia University where she majored in Finance and Economics. She followed the traditional post college path and took a job in Pittsburgh as a financial analyst. After realizing her true passion she left her full-time job and enrolled in Parsons, The New School for Design in New York City and received an AAS degree in Fashion Marketing. She graduated and interned in Germany with PUMA, a sports and lifestyle brand. Following her internship she was offered a job with PUMA but turned it down to pursue her own small business.

University Girls, a women's officially licensed collegiate clothing line, was incorporated in 2008 and launched their first line in 2011. They manufacture, design, and distribute their clothing brand to stores across the United States. The clothing brand can be found in over 300 small business and corporate stores. The business started as a small clothing line for West Virginia University and Marshall University but has expanded and currently carries a license for 30 top universities, and is growing each year.

Realizing that there was little for the fashionable alumna to wear in cuts that flatter their body, Sanghavi set out to create a new collegiate clothing line in real sizes for real women. "I started University Girls because I saw a lack of fashionable women's clothing in West Virginia stores," stated Sanghavi. "I also found that the collegiate market was mostly junior sized, which left out the average sized woman."

Being a young determined woman right out of college, Sanghavi learned a lot through trial and error but also found guidance from the Small Business Development Center. She knew she had a resource of coaches to bounce ideas off of and point her in the right direction. "I have worked with hundreds of small businesses throughout my career and Nesha is head and shoulders above even some of the best small businesses out there," states Sam Payne, SBDC business coach.

"I'm honored to receive this award," states Sanghavi. "Being a young female in the fashion world is difficult and I feel this award adds value to the effort I have put forth to succeed."

SBA's West Virginia District Office celebrates Sanghavi's award during an invite only luncheon at the Robert H. Mollohan Research Center in Fairmont, Wednesday, May 4 at 12:00 p.m. The awards luncheon is emceed by WBOY reporter Nick Farrell. [Click here](#) for a list of the 2016 West Virginia District Small Business Week winners.