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Lebanese Journalism: A Global Reach

LAU Alumna Octavia Nasr CNN's Sr. Editor of Middle East Affairs

Media in Flux The print/web equation in Middle Eastern journalism

Business and the Lingua Franca Practicality, opportunity, legacy

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VOLUME 12 | issue nº 1 | Spring 2010



The Art of Communication

FEATURES

4

Media in Flux

The reports of print-media's death have been greatly exaggerated...But changes in information delivery bring two-fold uncertainty to the region's readership. And to the journalists who serve it as well...





Lingual Tradition vs. Economics English is the global language of opportunity–

English is the global language of opportunity– for now. In Lebanon and the Middle East, the joy of linguistic diversity continues



Form Before Function

Past and future often miss each other in the architecture of Lebanon and the region

17 Lebanese Journalists Around the World A survey of some of the journalists

who bring us the globe





New challenges for Communication design in the middle east

Getting design right for Lebanon is harder than it looks

World-renowned designer Hiroki Yamamoto teaches students at the Graphic Design Exchange Workshop in Byblos (see page 23)



CONTENTS

- 16 Disability and Communication in the Middle East
- 23 Graphic Design Exchange
- 25 Fighting for Children's Rights
- 26 Accreditation Progress Update: NEASC Accreditation Team Visits LAU
- 27 LAU School of Pharmacy Signs Partnership Agreement with the University of Toledo
- 27 *LAU Magazine* Recognized by International Education Council
- 28 Darwin's Living Legacy
- 29 Expanding Education: New School of Architecture and Design Gathers Design and Art Programs Under One Roof
- 30 Faculty on the Move
- 30 Staff on the Move
- 32 Student Achievement
- 33 Campus Notes
- **40** The Legacy and the Promise Campaign: Alternative Giving
- 41 Conference Room Dedicated to Jamil B. Iskandar, Late LAU Board Member
- 42 Alumni Awards Around the World
- 43 Alumni News
- 45 Alumni Events
- 46 Remembered With Love: Ziad Beiruty and Margaret Flory
- 47 UPCOMING EVENTS
- 48 Why I Give Back



LAU student Amer Mouawad accepts a prize for his final year undergraduate project from the Software Design Consulting Group (see page 32)

LAU Magazine & Alumni Bulletin Volume 12 | issue nº1 | Spring 2010

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Marketing and Communications Department Lebanese American University P.O. Box 13-5053/F24 Chouran, Beirut 1102-2801, Lebanon New York Office Lebanese American University 475 Riverside Drive #1846 New York, NY 10115-0065



LAU students, faculty and staff distribute water to runners at the Beirut Marathon in December

Corrections for LAU Magazine, Volume 11, Issue 4

LAU Board of Trustees member Wadih S. "Bill" Jordan served as President of the Board of the American Community Schools in Athens, Greece from 1989-1993—not as a trustee of the board of directors of AUB (Page 47).

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From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

We are subjected to television, newspapers, websites, blogs and numerous other forms of communication every day, and the increasing openness and freedom of communication today is a blessing for which we should all be thankful. The ability of one single individual to reach a huge mass of people is, in fact, one of the hallmarks of our modern age. Yet the greater number of voices vying for attention in the marketplace means that there is a need for even greater analysis and scrutiny of what is being communicated. Teaching and learning about all forms of communication, therefore, has never been more imperative.

From architecture to new media to language, communication in our world takes many forms, and I am pleased that you will read about this vitally important, fascinating and everchanging topic in this issue of LAU Magazine.

Naturally, LAU and institutions like it play an essential role in helping people from all over the world to develop communication skills. Our university resides in a region that employs a diverse set of languages and dialects, and that encourages the use of English, French and Arabic, sometimes at the same time. But universities like LAU are also important for their ability to teach communication of a different sort. The ability to analyze and evaluate what one is told is a crucial skill, especially when information threatens to overwhelm citizens who are connected to the media of the modern world.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support of our beloved university.

Sincerely,

alilna

Joseph G. Jabbra President



FEATURES



Media in Flux

By Matthew Mosley

Since the advent of the internet, global predictions for print journalism have been dire. Legendary newspapers such as the New York Times and the Washington Post are on their knees, begging for bailouts and aborting bureaus.

In the Middle East, as with elsewhere in the world, the media world is in a seemingly permanent state of flux. "No one really knows what's going to happen," said Dr. Ramez Maluf, professor of journalism at LAU, chair of

the Arts and Communication Division and director of the Institute for Media Training and Research. Online news sources, of course, are primarily free. Al Jazeera, the BBC and newspapers such as Al Akhbar all

have extensive online coverage that, in many cases, outstrips any print publication available.

With all the benefits of online journalism, who is mourning the loss of print?

Journalists such as Omar Nashabe, professor of journalism at LAU and a member of the editorial board of Al Akhbar, maintain a strong attachment to the traditional news medium. Although Al Akhbar has a highly successful website—Nashabe claims it attracts the most readers of any Lebanese online newspaper—there are no plans yet to get rid of the hard copy.

"We love the paper version," he said. "The touch, the smell, the routine of reading the morning delivery with a cup of coffee."

If the attachment were purely sentimental, the loss of physical newspapers might not be such a blow. But of course, there are more serious factors involved.

As Maluf mentioned, most online news providers have not figured out a way to make up lost revenue with online advertising. This deficit has a damaging impact on editors' ability to hire quality reporters and carry out the time-consuming business of journalism.

"We love the paper version. The touch, the smell, the routine of reading the morning delivery with a cup of coffee."

-Omar Nashabe, LAU Professor of Journalism



"CNN and the BBC don't make money from their online operations yet," he added. "The conundrum for online news providers is this: How do you create an addiction, feed it, and make it pay?"

Al Jazeera, by constantly updating its "breaking news" section, is creating that addiction. Readers know that if they visit the site every couple of hours, there will be new content online.

"We can't even say at this stage that we're experiencing a transition. The word is too strong. I would rather say that we're experiencing a diversification of attention." –Omar Nashabe, LAU Professor of Journalism

Likewise Naharnet, the Lebanon news service from Beirutbased paper An Nahar, is regularly updated with new content. These innovations increase traffic to the sites, which in turn brings in advertising revenue.

However, such web-savvy practices are still relatively rare in the Middle East. Most other Lebanese newspapers, for example, merely put their print version online—meaning that the online version of the news is more a record of the physical copy than a viable entity in its own right.

"The internet is definitely not ousting print in the Middle East just yet," said Mike Hills of Social Media Exchange, an organization that teaches activists and NGOs how to use social media effectively for outreach and campaign purposes.

"Newsrooms in the region have been slow to adapt to the internet revolution," he said.

Hills recounted how a participant at a recent Social Media Exchange event complained that "some journalists in Lebanon do not even use a computer, let alone the Internet; they just write the story and their secretary types it up."

The worldwide community of Lebanese expatriates makes for a significant overseas audience for many Beirut newspapers, whose readerships check the online versions for news of home. But these expatriate readers are not relevant to the local businesses that form the daily bread of advertising revenue in Lebanon.

Another possible reason for the slow reaction times of Middle Eastern news sources is that the internet still has not reached its full potential here as an information tool.

In many countries of the region, Internet connections are cripplingly slow, hampering local enterprises as well as the efforts of news providers that aim to provide up-to-the-minute coverage.

On top of this, the Internet in many Middle Eastern countries still is not widespread enough to replace print news. In a country such as Lebanon, where 8 percent of the population is in extreme poverty, according to the United Nations Development Program, computer ownership and Internet connections are restricted to specific socioeconomic groups. Many readers still rely on newspapers, the news source with the lowest overhead cost.







Lastly, studies have shown that a mere 0.4 percent of online content is in Arabic, suggesting that news coverage specifically for Middle Eastern audiences is minimal.

"This is a cultural setback," said Nashabe. "We don't read our own language. It has to do with a wider identity crisis. Everyone wants to speak French or English."

Still, the Internet is frequently trumpeted as a tool of democratic representation. Host websites, for instance, allow users to set up a blog, or web-diary, for free.

In theory, this means that issues not covered by the mainstream press get the attention they deserve. Some of these blogs have even been incorporated into popular online news providers, such as The Atlantic and The Huffington Post in the U.S. In other cases, the preoccupations of the blogosphere have helped set the agenda in the mainstream media.

For this kind of Internet revolution to occur in the Middle East, there must be absolute freedom of the press and of Internet users. In some Middle Eastern countries, this is still not the case. Online clampdowns after the recent Iranian elections are a clear recent example, but instances of attempted internet censorship are relatively common across the region.

Maluf suggested that the issue of credibility is one of the biggest problems facing online journalism in the contemporary Middle East.

The fact that anyone can own a website means that self-

proclaimed news providers the world over do not always maintain the standards of impartiality and rigor that most readers expect.

These contingencies are compounded in the Middle East, where the twin forces of censorship and lack of advertising revenue result in online news sources mostly being funded by governments or political parties.

"With an established newspaper such as the New York Times, there was a perception, whether or not it was true, that the newspaper was independent and met certain standards," said Maluf. "When news sources are funded by governments and political parties, this credibility is lost."

For journalists, the impact of the Internet on their lives is fraught with irony. On the one hand, the Internet has made the process of researching and finding stories far easier and quicker. On the other, it has made the environment much more challenging, with fewer jobs available and more skills expected of employees.

Statistics, academic research and archived articles can all be accessed online, making the process of compiling stories easier. Furthermore, social networking sites empower journalists to make contacts and find ideas for stories with increased efficiency.

Twitter, in particular, is becoming useful for journalists working in the Middle East. The site allows users to post short segments of information which can then be seen by anyone who logs on to the site.

"This is a cultural setback. We don't read our own language. It has to do with a wider identity crisis. Everyone wants to speak French or English."

-Omar Nashabe, LAU Professor of Journalism



The site was particularly useful during the recent Iranian elections, since journalists and citizens who could not be on the ground were able to keep abreast of the action via Twitter posts from citizens in Iran. On a less dramatic level, users often post day-to-day annoyances or experiences, which can then be turned into stories by journalists.

"The conundrum for online news providers is this: How do you create an addiction, feed it, and make it pay?"

-Ramez Maluf, Chair of the Communication Arts Department

Many Middle Eastern journalists now have a presence on Twitter. Successful examples include LAU alumna Octavia Nasr, CNN's senior editor of Middle Eastern affairs, who boasts almost 5000 "followers." Nasr posts regular updates on regional happenings and links to other stories.

Such multimedia activity represents an emerging trend: Journalists are expected to work across media, across different news providers and across the region.

Local news providers, according to Maluf, have been particularly hurt by the internet shake-up. Because of the problem of winning advertising revenue, it is only the very large news providers that are feeling any kind of benefit from their Internet presence. The lives of journalists have, as a result, become less stable. Increasingly, they are expected to travel to the action rather than having a stable job in a specific place.

The much-vaunted interactivity of web content means that journalists now have to master a battery of additional skills. As well as being able to write an attention-grabbing story, journalists now typically need to be familiar with video cameras and lighting rigs so they can produce video clips on the go.

LAU is currently restructuring its journalism program and, increasingly, web-type scenarios are taught in the classroom.

"Changes in the structure of the course had already taken place with the advent of television," said Maluf. "Students had to know how to choose a good sound bite and the fundamentals of lighting. This is a continuation of the same direction."

The problems for journalism schools are the same as those for news providers: The new media landscape has not yet come into focus.

"We can't even say at this stage that we're experiencing a transition," said Nashabe. "The word is too strong. I would rather say that we're experiencing a diversification of attention."

Players across the industry, from media magnates to educators to the journalists themselves, are awaiting the fall-out with bated breath. Are newspapers doomed? Will online news sources become viable moneymakers? What is the journalist's new role? Unfortunately, only time will tell.



FEATURES



Lingual Tradition vs. Economics

by Marc Abizeid

After a brief time of deliberation, the jury enters the courtroom and hands its verdict to the judge in the case of *Lingual Tradition v. Economics*.

The judge puts on his specs and carefully tears open the envelope to view the decision. Audience members hold their breath as the judge unfolds the document and begins to read it aloud.

"In the case of *Lingual Tradition v. Economics*," the judge says, "the jury finds Economics guilty of establishing English as the new international lingua franca and forcing millions of people with hopes of achieving financial prosperity to spend years inside classrooms and textbooks studying preposterous grammatical forms."

The verdict should hardly come as a shock considering that the signs—both figuratively and in the streets and store windows—serve as a constant reminder of the dominance that the English language has assumed across the globe over the past decades.

"People want better jobs, especially in an age of globalization and outsourcing," said Dr. Kassim Shaaban, professor of linguistics at the American University of Beirut. "If you want to live in the modern world, you need English."

By Shaaban's estimates, around 75 percent of scholarly research in the world is published in English. The same figure describes the percentage of international NGOs that have adopted English as their medium.

Linguists predict English will remain the single most important language for the foreseeable future—but the growing influence of China, the world's most populous country, reveals the potential for a new dominant language.



He also noted that emphasis on teaching English in Arab countries has increased drastically over the past years. In most Gulf countries, students who would have once started studying English around the seventh-grade level are now receiving the same training in the first grade.

Universities in the Middle East too, Shaaban said, have integrated more English instruction into their curriculum.

Université Saint-Joseph (USJ) and Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik, two French-medium universities in Lebanon, are now requiring their students to reach a certain proficiency in English before graduating.

In most Gulf countries, students who would have once started studying English around the seventhgrade level are now receiving the same training in the first grade.

At those universities, even some courses in specialized fields such as business and engineering are being taught in English.

"From a business perspective, there are several major factors that helped create those shifts," said Dr. Hussein Ismail, LAU business management instructor. "First is the increase in American franchises operating in Lebanon in the past decade, and in particular popular coffee shops and restaurants which are visited by many Lebanese on a daily basis." Other major factors, according to Ismail, are the Internet, which he described as "an English language technological communication tool that literally invaded our homes," as well as American and British products popular with youth around the world.

Recognizing the importance of English in communicating with people around the world in the era of globalization, Ismail recently founded an English-language business magazine called Why Not!, with a mission of helping entrepreneurs in countries all over the globe manage successful businesses.

"It is published in the English language, given that English is spoken almost everywhere around the world," he said. "This fact reinforces and complements the vision of the magazine, which is to be read and appreciated by any person in any country."

There is also recognition among linguists that economics are not a sole factor shaping language trends.

Regional (and now global) trends in lingual dominance have been existent and identifiable for centuries throughout history. Arabic was considered the lingua franca in much of Europe, Africa and the Middle East during the period of conquest and domination by the Islamic Empire that began in the ninth century.

If history serves as any indication of the patterns of lingual trends, it would reveal that the domination of English does not have an eternal life expectancy either.



"English, little by little, was becoming more widely used in Lebanon, and we had more Frenchmedium schools that were being turned into English-medium schools."

-Rula Diab, LAU Professor of Linguistics

What's next in terms of language trends may depend largely on the direction and growth of the global economic and political landscape. Linguists predict English will remain the single most important language for the foreseeable future—but the growing influence of China, the world's most populous country, reveals the potential for a new dominant language.

"If China becomes the economic power people expect it to be, and if it starts expanding its powerful arms economically and otherwise, most probably people will feel the need to learn Chinese," Shaaban said. "There are people now who feel like if you are among the first to learn the Chinese language, you'll be the first to reap the benefits."

The study of Mandarin and other Chinese languages is growing more popular worldwide as part of the so-called "Chinese Language Fever."

According to the Xinhua News Agency, China's official state news agency, there are 30 million foreigners studying Chinese in more than 2,300 universities across more than 100 countries.

Much of the growing curiosity and interest surrounding Chinese is being driven by the Communist Republic itself, which promotes language study through agreements with universities around the world to set up global branches of Chinese-language Confucius Institutes.

One of those centers was recently established at USJ, offering children as young as nine years old the opportunity to start learning Chinese during the summer—a program that Dr. Henri Awaiss, director of the Languages and Translation Center at USJ, said has been very successful.

"You cannot separate the strength of a language from a country's economic power, political power, and strength and size of its workforce," Awaiss said. "China is becoming very strong on those fronts, and people are driven to learn the language of a mighty power."

How long it may take for Chinese to establish itself as the newest lingual hegemony, and whether or not that may ever even occur, are questions beyond the scope of any linguist or economist.

In Lebanon, for the time being, the debate remains centered around issues concerning the role and preservation of the French language, whose roots in the country date back to the French Mandate of Lebanon in 1920.

Concern has been mounting among some traditionalists in Lebanon, which is a member of the International Organization of the Francophonie, over the fate of French language and culture in the face of the growing popularity of English.

"Trends from French to English started happening in the last 20 years or so in Lebanon," said Dr. Rula Diab, assistant professor of English at LAU. "English, little by little, was becoming more widely used in Lebanon, and we had more French-medium schools that were being turned into English-medium schools."

And in the last decade or so, Diab added, a recognition that



English was gaining on French became "more official," indicated by clues such as the addition of English to Lebanese passports, which were previously just issued in Arabic and French.

But those associated with Francophone institutions in Lebanon often deny the existence of a struggle between French and English in the country, and also deny that French is losing ground to English. Rather, they acknowledge that fluency in English has become essential to compete in today's globalized world, but say that French language and culture will always have a place in Lebanon.

"We don't view this issue as a war between languages," said Awaiss, who has been working at USJ since 1980. "Languages trade gifts between them, not wars."

A large part of that argument derives from the issue of identity. For many Lebanese families, knowledge of French has less to do with the practical use of the language as a means of communication, and more to do with preserving their culture, heritage and identity as traditional Lebanese French speakers.

"There are still some groups in Lebanon that consider it very essential to know French for various reasons," said Diab, who recently published a 20-page research article examining linguistic identity in Lebanon. "I'm not talking about just being able to survive in French, but rather to be very fluent, to be very French-like."

Meanwhile, traditionalist families may also take comfort in the widely recognized observation that students in Frenchmedium schools are required to reach a proficient level of English, whereas students from English-medium schools generally lack the motivation to study French beyond the minimal requirements set by their schools.

"French is a language of cultural exchanges spoken on every continent in the world. It opens a new dimension that English alone does not."
—Olivier Garro, Director of the AUF's Middle

East bureau





Those facts also indicate that an increase in the number of English speakers in Lebanon does not necessarily correlate with a decrease in the number of French speakers. French-medium schools simply place an emphasis on learning English—a demand not requited by their English counterparts.

Shaaban pointed out that the number of students enrolled in French-medium schools is still overwhelmingly larger than those in English-medium schools. The proportions, according to him, are about 70 percent French and 30 percent English.

Nevertheless, Francophone institutions in Lebanon undertake concentrated efforts to maintain their presence through various programs and activities.

"We don't view this issue as a war between languages. Languages trade gifts between them, not wars."

-Henri Awaiss, USJ

In December, for example, Beirut hosted a four-day regional congress of the International Federation of French Teachers, gathering hundreds of French-language instructors from throughout the Arab world. Among other topics, they discussed strategies to make the language more appealing to students.

"The French are very protective of their language and culture and are doing their best to keep French flourishing in this country," said Shaaban. "They give scholarships and send about 1,000 teachers to Paris every summer to upgrade their French."

The Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)—an association that partners with a network of French-language higher-education institutions, and that has regional offices

around the world, including in Beirut—is just one among several Francophone institutions keen on preserving French in Lebanon.

The agency is delegated with several tasks, although it focuses on supporting a network of Francophone universities across the globe and offers grants to students pursuing graduate degrees in certain fields.

"We don't have any worries on the question of language," said Olivier Garro, director of the AUF's Middle East bureau. "French is a language of cultural exchanges spoken on every continent in the world. It opens a new dimension that English alone does not."

AUF, along with a coalition of other Francophone institutions in Lebanon, including the Association of French Teachers in Lebanon and the French Embassy in Beirut, offered its support to the recent meeting of French teachers, demonstrating the unity and solid partnerships built among Francophone organizations.

But to place emphasis on the cultural incentives of studying French in Lebanon should not undermine the traditional benefits of speaking multiple languages.

Which brings the conversation back to economics. Garro noted that from his experiences in traveling to the Gulf, a Lebanese who speaks Arabic, French and English reaps benefits beyond preserving a Lebanese identity. If he is applying for a job in the area, a person who speaks all three languages is always more likely to be hired than someone who just speaks Arabic and English—even if the work only requires English.

"To preserve a language is very important because it means preserving links between people," Garro said. "I think that is what is at stake in the world today."





Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai

Form Before Function?

Contemporary architecture in the Middle East is sending a mixed message

By Saba Haider



Lebanon has been destroyed and rebuilt many times in the past century alone, and each time the reconstruction has produced the same style of architecture, one that reflects various cultural influences in the region.

Is there anything wrong with that?

For most people, the term Arab or Islamic architecture connotes arched doorways, central courtyards, and walls and tiles decorated with the arabesque design of repeated geometric shapes.

This style reflects various strata of Islamic architectural tradition across many empires that have ruled the Middle Eastern and North African regions, including Persian, Turkish, Fatimid and Moorish.

But that was then. Now, according to Dr. Maroun Daccache, chair of LAU's Department of Architecture, the architecture in Lebanon needs to adapt to the times, as opposed to continuing to mimic what was done in other periods. The current age represents a new period of history, and our architecture should reflect this period as opposed to copying what was done centuries ago, Daccache said. He described the greatest weakness or shortcoming of contemporary Middle Eastern architecture as a tendency to "camouflage, versus evolve."

Daccache admitted that evolution is not necessarily a straightforward task, as it emerges from considerable and dynamic research—something that he does not yet see taking place. "We need to develop a new instrument for research that provokes new contemporary developments," he said.

Daccache offered the example of Hassan Fathy, a prominent Egyptian architect in the 20th century who has been credited with pioneering a suitable local technique for building in Egypt. Fathy's work spearheaded a local movement to reestablish the age-old practice of using mud brick (also known as adobe), instead of the common regional practice of using new imported materials.

By using ancient materials and approaches to architectural design, Fathy was able to address the pressing economic situation in the country, especially in the rural and farming areas, while educating and empowering the locals to make their own materials and their own buildings-all without relying on foreign materials or talent. From a functional standpoint, Fathy's designs and methods had features that were best suited to local climate conditions, for example courtyards that allowed the passage of cooling air around the homes. The result was a traditional form of architecture based on the functionality of the design and materials used.

A history obscured

to adapt to the times, as

what was done in other periods.

Daccache said that by mimicking historical styles of architecture through modern techniques, contemporary Lebanese architecture is communicating the wrong message. "Architecture is a result of the needs of our society, these being education, communication, socialization, etc.," he said. Daccache added that the city is "a main reference of our ideas in architecture," because cities are built around the movement of people and their needsand because they reflect the architecture of our history and society.

He offered the example of Beirut's Gemmayzeh district. While historically a residential area, the district has evolved into a center of nightlife in Beirut, filled with bars, restaurants and nightclubs.

"Gemmayzeh is an example of the evolution of the movement of people," Daccache said.

But, he noted, "The panorama of Lebanese architecture shows that its objects are not related to evolution, nor to a revolution of ideas of movement. We don't have movement in architecture in Lebanon."

Daccache added, "Architecture is not just the visual design of an object, and that's what we need to teach in Lebanon. It should be about the meaning of the term—architecture with a purpose, whether it's practical, cultural or civic"

Randa Nemer is a Lebanese-American from Cleveland, Ohio, who returned to her native Lebanon to study Arabic at LAU's SINARC program. Her impressions of Lebanon upon leaving after three months in Beirut center around her dismay with the state of contemporary Lebanese architecture----not just with what Daccache would describe as a "mimicking" of another era's style, but also with manifestations of Western architecture. She offered the newly constructed Beirut Souks as an example. "The Beirut Souks—you can put them in any city and they'd be indistinguishable," Nemer said. "There is nothing about the Beirut Souks that says to me, 'This is Lebanese.' Wasn't the point of the souks to take what the old souks were and to modernize it?"

Nemer's frustration extends to the adjacent downtown area, rebuilt by Solidere, the Architecture in Lebanon needs Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District. in a process that began in 1994, a few years after the end of the civil war in 1991. "Downtown looks fake," she asserted. "They should have either accurately used opposed to continuing to mimic

the old style with the old stones if they wanted to recreate an old style—but they didn't even do that. What they created looks like they used stucco to create a postcard setting."

Daccache pointed out that, culturally, the Middle East today focuses on the aesthetics of architecture without an understanding of the functionality or purpose of architecture—as is evident through many examples in Dubai and other cities in the Gulf region.

"Society, the city and its architecture are all related," said Daccache, adding that European cities are a product of this combination.

Invisible cities

On the flip side of the Lebanese phenomenon that Daccache addresses is the in-your-face urban architecture of Dubai.

In contrast to the history of ancient Lebanon, the idea of Dubai was conceived by the late ruler of the emirate state, Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, to be an amalgam of architecture from different regions. The process was kick-started by the rapid expansion that the emirate underwent after the discovery of oil there in 1966. Today Dubai's skyscraper-lined skyline looks like a glitzy American city, filled with glamorous constructions—but not, according to Daccache and many others, displaying a look that is authentic to the heritage or culture of the emirate or the Persian Gulf region.

"In the Middle East, we have this problem," said Daccache. "We have no connection with our history. The Islamic city can be a reflection for our new ideas. Our real problem is that we don't use our history as a background for our new ideas."

What we need to understand, said Daccache, is that "Arab and Islamic cities can be transformed into modern cities" without copying foreign architecture. Another example he offered in which the local architectural tradition or style is not necessarily a focus is in Abu Dhabi, where three famous international architects are working on creating three obvious manifestations of foreign culture. Jean Nouvel, Frank Gehry and Zaha Hadid have been hired to create specific cultural establishments that aim to position Abu Dhabi as a cultural capital in the Middle East.

France's Nouvel has designed the Abu Dhabi branch of the renowned French art gallery and museum the Louvre; the dually Canadian-American Frank Gehry has designed the Guggenheim museum in Abu Dhabi; and Iraqi-born, British-based celebrity architect Zaha Hadid has designed the Abu Dhabi Performing Arts Center. All three are part of the emirate's ambitious vision for its \$27 billion, 270-hectare Saadiyat Island, to be completed by 2018.

The island will house five major cultural institutions—albeit manifestations of foreign establishments, as the entire Saadiyat Island project has been developed by the U.S.-based Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, on behalf of the Tourism Development and Investment Company of Abu Dhabi (TDIC). Notably, none of the firms involved in the grand project are Middle Eastern or Arab. The other two cultural institutions that will be housed on the island are the Maritime Museum Building, designed by Japan's Tadao Ando Architects, and the Sheikh Zayed National Museum Building, created by the firm of iconic British architect Norman Foster.

"These big projects are all manifestations of the foreign culture," Daccache noted. By hiring these top architects to create new architecture in Abu Dhabi, he pointed out, the message communicated by the emirate is worrisome: "We are at the same level of other cities in Europe." Daccache added: "These projects are not related to our [Arab] culture; they are manifestations of international grandeur."



Beirut Souks

Daccache offered the following explanation for this phenomenon in Abu Dhabi. In the 1970s, then-President Francois Mitterrand declared that Paris should become the cultural capital of Europe. Mitterrand hired a number of big architects to construct what have become iconic French structures: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Institut du Monde Arabe, L'Opéra de la Bastille, and the Trois Points. Since the successful metamorphosis of Paris into a cultural first city, other cities around the world have attempted to adopt the same approach, and have contracted renowned architects to invent new landmarks—such as Gehry's stunning and grandiose Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, Spain. According to Daccache, Abu Dhabi is following the same trend.

A crisis in building Lebanon

In the case of Lebanon, where the nation clings to the architectural designs of an era long gone, and Dubai, where the nation thrives on manifesting foreign architectural styles and designs, form is considered before function. According to Daccache, both of these regions are communicating the wrong history and the wrong message about the local culture.

"In Lebanon the government is very conservative with what they allow architects," he said, "and they support the imitation of history ... Imitation is not a representation of our new movement [of architecture]."

Daccache added: "Architecture in this case should respond to the need of our economic and social movement."

Dr. Jad Chabaan, an economics professor at the American University of Beirut, believes that postwar reconstruction has, in the past, divided Beirut along sectarian lines—and continues to do so. He said that after the civil war ended in 1991, the rebuilding strategy for downtown Beirut was not very straightforward.

Since the successful metamorphosis of Paris into a cultural first city, other cities around the world have attempted to adopt the same approach, and have contracted renowned architects to invent new landmarks.





The Atlantis hotel, Dubai

"They [Solidere, the development company behind the reconstruction] thought about recreating downtown Beirut and building it as a meeting place for everyone," Chabaan said. He added that the development did not necessarily address a postwar multi-confessional society, and explained that the development of downtown Beirut "was done in a way that didn't respect the original mix of people, because there was a land expropriation."

"There were some issues concerning concentrating this power over Beirut's downtown into a single deciding unit," Chabaan said. "Not even from a justice point of view—but also from an aesthetic point of view. Some major urban decisions were made by a single entity."

What architecture tells us

Throughout history, architecture has always been a form of communication design, and has adapted to the social, political and cultural climate of its era and environment. For instance, while there have always been cultural influences in architecture, in the past century the Middle East, particularly Lebanon, has endured a great deal of war.

"Architecture is a result of the needs of our society, these being education, communication, socialization..."

-Maroun Daccache, Chair of Architecture Department

But in Daccache's view, the result of contemporary Middle Eastern architecture as a form of communication design is that a message is being lost. In order to stay true to its times, he noted, a nation's architecture needs to reflect its current needs and realities—visually, functionally and culturally.

Daccache explained that at LAU, the School of Architecture and Design's curriculum gives special consideration to community projects, and reflects current social and economic issues in Lebanon. The aim of the program's final-year projects is to inspire students to develop a sense of need for civic and socially responsible work, Daccache said. This empowers the community at large to work with the university.

"In this case, our universities become a part of the need of our societies," Daccache said.

The LAU School of Architecture and Design's architecture program has been recognized in France for many years, enabling LAU graduates to also practice in the European Union. However, the upsurge in development in the Gulf countries in recent years has presented significant opportunities for architects in the region, and Daccache takes pride in the fact that LAU graduates are sought-after by firms in the Gulf countries.

Daccache asserted that there are political and cultural nuances and considerations for architecture in the Middle East, in Lebanon and the Gulf countries—as different as those examples might be from each other. The countries in the region can, for example, benefit from an increased focus on adapting their design tradition, as opposed to mimicking it. The region's architects should be trained and encouraged to develop projects that are best suited to the area from a functional, cultural and practical standpoint, in terms of both forms and materials.

When future generations look back on our time, they should be able to see an architecture that reflects our era. We should characterize the time we live in by evolution and adaptation, as opposed to replication—or, as Daccache would call it, "falsification."



A reconstructed building in downtown Beirut





Disability and Communication in the Middle East By Dalila Mahdawi

Middle East residents with learning or physical disabilities are no strangers to adversity. In the area of communication, their challenges are especially pronounced.

Because of conflict, lagging development, poverty and inadequate resources in the region, those with special educational and mobility needs or other disabilities are only now slowly beginning to get their needs met.

The situation represents an ironic reversal of fortune, considering that the world's first institution dedicated to caring for those with intellectual disabilities was established in Baghdad, by Ibn Barmak, in 837 A.D. The institution was replicated around the Islamic world, but took some six centuries to reach the West.

The United Nations has noted that the challenges facing those with disabilities are compounded by a dearth of accurate data on the prevalence or types of such disabilities within the Middle East. Without such basic information, specialists and governments cannot but fail to adequately cater to this community.

But there are encouraging signs of change in the region. The League of Arab States is now in the process of establishing a sign language interpreting agency, which will be based in Doha, Qatar, and will provide certification for Arab sign language interpreters and encourage the use of sign language on local television.

LAU alumnus Jihad Kareem, who is blind, was able to pursue a B.A. in computer science by using voice-activated computer software, a Braille keyboard, and equipment that translated his books and computer files into Braille. In a similar move aimed at enhancing communication access for deaf people, researchers in Saudi Arabia are developing an avatar-based sign language translation system that will allow mobile phone users to translate Arabic text into Arabic Sign Language.

The world's first institution dedicated to caring for those with intellectual disabilities was established in Baghdad, by Ibn Barmak, in 837 A.D.

LAU alumnus Jihad Kareem, who is blind, achieved success with other forms of communication technology. He was able to pursue a B.A. in computer science by using voice-activated computer software, a Braille keyboard, and a machine that translated his books and computer files into Braille.

"[The] period without surveillance from specialists was very difficult," Kareem admitted, noting the prohibitive cost of technology for the blind in the Middle East. But his perseverance has paid off. Today, Kareem is a network and telecommunications administrator at the Ministry of Social Affairs.

"Now if someone at work has a problem with their computer, I am the one who fixes it," he said. \boxtimes



FEATURES



Al-Jazeera's Ghida Fakhry

Lebanese Journalists Around the World

By Gregory Houle

Having a keen desire to make sense of a complex world seems to be a Lebanese trait. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that a generation of Lebanese grew up at a time when their own nation was entangled in a messy civil war that they hoped one day to get to the bottom of. This might be what has led so many Lebanese and Lebanese-Americans down the path toward becoming world-class journalists.

Whatever the case may be, the number of journalists of Lebanese descent working today—and in particular, covering important events in the Middle East—cannot be ignored. Whether they're working for a major, global news organization such as CNN, the BBC or Al-Jazeera, or making waves at home in Lebanon, these journalists are covering the world.

Lebanese Journalists Around the World



Rima Мактаві

LAU graduate Rima Maktabi was born in Beirut during the height of Lebanon's civil war. Her father was killed during the conflict when she was only three years old. Originally she had planned to study engineering when she entered university, but an opportunity with the popular television network Future TV changed Maktabi's trajectory permanently. She decided instead to study journalism at LAU and, while she was there, she also received an M.A. in international relations.

A meeting with Gebran Tueni, the editor and publisher of the popular An-Nahar newspaper, at a workshop at LAU helped provide Maktabi with the opportunity to enter the world of a working journalist while she was still a student. She began as a writer and eventually became an on-air personality at Future TV.

Maktabi's big break, however, came in July 2006 when, as a journalist for Al-Arabiya, the popular pan-Arab satellite news channel based in Dubai, she was given the opportunity to cover the Israeli-Hezbollah War. Watching the tragic destruction of her homeland wasn't easy for Maktabi. But her determination to find the truth and to accurately report on the ground reinforced her belief in journalism as a profession. It also helped her make the often-difficult transition from the entertainment world (early in her career Maktabi had hosted a game show and done other entertainment-related work) to a role as a respected news journalist.

Maktabi has continued to cover the important events taking place in the region, and nowadays she is doing so from Al-Arabiya's headquarters in the UAE.

ANTHONY SHADID

The Washington Post's Anthony Shadid, an American of Lebanese decent who grew up in Oklahoma, has spent two decades mostly covering the Middle East. Having won a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the Iraq War in 2004, Shadid is also the author of two books about the region, including the award-winning "Night Draws Near," which developed out of his early reporting from Iraq after the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. Shadid's knowledge of Arabic has proven to be a major boon for his reporting throughout his career, arming him with a more acute ability to report about public opinion that gives him an edge over many other reporters for Western publications. But as a second-generation Lebanese-American, Shadid did not grow up fluent in Arabic. Instead he studied it in college at the University of Wisconsin, and later as part of a fellowship from the American University in Cairo in the early 1990s.

His devotion to the story is legendary. In 2002 Shadid was wounded in Ramallah while covering a story for the Boston Globe.

GHIDA FAKHRY

Ghida Fakhry is indeed a child of the Lebanese Civil War, citing it as one of the main reasons why, as a young girl, she decided to become a journalist. She studied international relations in Europe, where her parents sent her during one of the more violent stages of the conflict. It was coverage of the Gulf War in 1991 that helped to solidify her entry into journalism. Fakhry currently works at the Washington, D.C. bureau of Al-Jazeera, where she has served in two reporting roles over the past decades. Fakhry also worked as a news anchor for the Lebanese Broadcasting Company from 2002 to 2004. While at Al-Jazeera, she has conducted exclusive in-depth interviews with former U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, and the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. She also covered the events of September 11 from the streets of New York, as the network's bureau chief there.

Given her international experience, Fakhry is one of the best-known Arab news personalities outside of the Arab world.

BRIGITTE GABRIEL

Brigitte Gabriel is a former news anchor for "World News," an Arabic evening news broadcast on Middle East Television that is seen throughout the region. She emigrated from Lebanon to the United States in 1989 and founded a television production company whose clients included the U.S. networks ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, Fox News and others.

Gabriel is founder, president and CEO of ACT! For America, a citizen action network dedicated to preserving national security and combating what Gabriel calls "Islamic supremacy." She is the author of two controversial bestselling books, "Because They Hate" and "They Must be Stopped." Gabriel is a divisive figure whose work has often been met with criticism, with many calling her an Islamophobe. But other critics have reviewed her work positively, making Gabriel a highly soughtafter and prominent speaker.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with her line of thinking, Gabriel has become a major force in Middle Eastern journalism.



HUSSAIN ABDUL-HUSSAIN

Abdul-Hussain began his journalism career with Lebanon's only English-language newspaper, the Daily Star, spending five years at the paper during the early 2000s before working as a producer for Alhurra, the television network founded by the U.S. State Department in 2004.

Abdul-Hussain is a visiting fellow for the well-respected think tank Chatham House in London, where he focuses his efforts on the Middle East and North Africa. He is also the Washington, D.C. correspondent for Al Rai, the Kuwaiti daily newspaper, and has written for U.S. newspapers like the New York Times and the Washington Post. He has appeared as a commentator on several major television networks, including the BBC and CNN. Abdul-Hussain focuses most of his journalistic attention on Lebanese politics, especially as it relates to the interaction between the state and Hezbollah. He also maintains his own blog on Middle East affairs: http:// hussainabdulhussain.blogspot.com/

OMAR AL ISSAWI

Al Issawi is a journalist and documentary filmmaker who has worked for the BBC and Al Jazeera during his career, but he got his start spinning rock music for a Lebanese radio station during the civil war. In addition to working in the Middle East, Al Issawi covered the war in Bosnia in the 1990s and was injured there in 1995 while in the line of duty.

Omar became one of the first to join Al Jazeera after its inception in Qatar, and he produced such documentaries for the network as "The War in Lebanon" and "A Tale of Revolution," which focused on the PLO. Al Issawi also covered the war in Iraq, working from U.S. Central Command headquarters in Doha. He received praise in a profile in The New Yorker magazine and other U.S. publications. He was also called a "living national icon" by Britain's Guardian newspaper.

MAY CHIDIAC

May Chidiac is an award-winning Lebanese journalist known for her political talk shows on the Lebanese Broadcasting Company. She lost an arm and a leg in a car bombing in 2005. The 2005 attack was part of a string of bombings targeting influential Lebanese, many of whom were journalists opposing Syrian influence.

In 2006, Chidiac received a Courage in Journalism award in New York, as well as UNESCO's Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. In 2007 she was awarded the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur by former French President Jacques Chirac in Paris.

Chidiac resigned from LBC last February but remains a towering figure in the world of Lebanese journalism.





OCTAVIA NASR

LAU graduate Octavia Nasr is an award-winning veteran of the news business, with nearly a quarter-century of experience under her belt. She currently serves as the senior editor of Middle East affairs for CNN at the network's main headquarters in Atlanta. Nasr has kept her finger on the pulse of the Middle East for decades, covering every major story in the region from the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to the recent election in Iran.

Nasr is a recipient of the prestigious Edward R. Murrow award for her coverage of the Middle East for CNN. Her familiarity with the region has proven to be invaluable in helping to improve the news network's coverage of the Middle East. In recent years Nasr has expanded her work to include podcasts, blogs and Tweets from CNN's website.



HELEN THOMAS

The unrivaled queen of Lebanese journalists could only be the indomitable Helen Thomas.

Having covered the White House since the days of President John F. Kennedy, Thomas has been synonymous with coverage of U.S. political affairs for the past six decades. She was the first woman officer of the National Press Club, the first woman president of the White House Correspondents' Association, and the first woman member of the Gridiron Club. For decades, Thomas has been entitled to ask the first or second question during presidential press conferences.

Thomas began her career in 1943 at United Press International, where she got her start covering women's issues and celebrity news. By the mid-1950s Thomas had moved into serious topics, covering various government agency beats during the second half of the decade.

With the election of President Kennedy in 1960, Thomas made the jump to the White House press corps, a position she retains today.

Helen Thomas has been a true pioneer and icon in the field of journalism for as long as most people can remember. She is the author of five books about politics and journalism, and has reported on key presidential developments over the last 50 years.



page 20

FEATURES



New Challenges for Communication Design in the Middle East

By Austin G. Mackell

Design is a rapidly growing field in the Middle East, but designers in the region often come up against specific obstacles that can lead to mistakes and missed opportunities. Opinions vary about which problems are the most widespread.

Melissa Plourde Khoury, assistant professor of graphic design at LAU Byblos, said the most common mistake is that a designer becomes "so involved in the idiosyncrasies of a certain project or client that they forget [their] design responsibility."

Noor Haydar, an LAU graduate and graphic designer working with Channel Design in Beirut, works mainly on advertising. She said the most common mistake she sees is an excessive focus on aesthetics and a lack of attention to the needs of the project, or, as she put it, "focusing on the visual before the concept."

Randa Abdel Baki, chair of the graphic design department at LAU Beirut, said that Middle Eastern designers often fail to create something "customized to the purpose," and instead fall back on ideas they had created previously and shelved for later use.

The tension between artistic and commercial motivations



for design is a problem faced by designers around the world. However, in the Middle East, where consumers and clients alike are less acquainted with the idea of design as a full-fledged professional field, the difficulty is particularly acute.

"Middle Eastern clients create a massive barrier" between the region's talented graphic designers and the potential for consistent, excellent design, said Plourde Khoury.

"When we try to push the limits of advertising and design," Haydar agreed, "we tend to be held back with the excuse that the common public will not grasp the idea."

Some clients confuse the role of designers—tasked with creating the visuals to deliver their clients' messages—with that of technicians, whose job is to operate the software as their clients look over their shoulders and tell them what to do.

According to Abdel Baki, the problem is a lack of respect for graphic designers. Some clients "think everyone is a designer," she said. Abdel Baki pointed out, however, that clients who have no idea what they want can be equally problematic.

"Much of the design that comes out of the Middle East is superficial. It does not reach the audience in a richer, deeper, more conceptual manner."

> -Melissa Plourde Khoury, LAU Professor of Graphic Design

New Challenges for Communication Design in the Middle East



These small firms are constantly struggling to be noticed in a crowded market, and must rely on the imaginations of individual designers.



Still, these constraints have not prevented the Middle East, and Lebanon in particular, from producing world-class designers. "When our students engage in master's degrees in the U.S., Canada, Japan and Europe," said Silia Abou Arbid, co-chair of the Fine Arts and Foundation Program at LAU Beirut, "most of them always manage to grab an 'excellence' scholarship, partial or full. So, I guess we're pretty competitive by world standards."

Patil Tchilinguirian, a design graduate of LAU who also works at Channel, shares this high opinion of the region's designers, pointing to their success in international design awards. She also pointed out the high percentage of Lebanese winners in pan-Arab design competitions. Tchilinguirian concurred with Abdel Baki that Lebanon is the "hub" of design in the region.

Much of the best design work, however, receives little exposure outside elite circles.

"We are producing excellent design," Abou Arbid said. "However, this remains within closed circuits ... mainstream [design] is absolutely decadent."

"Much of the design that comes out of the Middle East is superficial," Plourde Khoury said. "It does not reach the audience in a richer, deeper, more conceptual manner...It is not challenging."

The importance of creating design work that reflects the local culture is one area in which other regions seem to be taking the lead. Iranian designers in particular have developed distinct regional and national design styles that emerge from and reflect their indigenous visual culture. Beginning in the late 1980s and continuing through the 1990s, Iranian graphic designers made an impact on the world design scene, drawing on their country's rich artistic history and creating a truly unique and Iranian aesthetic.

"You can see the culture in their work," Abdel Baki said, "and it's beautiful. But they kind of modernized it as well...It all comes also from a very strong art base."

The success of these Iranian designers emboldened others in

"You can see the culture in their work, and it's beautiful."

-Randa Abdel Baki, Chair of the LAU Graphic Design Department

the Middle East to carve out their own paths, rather than imitate styles already successful elsewhere. This is a development that faculty members of the design department at LAU's Byblos campus were keen to encourage when they organized Design Exchange '09. The event, a weeklong conference held in November, aimed at "enhancing visual culture through modernization rather than its obliteration due to globalization."

One source of optimism in the Lebanese design world is that a plethora of smaller design firms (such as Channel Design, which has a full-time staff of only two designers) are establishing themselves despite competition from big multinationals (Saatchi and Saatchi, Impact BBDO, Grey worldwide, JWT, Y and R, Leo Burnett) and from established Lebanese companies with regional reach (Koein, Promo 7, Element C2, Wonder Eight).

These small firms are constantly struggling to be noticed in a crowded market, and must rely on the imaginations of individual designers. To succeed, they must take more risks. Their daring, Abdel Baki said, has not gone unnoticed by experienced clients, who seem to be opening up to smaller, fresher companies with a personal style and a local orientation, rather than one of the established international firms.

These boutique firms are also working outside the region and expanding into new markets. One example of this was Channel Design's work on the 2009 electoral campaign of President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon. In just 12 busy days and nights, Channel's two designers, assisted by yet another LAU graduate, created an entire line of visual campaign elements.

"It was a big challenge for a company with such a small team," Tchilinguirian said.

Perhaps it's no surprise that the talented team at Channel Design was able to meet the tight deadline. Because of the country's turbulent political situation, Lebanese designers often have superior crisis-management skills, Abdel Baki suggested.

"For Lebanese designers," she said, "nothing is impossible." 🕅



LAU Joint Ventures



Graphic Design Exchange

By LAU Staff

World-renowned graphic designers Bob van Dijk from the Netherlands and Hiroki Yamamoto from Japan visited Lebanon in November to attend a design conference on the LAU Byblos campus and to view an exhibition in the historic souk of Byblos. The Design Exchange '09 conference was held November 23-28, and gave LAU graphic design students from both campuses-as well as students from the LAU-affiliated Scientific College of Design in Oman-the opportunity to study under the acclaimed designers through a series of workshops and lectures.

By offering such workshops, the Graphic Design Department in Byblos hopes to expose students to the work and ideas of international professionals, explained event organizers Tarek Khoury, department co-chair and assistant professor, and Melissa Plourde Khoury, assistant professor of graphic design.

"We offer students our own experiences and knowledge," Plourde Khoury said, referring to LAU faculty members. "But by bringing people in from the outside who are not professors but...[working professionals], and within a completely different culture, [we expose students to] fresh ideas, a fresh vision, new insight," Khoury added, noting that these experts can provide perspectives on "a different way of working."

"It's about trying to find the essence of a problem that a client has, and trying to solve that in a creative way."

-Bob van Dijk, Graphic designer

Van Dijk presented a workshop series called "5 Ways of Being Creative," and had students work on five small projects rather than one large one. He explained that by completing more than one project, students could "carry over what they learned [in one project] to the next one." He called the workshop participants "very enthusiastic," saying, "They are curious, pose good questions, and are really interested in learning. And I can feel that they [learned] from the first assignment."

One of the assigned projects was to create a ghetto blaster for the deaf. Because the concept is contradictory, students were forced to think creatively. Students "really have to get out of their box," said van Dijk. He explained that he always tells students not to trust their teachers-meaning not that they should disrespect those teachers, but rather that the students should feel encouraged to have their own creative ideas.

Participant Patricia Farah, a third-year graphic design student at LAU Byblos, thought of the ghetto blaster in terms of invasion of space rather than sound. She created a concept involving balloons that rhythmically inflate and deflate, becoming so big that they invade the space of all passers-by, including the deaf. She and other participants were enthusiastic about the opportunity to attend such workshops. Farah said she was inspired by van Dijk's perspective, adding that he "had the key and opened the creative door."

"In his class, the sky is the limit," Farah said.

Yamamoto's workshop, "Construction from Deconstruction," also involved several projects, and focused on techniques like collage and montage. In one of the first sessions, students spread out pre-existing designs in a workspace and deconstructed them. Later, they constructed new designs from the pieces.

LAU Joint Ventures



Van Dijk at the exhibition in Byblos

About 75 students registered in advance for the workshops, but the lectures and exhibitions were open to everyone. The exhibition, held in coordination with Eddé Yard, opened on November 25 and lasted through November 28 in Byblos' old city center, now a popular local and tourist destination. The designers mingled with students and guests and described the inspiration behind each work. The displayed works were all designed using a variety of instruments and techniques, many of which were explained by both designers at the lectures held at LAU Byblos the same day.

In his lecture van Dijk showed the audience some of his most recent projects for companies both large and small, explaining that one of the main tasks in his work is to develop a fitting identity for each client that would cater to its specific needs. "In a dynamic world with dynamic organizations, we need dynamic identities," van Dijk said.

He added that the job is more about developing creative strategies than designing attractive logos.

"We can all make nice things," he said, "but the strategy behind it is more fascinating. It's about trying to find the essence of a problem that a client has, and trying to solve that in a creative way."

Yamamoto started his lecture by giving a brief history of graphic art, which he said began with the 32,000-year-old Lascaux cave drawings in France and the development of the alphabet. He emphasized the importance of the medium or instrument employed in creating graphic art, whether it is a rock used to make a carving from wood, or a paintbrush used to create an image. He argued that without such instruments, graphic expression would have no meaning.

"There's a fine line between calling something graphic art, and not calling it graphic art," Yamamoto said. "And it has to do with the medium that is being used to transfer it. It's the medium that gives it value."

The conference is the first of its kind for the Graphic Design Department at LAU Byblos. Khoury said the event was called "Design Exchange" because it is about the exchange of cultural identity. The goal is for students to take ideas from other cultures and integrate them into the graphic design field in Lebanon.

"We are taking action to involve the community and enrich our students," Plourde Khoury added. "We're trying to move the program into the future."



Dr. Melissa Plourde Khoury introduces Yamamoto

Hiroki Yamamoto is a Japanese designer and president of Marvin, a design firm in Tokyo. Because Yamamoto only speaks Japanese, an interpreter was brought in to translate for attendees.

Bob van Dijk is a partner and designer at the design firm NLXL in The Hague, Netherlands. The award-winning designer has lectured, presented workshops and exhibited in Europe, the United States and the Middle East.

Richard Doubleday, assistant professor of art at Boston University, was scheduled to attend but was unable to make it to the conference.

An exhibition of student work done during the workshops followed the conference. The works were on display from November 30 to December 4 in the Rima Hourani Exhibition Room on the Byblos campus.



"It's the medium that gives it value." —Hiroki Yamamoto, Graphic designer

LAU Joint Ventures

Maysoun Chehab, member of the Arab Resource Collective, and Dr. Ahmad Oueini, chair of LAU's Department of Education, organized the three-day event



Fighting for Children's Rights

By Marc Abizeid

"Education is the most fundamental right for children."

-Samir Jarrar

Dr. Jane Betts, senior disability adviser for World Vision U.K.

The right of children to an education was the focal point of a massive regional conference in Beirut that brought together hundreds of educators and NGO representatives from across the Middle East and other areas from November 5 to 7.

Dubbed "Inclusive Education and Diversity in Early Years," the three-day conference was the product of a joint effort between LAU's Department of Education at the School of Arts and Sciences, and the Early Childhood Care and Development Program at the Beirut-based Arab Resource Collective (ARC).

"The objective of this conference is to spread [awareness] of the diversity of early stages of childhood ... and to develop a strategy to support children in their own communities," said Dr. Samir Jarar, chairman of ARC's Board of Trustees.

Education is the most fundamental right for children, Jarrar explained. He went on to elaborate on the other essential entitlements—such as health care, freedom of speech and protection—that are due to all youngsters regardless of disability, poverty or any other element that may be used to discriminate against them.

Several speakers gave presentations at the opening ceremony. Among them was Dr. Jane Betts, senior disability advisor for World Vision U.K., who stressed the need to push governments to enforce international conventions on children's rights.

Through a PowerPoint presentation, Betts introduced the audience to a young girl she met who was living in an orphanage in Armenia. The child's parents had placed her in the orphanage as an infant because she was born with a disability.

"These children are facing extreme marginalization and no hope for reaching their full potential," Betts said. "We must not let [this child] and the millions of other children with disabilities down. We have the tools, and we must have the will, and we must be tireless in supporting parents and communities to include all children within early childhood care and development." Dozens of topics were discussed during the conference, which was composed of four plenary sessions, 19 concurrent sessions, 10 workshops and one working group that collectively amounted to 55 hours.

Participants discussed child protection, discipline, and broad strategies to deal with children who have physical and learning disabilities.

Through several case studies, attendees also examined how to address the problems of Palestinian children living in refugee camps, sexual abuse in Lebanon, and the inclusion and protection of Iraqi child refugees in Jordan, among other topics.

"These children are facing extreme marginalization and no hope for reaching their full potential." —Jane Betts, World Vision U.K.

It was not the first time ARC and LAU collaborated to address the issue of children's education.

Dr. Ahmad Oueini, chair of LAU's Education Department, said that he had previously worked with the organization to develop several projects, most recently a program geared to help mothers in Lebanon's poverty-stricken areas to prepare their children for school.

Perhaps the most crucial aspect of the conference, Oueini explained, was to help connect activists from around the world who share a belief and a passion for reaching out to children. Those connections will set the stage for future events and projects.

"Networking is very important," Oueini said. "[It's about] meeting new people from all over the world, learning from their experiences, and gaining new ideas and resources."

"Networking is very important. [It's about] meeting new people from all over the world, learning from their experiences, and gaining new ideas and resources." —Ahmad Oueini, Chair of LAU Education Department

LAU Accreditation



The NEASC team visits the Byblos campus

Accreditation Progress Update NEASC accreditation team visits LAU By LAU Staff

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A team of six representatives from an American institution that accredits universities visited LAU November 8-11 for a comprehensive evaluation. The visit was intended to examine the progress and changes undertaken by the university to meet accreditation standards.

LAU began the accreditation process in 2005 and officially attained candidacy status in 2007, when the first team representing the organization—the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)—visited the university.

Usually, once a university attains candidacy status, it has five years to make the necessary changes before NEASC-CIHE sends a team to review progress and to make the appropriate recommendation to the commission.

After the 2007 visit, NEASC-CIHE prepared a report outlining a number of emphasis areas to which LAU should pay special attention. These included: implementing the medical and nursing schools; undertaking the facilities plans; conducting integrated planning; focusing on university governance; ensuring sufficient numbers of full-time faculty; engaging in assessment efforts; and committing to the goal of "one" university.

Usually, once a university attains candidacy status, it has five years to make the necessary changes before NEASC-CIHE sends a team to review progress and to make the appropriate recommendation to the commission. The visit to LAU comes just two years after the university became a candidate for accreditation. "Under the leadership of President Jabbra, the university has engaged in a major effort to apply for full accreditation in two years," said Elie Badr, assistant provost for academic programs and co-chair of the steering committee charged with helping the provost oversee the accreditation process.

During the November 2009 visit, the team spent time on both the Beirut and Byblos campuses and met with faculty, staff, students, and members of the administration and the Board of Trustees. The meetings were organized around the NEASC's Eleven Standards as well as the seven emphasis areas that the CIHE had pinpointed for LAU in the 2007 report.

NEASC-CIHE, which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, is one of eight American accrediting commissions that provide institutional accreditation on a regional basis. The organization currently accredits approximately 200 colleges and universities in the six-state New England region.

In addition to institutional accreditation, there are also field-specific organizations that accredit particular schools and programs. LAU's School of Pharmacy, for example, is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmaceutical Education. It is the only school outside the U.S. to receive this designation.

Badr explained that in order for other LAU schools, such as business and engineering, and programs, such as computer science, to earn professional accreditation, the university must first earn institutional accreditation.

The decision regarding LAU's accreditation is expected from the NEASC Board of Trustees in early spring.

"Under the leadership of President Jabbra, the university has engaged in a major effort to apply for full accreditation in two years." —Elie Badr, Assistant Provost

LAU School of Pharmacy Signs Partnership Agreement with the University of Toledo

A new partnership agreement between the Lebanese American University (LAU) School of Pharmacy and the University of Toledo (UT) College of Pharmacy was signed whereby students in the Pharm.D programs at UT will have the opportunity to study abroad in Byblos- Lebanon, and students from LAU to study at UT- Ohio. Dr. Farid Sadik, Dean of the Lebanese American University School of Pharmacy visited the college to sign the agreement. During this visit, Dr. Sadik held a seminar to discuss research at LAU and to familiarize students with all LAU has to offer to UT students who wish to travel for rotations and internship experiences. In addition, Dr. Sadik interviewed several students who are interested in completing experiential rotations at LAU as early as Spring 2010.

LAU has the distinction of being the only non-U.S. college of pharmacy that is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and students from LAU will have the opportunity to study and complete rotations at UT. UT students were enthusiastic about meeting Dr. Sadik and learning about LAU. At the agreement signing, many members of Toledo's Lebanese community turned out to welcome Dr. Sadik and to support the college's partnership with LAU.

Dr. Johonnie Early, Dean of UT College of Pharmacy believes the partnership with LAU will benefit the college's international reputation and giving more students the exposure to international research opportunities. "I look forward to solidifying this partnership with the exchange of student learners. Studying at LAU will be a life-changing experience for our students, and working with LAU students

will enhance the diversity and reach of our college". Dean Sadik is delighted that LAU Pharmacy students will have the opportunity to be exposed to pharmaceutical care in the US.



LAU Magazine Recognized by International Education Council



The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) has bestowed a prestigious award to *LAU Magazine and Alumni Bulletin*. CASE is the premier global professional association serving educational institutions and the advancement professionals who work on their behalf in alumni relations, communications, development, marketing and allied areas.

The honorable mention prize, part of the 2010 Accolades Award program for District Two of CASE, was awarded in the category of visual design in print—illustration. The winning illustration graced the Spring 2009 issue of the magazine, and was created by Beirut-based artist Joelle Achkar. The illustration was commissioned and produced under the direction of Managing Editor Todd Dorman. MarCom Director Peggy Hanna supervised production. The Spring 2009 issue focused on the regional and global economy, and Achkar's work provided a fantastical depiction of the recovery challenge (see above). Achkar also illustrated an article about Islamic Banking in the same issue of *LAU Magazine*. This interior illustration took a fresh, economics-based look at the classic fable of the tortoise and hare.

Achkar's *Faits et Méfaits* (L'Orient-Le Jour & ALBA publishing) was released in February 2008. Her 2009 release, *El Dajaja Bak Beek*, was announced as Children's Book of the Year at the 2010 Beirut Book Fair. Achkar graduated with distinction from the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts. In addition to her writing and book illustration work, she freelances as an illustrator for magazines and websites. Achkar also teaches visual literacy courses at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts.

LAU is a member of District 2, the largest of the eight CASE districts, representing institutions in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States as well as Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Island and Ontario, Canada. This year Rutgers University and Dickinson College also received honors in the same category.

Darwin's Living Legacy By LAU Staff

Speakers hailed from more than 120 countries and presented research in a range of disciplines including medicine, agriculture, biodiversity and the environment.

However divisive Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory may still be, it has undoubtedly made—and continues to make—a huge impact on the world.

Darwin's famed work, "On the Origin of Species," is the basis for the theory of evolution and has impacted many scientific fields. However, the book remains controversial among many communities around the world, since it is often regarded as a challenge to the monotheistic view of creation.

"There were lively and significant debates." —Ramez Maluf, Chair of LAU Communication Arts Department

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the publication of "On the Origin of Species" and the 200th anniversary of its author's birth, the British Council organized an international conference entitled "Darwin's Living Legacy," which was held November 14-16 at the Biblioteca Alexandria in Egypt.

Among the approximately 120 guest speakers were Dr. Pierre Zalloua, associate professor at LAU and assistant dean for research at the university's School of Medicine, and Ramez Maluf, associate professor and chair of LAU's Communication Arts Department.

The speakers hailed from more than 120 countries and presented research in a range of disciplines including medicine, agriculture, biodiversity and the environment, and provided broader social, historical and cultural perspectives.

"The most interesting thing about [the conference] was that it really brought together people from around the world with conflicting views about these issues," said Maluf. "There were lively and significant debates."

He mentioned that the conference was atypical in that he met people from outside his own field, whereas most conferences

"Let's judge Darwin on his scientific merit. From a scientific perspective, I think it's very hard for us to say Darwin was wrong."

-Pierre Zalloua, Assistant Dean for Research at LAU School of Medicine



bring together experts from one field. Zalloua added that he enjoyed being exposed "to many different concepts from very different backgrounds ... tackling the same [topic]."

"What Darwin said 150 years ago is very hard to refute even today," said Zalloua. He explained that Darwin's theory sometimes attracts controversy because of misconceptions about it.

"Darwin never said we descended from apes," Zalloua explained. "That's not what Darwin is about. Darwin is about evolution and the way evolution happens from a scientific perspective."

"Let's judge Darwin on his scientific merit," he added. "From a scientific perspective, I think it's very hard for us to say Darwin was wrong. He was wrong on certain elements of his theory... that's why there is Neo-Darwinism now."

Zalloua presented a lecture entitled "From Africa to the Levant," which traced the migration of the first humans out of Africa 130,000 years ago to the current Levant area. The journey took approximately 90,000 years and happened in two phases due to changes in the Earth's climate.

Maluf, who holds a Ph.D. in the history of science and has been interested in Darwin since he was a graduate student, lectured on the Arab media's representation of Darwin, specifically over the past six months, on the occasion of the anniversaries of the evolutionist's birth and of the publication of his book.

Maluf was also involved in a more local celebration of Darwin's work a few days later, on November 24, when he presided over a three-hour discussion for the LAU community. The event, which focused on evolution, religion and the influence of Darwin's theory on 19th-century Beirut, featured Dr. Kamal Badr, founding dean of LAU's Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine; Dr. Habib Malik, LAU associate professor of history; and Mohammed Al Zein, instructor in natural sciences.





Expanding Education: New School of Architecture and Design gathers design and art programs under one roof By LAU Staff

LAU continues to grow, and this year it added another new school: The School of Architecture and Design, which brings together existing programs in architecture, interior design, graphic design and fine arts.

Previously, the architecture and interior design programs were offered under the School of Engineering and Architecture, while graphic design and fine arts were part of the School of Arts and Sciences. The reshuffling was necessary to better organize the university's design and art programs.

"Bringing all these disciplines together in a single school of design brings more cohesion, and thus strengthens these programs that were [formerly] operating under different administrative units," said LAU Provost Dr. Abdallah Sfeir.

"It came to our attention that these programs that are very much interlinked should be in one school," said the new school's Acting Dean Dr. Elie Badr, who also serves as assistant provost for academic programs and professor of mechanical engineering.

Sfeir spearheaded the initiative last year but had the idea to create the school four years ago. "Beirut is a hub for all creative disciplines in the Middle East, and it is very befitting that LAU capitalizes on this in its offerings," he said.

Badr will initially direct his attention to building a solid foundation for the school, focusing on financial, governance and marketing issues. "You have to give [the school] an identity. You have to create bylaws for it. You have to create its own budget," he explained, describing the process of starting up the new entity.

With time, however, he hopes to create a strategic plan for the school and identify additional programs to help its growth. "Lebanon is very well known for its jewelry and fashion design," he said. "These are some ideas that we will think about in expanding the school." Industrial design might also be considered. Badr explained that any new programs would have to be "suitable for the country and for the region."

He added that Lebanon and the region do not have many institutions that focus on the field of design, so the new school will serve the industry well with its existing and impending programs.

"With the foundation of the new Architecture and Design School, LAU has once again revealed its remarkable determination to break boundaries, test limits and excel in all its endeavors and undertakings," said LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra. "The school's establishment, derived from the same core values that have for decades kept LAU moving forward and cemented our moral and academic prominence, will offer specialized and student-tailored academic programs for outstanding theoretical and practical education."

The school is fully recognized by the Lebanese government, and an amendment to LAU's charter by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York is in progress.



Acting Dean of the School of Architecture and Design, Dr. Elie Badr "With the foundation of the new Architecture and Design School, LAU has once again revealed its remarkable determination to break boundaries, test limits and excel in all its endeavors and undertakings." —Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra, LAU President Faculty and Staff

Faculty on the Move



DR. ELIE BADR

This year Dr. Elie Badr has been promoted to full professor of mechanical engineering, in addition to his roles as the assistant provost for academic programs and the acting dean of LAU's new School of Architecture and Design. Having joined LAU in 1997 as an assistant professor of mechanical engineering, Badr was promoted to associate professor with limited tenure in October 2001. He also served as the faculty representative of the Byblos campus from 1999 to 2003 and became the acting dean of the School of Engineering and Architecture from July 2003 until September 2005, at which point he was appointed the assistant vice president for academic programs. Badr holds a B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma. He has done extensive research on residual stress analysis, metal fatigue, machine design and energy forecasting and analysis. Badr serves as a consultant for numerous companies and has completed several mechanical projects.



DR. SAMI BAROUDI

Promoted this year to full professor, Dr. Sami Baroudi first joined LAU in 1992 as an assistant professor of political science. He also serves as the assistant provost for faculty affairs. Between October 2001 and September 2005, he held the position of chairperson of the Education and Social Science Division – Beirut. In 2005, he was appointed assistant vice president for faculty affairs. Baroudi has a Ph.D. in political science from Indiana University – Bloomington (1991), an M.A. in political studies (1984) and a B.A. in economics (1981) from the American University of Beirut. Baroudi has an extensive publication record on the political economy of the Middle East, particularly Egypt and Lebanon, and played a major role in launching the M.A. program in international affairs at LAU.



Staff on the Move



SONIA HAJJAR

Sonia Hajjar was appointed assistant vice president for budget and grants in 2009. She joined LAU in 1995 as the associate comptroller, and became the director of budget and financial planning and the grants coordinator in 2001. Previously, she had worked for Saba & Co., a Deloitte & Touche audit firm, and for the Catholic Relief Services as a financial and administrative consultant and deputy country director. Hajjar has a B.A. in business administration and an M.B.A. from the American University of Beirut.



PEGGY HANNA

Peggy Hanna has recently been promoted to assistant vice president for marketing and communications. She joined LAU in 2007 as the director of the newly established department, after enjoying a notable career in public health. She has extensive experience in media communications as well as a strong public-sector and NGO background, and she has been involved in training in capacity-building for the American University of Beirut, Université Saint Joseph, Lebanese University and ESA, as well as for the World Bank, WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF. Hanna holds an M.P.H. from the American University of Beirut and an M.B.A. from Université Saint Joseph/Université Paris Dauphine (Paris).



ROBERT HOLLBACK

Robert Hollback is LAU's new assistant vice president of development for North America. Based in New York, Hollback joined LAU in 2007 as the director of development for North America. He has a B.S. in journalism from Bowling Green State University, Ohio, and worked as a reporter and editor early in his career. He has almost 30 years of experience in higher education advancement, including work at the American University in Cairo and the Center for Economics Research and Graduate Education at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. Hollback served as vice president for development for both institutions.

ED SHINER

Ed Shiner is now the director of alumni and special projects for North America. Shiner, who is based in New York, joined LAU in 2006 as the university programs manager and later became the alumni programs manager. He is cementing ties with alumni and donors and oversees alumni chapters in the U.S. and Canada. In the past two years, he helped establish nine new chapters. Shiner graduated in 1967 from Wilkes University with a B.S. in music education and in 1970 from Temple University with a master's degree in music history and literature. He previously served as executive director of the National Apostolate of Maronites for 23 years. In addition to his work, Shiner has been singing with the West Village Chorale in New York City and serving on its board of directors for 19 years, and he volunteers for multiple organizations in the city. He evaluates his years at LAU as extremely invigorating and rewarding.



RAMI MAJZOUB

Rami Maizoub just joined his alma mater as an associate director of development. For the past 12 years, he has worked in senior sales and media positions at such companies as the Reuters news agency and the Abu Dhabi Media Zone training academy. He holds a B.S. in computer science from LAU and an M.B.A. from Ecole Supérieure des Affaires. He is enjoying being part of one of the fastest-growing universities in the region and hopes to contribute to LAU's vision and success, adding to it his experience and enthusiasm. Majzoub has also worked with several NGOs, such as Injaz, and he co-founded JCI (Junior Chamber International, Inc.) in Lebanon.



HUDA JREIDINI

Huda Jreidini has recently joined LAU as a paralegal in the office of the vice president and general counsel. She is an LAU alumna, having graduated with a B.A. in English literature in 1999, and she has nine years of experience in teaching at schools and universities in Lebanon as well as at the AMIDEAST organization. From 2005 to 2007, she worked as the sole writer at a quarterly publication for the American University of Beirut Medical Center. She welcomes the challenge of her current position and so far says she has loved every minute of it. Jreidini hopes to serve her much-loved university for many years to come.



NADINE WEHBE

Nadine Wehbe has just joined her alma mater as an administrative assistant at the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, a new division established in 2008. Throughout her years as a student at LAU, she worked at the university's Financial Aid Office. Wehbe considers her experience as a financial aid student valuable in her efforts, and she hopes to keep up the high quality of work done by her department with the help of Director Diane Nauffal. Wehbe holds a B.S. in management systems.

Student Achievement

Sami Kiwan

Third-year LAU student Sami Kiwan has been interested in graphic design since adolescence, but his talents are flourishing as a result of his undergraduate studies at the university. "LAU has helped me a lot in developing my skills," he said. His work has not gone unnoticed: In October 2009, Kiwan won a \$10,000 cash prize after designing a logo that earned first place in a competition organized by the Studio EI Fan talent program of Lebanese television station MTV.

The old Studio El Fan logo was penned in elaborate calligraphy. Kiwan created the new logo based on a cleaner, more modern script, inspired by his idea of making the design more accessible and attractive to people from all backgrounds.

The popular appeal of his design is evident, as the logo he created now graces billboards and television advertisements all over Lebanon.

Kiwan also works part-time in LAU's Marketing and Communications Department, and he is a student assistant in the Graphic Design Department. Even his hobbies involve creative computer work: Kiwan is an avid musician who plays the piano and uses computer programs to compose orchestral accompaniments to his pieces.

He expects to graduate in spring 2010, and plans to stay and work in Lebanon to gain some professional experience before going on to do a master's degree abroad in either 3D animation or special effects.



Kiwan works at the Marketing and Communications Department



The logo Kiwan designed

Amer Mouawad

LAU graduate student Amer Mouawad likes to describe his work in theoretical computer science as "a game." While talk of different types of algorithms and complex graphs would send some minds spinning, Mouawad is fascinated by the process of using computers to find faster ways of solving

In November 2009, he took some time out of his M.Sc. in computer science to participate alongside mathematical problems. other LAU undergraduates and postgraduates in the Arab and North Africa Regional Programming Contest in Alexandria, where his team of three finished in sixth place out of 45.

Prior to that, Mouawad won a \$2,500 prize for his final-year undergraduate project,

entitled "The Whistler: A Query by Whistling Search Engine," in which he created a computer application that uses a database of songs to identify a tune whistled into

Having played guitar since the age of 10, he found the inspiration to merge the a microphone. technological and the rhythmic through his passion for music, particularly blues and jazz. However, Mouawad's busy study schedule, combined with his work as a research assistant in the Department of Computer Science and Mathematics, has kept him from performing as much as he did in the past. For now, he is focusing on applying for doctoral studies at major U.S. universities, and he hopes to start in a Ph.D. program

after his planned graduation in fall 2010.



Campusvoles

Celebrating Lebanon

To mark Lebanon's 66th **Independence Day** on November 22, soldiers from the Lebanese army's airborne unit put on a show for LAU community members on November 17 on the Beirut campus. Attracting well over 1,000 spectators to cheer on their performances, the soldiers performed stunts, crawled down the sides of buildings with ropes, and demonstrated fighting techniques. An army orchestra also performed.

A commemorative event **celebrating independence** was also held on the Byblos campus on November 25. Famous Lebanese singer Sami Clark performed the Lebanese national anthem, and a military orchestra played a variety of patriotic songs. Three Lebanese cedars were planted, and 12 white pigeons were released over campus to symbolize peace. The event was organized by the Guidance Office – Byblos in collaboration with four student clubs: the Offre de Joie Club, the Scout Club, the Pulse Club and the Civic Engagement Club.



Art & Culture



A dozen literature experts and academics from around the world gathered to reveal how the works of the internationally celebrated Lebanese poet, writer and philosopher **Kahlil Gibran** continue to impact their countries. The conference, held on the Beirut campus on November 6, was co-organized by LAU's School of Arts and Sciences and the Gibran National Committee. The event was divided into three sessions and focused on Gibran's "presence in different cultures and societies," and it featured speakers and moderators from Lebanon, Japan, Indonesia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Italy, Germany and France. It was called to coincide with the 125th anniversary of Gibran's birth.



The second annual **student photography** exhibition was held at LAU Byblos November 4–6 before moving to Beirut November 12–17. The exhibition featured 400 black-and-white photographs taken by 120 students. Organized by photography professor Bassam Lahoud and the newly established School of Architecture and Design, the exhibition focused on four themes: action, campus atmosphere, architectural detail, and portrait. The featured student photographers were from Lahoud's 2008–9 Photography I courses on both the Beirut and Byblos campuses. The four themes were chosen to relate to the different majors of the photography students, who come from various backgrounds including graphic design, architecture, communication arts and fine arts.





Photo by Riham Hassan on display at the student photography exhibition in November

(Left-to-right) Students perform traditional dances at LAU's stand during the Beirut Marathon in December

LAU students pose with Dr. Joseph Jabbra during the Beirut Marathon in December

Students inspect photos at the From Borromini to Botta: History, Heritage and New Technologies exhibition
Art & Culture

Dr. Homa Katouzian, an Iranian-born professor in the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Oxford University, examined European liberalisms versus concepts of liberty in Iran, as well as the works of the late Forugh Farrokhzad, a well-known female Iranian poet, in two separate presentations at LAU Beirut on November 18 and 19. Katouzian's first presentation on November 18, "European Liberalisms and Modern Concepts of Liberty in Iran," was based on a comparative study, which contrasted the ideas and forms of liberty that emerged from the late 17th century onward in Europe with the concepts of liberty in Iran during the latter half of the 19th century. The following day Katouzian held a seminar on Farrokhzad, believed by literary experts to be one of the country's most influential female writers in the 20th century. Both events were organized by the Graduate Program in Comparative Literature at LAU's Humanities Department.





On November 18 and 19, the **Common Ground Film Festival** came to LAU Byblos to share various films intended to get youths to think critically about issues surrounding violence and conflict resolution. The visit was part of the festival's tour of 12 schools and eight universities throughout Lebanon. Based around the theme "Truth and Reconciliation," the festival revealed stories of rapprochement between former enemies and warring factions in Lebanon and other parts of the world. The event—organized by Search for Common Ground, an international conflict-prevention and resolution NGO, and the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, its local partner—was hosted by the university's Institute for Peace and Justice Education at the Selina Korban Auditorium. The festival started on October 5 and concluded with an event at the Dowar Al Shams Theater in Shiyah December 10–12.

On December 1, Swanee Hunt, lecturer in public policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and former U.S. Ambassador to Austria, paid a visit to LAU Beirut for a lecture entitled **"Political Progress of Women: Breaking Traditional Barriers."** She called on women to be more actively involved in politics and run for public office. Hunt, who began her talk by citing statistics showing trends in the number of female office-holders in national assemblies worldwide, revealed that the United States, surprisingly, is among countries with the lowest proportion of female office-holders, with just 17 percent. Hunt told the audience that while Lebanon and much of the world face challenges in getting women into leadership roles, many viable strategies exist for advancement on that front.



LAUmagazine & Alumni Bulletin

Health for Lebanon



The No Apathy Pharmacy and Health Awareness Student Society (NAPHASS), in collaboration with the Guidance Office-Byblos, held its first **Pharmacy Day** this year on November 6. The event aimed to educate the LAU community on effective drug use and the current Influenza A (H1N1) epidemic. Pharmacy students carried out a series of awareness-raising activities on the Byblos campus. The event included a new campaign, "The Flu and You," related to the current epidemic, in addition to the "Educate Before You Medicate" campaign, which offered information about safe medication use. Pharmacy students shed light on the signs and symptoms, prevention, vaccination and treatment of the virus, as well as the history of pandemics and pathophysiology. Healthy drinks, fruit and hand sanitizers were also distributed to passers-by.

In two December 1 lectures at LAU Byblos, held in observance of **World AIDS Day,** the LAU School of Medicine, Health Services, and the Guidance Office – Byblos animated discussions concerning HIV in Lebanon. Invited speakers included Dr. Jacques Mokhbat, chair of the department of medicine at Lebanese University, and Dr. Mona Haidar, LAU medical school faculty member in the field of social medicine. Mokhbat said Lebanon is heading toward "concentrated" AIDS outbreaks among homosexuals and drug users who share needles, if a trend of increased infections continues, while Haidar presented the global HIV epidemic as a human rights issue, linking the spread of the disease to issues of fear, stigma and discrimination.



Climbing on Campus



Students with a taste for adventure had the chance to participate in thrilling activities at an LAU Byblos event on October 23. Organized for the fifth consecutive year by the university's **Extreme Club**, with the help of the Guidance Office – Byblos, the event featured a rock-climbing wall outside the cafeteria, where students gathered to watch their peers ascend the 20-meter-high structure. Students took turns climbing their way to the top of the wall. There was also a crane lifting students high above the ground, from where they made a careful descent using ropes. More than 50 students took advantage of the opportunity.

Live Science

A dozen LAU biology students shared their scientific knowledge about diseases, cells and organs with visitors of all ages at LAU's stand during the second annual **"Science Days"** event, held October 14–17 at the Beirut Hippodrome. Visitors to LAU's stand were invited to view tiny samples of bone, skin and stomach cell tissues under microscopes. Last year, LAU chemistry students participated in the same event, which was attended by 13,000 people over three days. Sponsored and run by the Swiss Embassy, the Municipality of Beirut, and the Lebanese Ministry of Culture, the event this year featured around 30 stands where demos were presented by various universities, schools, research centers and organizations.



Learning Forums



A lecture entitled **"From Borromini to Botta: History, Heritage and New Technologies,"** by distinguished Lebanese-Swiss architect and professor Dr. Georges Abou Jaoudé, attracted a huge audience at LAU's Beirut campus on October 20. The event illustrated how architecture can transcend time, and examined the evolution of architecture over the centuries. The lecture, which revealed techniques to preserve the "flesh and feel" of an image or architectural piece while using modern technology, was followed by the opening of a linked exhibit. The events were part of a series of activities by the Italian Cultural Institute to celebrate "Italian Language in the World."



On October 5, LAU's Center for Lebanese Heritage opened its series of activities for this academic year with a panel discussion titled **"The Phoenician Tyre: Peace Carrier to the Mediterranean."** The event—dedicated to Tyre, the ancient coastal city in South Lebanon—brought together Maha al-Khalil Shalabi, head of the office of the International Committee for the Safeguarding of Tyre in Lebanon, and Dr. Antoine Kassis, professor of ancient history and Semitic languages at the Lebanese University. They discussed Tyre's Phoenician history, impact on the development of the Phoenician civilization, and links to Canaanite, Punic and other Phoenician cities.

From September 27 to 29, a group of 20 professors, researchers and professionals from different regions of Europe came together at LAU to examine current trends in simulation research in the Arab world as part of the **Middle East Simulation Multi-conference 2009.** MESM, a regional project established and sponsored by the European



Multidisciplinary Society for Modeling and Simulation Technology, has been running annually since 1999. This year marked the first time EUROSIS held the conference in Lebanon—with the support of De Montfort University in Leicester and IEEE UKRI–SPC—and chose LAU to host it. The conference was divided into five sessions with distinct themes: simulation methodology and tools, simulation and artificial intelligence, communication network simulation, complex systems simulation, and industrial simulation.



LAU hosts Blackboard seminar on enhancing education through technology

Responding to the swiftly evolving technological needs of new generations of students requires innovation and awareness. To that end, on October 22, 2009, LAU's IT Department hosted a daylong seminar by leading online education software company Blackboard and its regional partner ISB.

Through cutting-edge digital and online technologies, Blackboard provides services and software that aim at enhancing educational access and relevance on a global scale. At LAU, the use of Blackboard's tools by staff has more than tripled in the past three years, increasing from 26 faculty members in 56 courses in 2006 to 83 faculty members and 159 courses in 2009.

Participants at the event debated strategies for integrating technology into educational methods. Several LAU faculty members gave presentations on the ways in which technology enables more creativity and flexibility in the learning and teaching processes.

LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra gave an address in which he emphasized the importance of collaboration between the government, higher education institutions and IT service providers in responding to the growing needs of society.

More specifically, he mentioned the way in which technology improves access to university for students from underprivileged economic backgrounds. "One must level with the reality of today when a lot of students ... cannot afford to come to the campus," he said. "Therefore, it is not only our responsibility, but our obligation to take the campus to them."

The seminar was the first of its kind to be held in Lebanon. Similar Blackboard events took place in Bahrain in 2008 and Dubai in 2007.



LAU conference pioneers debate on the standards of higher education in the region

On November 6 and 7, 2009, LAU's Center for Program Learning and Assessment (CPLA) organized a conference entitled "Program and Learning Assessment in Higher Education."

Among the more than 100 participants in attendance were representatives from universities across the Middle East and the United States. The attendees discussed best practices for assessing and improving the quality of courses offered by higher education institutions. They also broached the issue of teacher training, with some participants noting that university academics tend to receive more training in research than in teaching.

The conference was deemed a success in that it not only raised awareness about educational standards across the region, but it also provided a dynamic forum for networking among Lebanese and Arab universities in order to further future efforts in this field.

One attendee, LAU associate professor Nahla Bacha, assistant dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at the Byblos campus and a member of CPLA, emphasized LAU's significant contribution to higher education in the region. She described CPLA as "unique," adding, "I don't think there's any other [Middle Eastern] university that has this."

The conference marked the third of a six-part series of events geared toward improving standards in higher education throughout the Middle East. The series comprised two workshops, one in December 2008 and another in April 2009, and will include two more in 2010. A concluding seminar is also planned for later next year. Financial backing for the events was secured through a \$200,000 donation from the Ford Foundation and supported by the Levant Brothers.

Top Scholars Honored



On November 12 and 13, LAU's 83 **merit scholars** were honored in separate ceremonies on each campus. The number of new merit scholars this year increased from around five to around 20 per campus. The students with merit scholarships are accepted based on merit and high grades, and they receive full tuition coverage as long as they maintain high GPAs. At both ceremonies, LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra and Vice President for Enrollment Management Elise Salem gave short speeches honoring and encouraging the students, after which students, faculty, upper management and staff mingled over snacks.

Learning to Eat (Well)



On October 21, LAU Byblos celebrated **World Food Day**, which is observed worldwide on October 16. More than 1000 traditional Lebanese "kakeh" breads were prepared by 11 of LAU's student clubs in Byblos, in an effort to symbolically show solidarity with the needy people of Lebanon. Profits from sales were donated to the charity organization "Mission de Vie."

A week later, at the **"Healthy Eating, Healthy Living"** event on the Beirut campus, hospitality management students offered handmade sandwiches, desserts and drinks to the LAU community to promote healthy eating habits. The event, which featured informative stands and posters about nutrition, was organized by the Guidance Office in Beirut in collaboration with LAU's Hospitality Management Program.

Science and Mathematics



Three LAU students came in sixth out of a total of 45 teams at the **Arab and North Africa Regional Programming Contest**, held November 22–24 in Alexandria, Egypt. Raja Baz, Rashad Kabbara and Amer Mouawad's team, the Sailors, was the more experienced of two teams from LAU to compete. The Stars team includes Marwan Fawaz, Karim Jahed and Hussein Mohsen, all of whom have just completed their first year at LAU. The teams performed so impressively at the competition—a qualifying round to the ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest—that LAU has been granted the opportunity to host next year's regional ANARC–ICPC contest, to be held in November.



Around 40 people from Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Lebanon attended LAU's first **Middle East Mathematica Conference** on the Beirut campus November 13-14. The conference highlighted the impact of Mathematica, a mathematics software produced and managed by Wolfram Research, on various areas such as engineering, finance and education. Organized by LAU's Computer Science and Mathematics Department in Beirut and by Wolfram Research, the event featured a workshop and lectures by experts from Lebanon and Europe.



LAU hosts seminar of renowned Arab women writers

On November 10, LAU's School of Arts and Sciences, in conjunction with the university's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) and Diwan Ahl el Kalam, organized a seminar entitled "Dialogue on the Arabic Novel and Poem" at LAU Beirut's Gulbenkian Theatre.

The event, held as part of a series of celebrations marking Beirut as the UNESCO World Book Capital for 2009, gathered 11 renowned women writers and poets representing countries in North Africa, the Levant and the Gulf.

In addition to their literary merits, many of the participants have assumed important positions in the political and social landscape of their countries, as ministers, unionists or key figures in national media organizations.

The seminar combined discussions about the textual portrayal of women in novels and poems with debates about broader social, economic and political issues facing women in the region. Some participants acknowledged that although they faced gender-based discrimination, attitudes toward women were slowly changing for the better. Another significant theme was the way in which women's experiences and struggles differed from country to country, and how such plurality and diversity added richness to their common goals and reinforced their sense of solidarity.

One audience member, Dr. Aman Kabbara Shaarani, an LAU alumna and president of the Lebanese Council of Women and the National Committee for the Follow-up of Women's Issues, lauded LAU's commitment to supporting women's causes. "This is natural," she said, "as it started out as a women's college."

For updates on LAU news and events please visit **www.lau.edu.lb**



THE LEGACY & THE PROMISE CAMPAIGN



Heavenly Light II (detail), by Adel Saghir (Acrylic and gold leaf, Courtesy Richard Heath)

"Today, giving can mean different things to different people." —Richard Rumsey, Vice President of Development



Alternative Giving

By LAU Staff

When we hear about people donating to causes they consider important, we usually assume the gifts are in cash. But nowadays, the forms of giving are diversifying. Lebanese American University, like any organization that relies on the generosity of others to help support its mission, takes a broader view when it comes to donations.

"Not all donations are cash, and we welcome any and all support that people generously provide to the university," said Richard Rumsey, vice president of university advancement at LAU. "Today, giving can mean different things to different people. For some it can mean writing us a check, but to others it can mean giving us a paid-up life insurance plan that they no longer need, or some other creative gift."

Donating stock is another example of a different way to make a valuable contribution to the university. From life insurance and appreciated securities to retirement plans and trusts, such financial instruments can provide a valuable gift to any organization, and they can also often provide a greater tax benefit than gifts of cash.

"Gifts of stock not only benefit LAU but can have significant advantages for the donor, who may otherwise be liable for taxes on any increase in the stock's value from the time of purchase," said Robert Hollback, assistant vice president for development. "Under normal circumstances, a donor can avoid these capital gains taxes by donating the stock directly to LAU."

But gifts can also take the shape of something completely different.

In 2007, New York City-based doctor Richard Heath donated a painting called "Heavenly Light II" from his personal collection. The large acrylic and gold leaf work, which is housed in LAU's New York office, was produced by the Lebanese artist and sculptor Adel Saghir, who now lives in the United States. The painting was professionally appraised at a value of \$15,000. In addition to its visual appeal, the work is an investment for the university that could potentially gain significantly in value in the years to come.

Over the past 10 years, LAU has also received approximately 142 gifts in kind, ranging from book donations and lectures to computers and sports uniforms.

"Gifts of stock not only benefit LAU, but can have significant advantages for the donor." —Robert Hollback, AVP of Development, North America RAISED **\$41.211.006**





"This gift of computers, in many ways, is providing more direct support for LAU's students than a gift of cash would."

> -Samir Kadi, Assistant Vice President for Development

Lana Abou Teen, assistant director of development, recently secured a gift of 20 laptop computers that will be loaned out to students from the library.

"This gift of computers, in many ways, is providing more direct support for LAU's students than a gift of cash would," said Samir Kadi, assistant vice president for development. "It is giving direct support to our students exactly where they need it."

There are other ways for donors to provide valuable support to the university through in-kind donations, and conducting a sale on eBay is one example. A donor can place a specific item for sale on eBay and stipulate that the money from the sale be donated directly to LAU. This is a simple way for donors who do not wish to give cash to turn their in-kind donations into direct support to the university. It also has the added bonus of providing valuable exposure to LAU to a large group of potential buyers on eBay.

"Like so many organizations do today, LAU welcomes a broad approach when it comes to support," Rumsey said. "The important thing is that people are continuing to join with a meaningful cause in whatever way they can do it best."





Conference room dedicated to Jamil B. Iskandar, late LAU board member By LAU Staff

Family and friends of the late Jamil Iskandar, a long-time LAU Board of Trustees member, honored him with the unveiling of a new conference room dedicated to his memory during a dedication gathering at LAU Byblos on December 16, just over one year after his death.

Plans were set to establish the Jamil B. Iskandar Conference Room in the Byblos Science Building in August 2009 by members of Iskandar's family.

"Jamil Iskandar was everywhere, not only in terms of business, but in terms of cultural presence, social presence, and community presence," said Joseph Jabbra during a short ceremony before the unveiling.

Iskandar, who died of cancer on December 8, 2008, led several successful businesses in Lebanon, and was associated with many universities in the country. He dedicated much of his personal time to serving the community through his involvement in various foundations.

"He was involved in so many community activities," Jabbra said, "but the most dear to his heart was education."

In 1978, Iskandar founded the Louaizeh College for Higher Education in Zouk Mosbeh.

From 1983 until his death, Iskandar held a number of positions at LAU, including membership on the Board of Overseers. At various times he also served as a member, vice-chairman and chairman of the Board of Trustees.

"His service to LAU was not utilitarian," said Benny Iskandar, Jamil's son, during the ceremony. "It had nothing to do with recognition or prestige. It was, plain and simple, a labor of love, a sense of civic duty, and an appreciation of science and education."

From 1987 until 1994, Iskandar also served as a member and chairman of the Board of Overseers at Notre Dame University. He served as a member of its Board of Trustees from 1994 until his death. At Iskandar's Alma Mater, the American University of Beirut, he served on the College Hall Fundraising Committee. He also served as vice-chairman of the Students Scholarship Fund Raising Committee at AUB from 1997 until his death.

"He had no hidden agendas or ulterior motives," Benny Iskandar said. "Instead, he looked people straight in the eye and spoke his mind. For many of us, he was simply the kindest of men—the man with the biggest heart."

The dedication ceremony was attended by many local officials, as well as senior management at LAU.

"He was involved in so many community activities. But the most dear to his heart was education." —Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra, LAU President LAUmagazine & Alumni Bulletin



Fil Rayess





Honey Al Sayyed not only hosts her own show, "Good Morning Syria," but is considered the "Oprah of Syria," and has been featured on the cover of the Los Angeles Times as the host of the nation's hottest radio show.

"It's not the university that is showing its appreciation for them; it's alumni showing appreciation for each other." —Abdallah Al Khal, Director of Alumni Relations

Tala Sinno



Alumni Awards Around the World

Thanks to LAU's alumni awards, graduates around the world have a chance to celebrate their peers with the help of the university. All alumni are invited to nominate other graduates for the Recognition Award, which is granted to those who have made significant accomplishments in business or professional life or who have distinguished themselves in human service to their community or country. Alumni are also invited to nominate other graduates for the Achievement Award, which is given to those who have made an outstanding contribution to their alma mater.

The awards were initiated in 2008 to encourage alumni to appreciate and support each other's successes, said Alumni Relations Director Abdallah Al Khal. "It's not the university that is showing its appreciation for them; it's alumni showing appreciation for each other," he explained. The two previous awards ceremonies have received noteworthy media coverage on TV and in newspapers.

Last year, award winners Honey Al Sayyed ('97) and Hala Jabr ('57) were celebrated at the alumni dinner during the Homecoming Weekend in July. The Achievement Award was presented to Al Sayyed for her accomplishments as a radio host. Al Sayyed not only hosts her own show, "Good Morning Syria," but is considered the "Oprah of Syria," and has been featured on the cover of the Los Angeles Times as the host of the nation's hottest radio show.

The 2009 Recognition Award was presented to Hala Jabr for her contributions to LAU as well as her work outside the university as the president of the Red Cross blood bank in Lebanon. "LAU taught us how to blend in a community with various cultures; it helped us develop freedom of speech with a sense of humor, of course, and showed us the true concept of democracy," said Jabr during her thank you speech.

Previous winners have included other high achievers. Tala Sinno received the Achievement Award in 2008 for her work as the founder of children's organization Toufoula, which she started with several other LAU alumni. Diala Fil Rayess—founder of Tamanna children's organization—was honored with the same award that year. It was the only time an exception was made and two winners were chosen for the award. The 2008 Recognition Award was given to Saad El Zein, the managing director of Abraj Property Developers and the president of the Dubai and Northern Emirates Alumni Chapter.

This year, nominations are due between February and April and can be made by replying with information about the nominees to an email that the Alumni Relations Office sends to all LAU alums. Once nominations are in, a selection committee with representatives from the Alumni Relations Office, Alumni Association Board, Student Development and Enrollment Management and Academic Affairs will evaluate them. Award winners will be honored at the 2010 alumni weekend this summer.

The Alumni Relations Office is also considering the development of additional awards in the future.

Alumni News

Huda Abdel Baki Kantar (B.A.'58) is currently living near the polar circle in Lulea, Sweden. She has worked in the town's communal library and has taught French. English and art. She also worked in translation and sat on the municipal council between 1998 and 2006. After residing in Sweden for many years, she is planning to move back to her home country of Lebanon this year.

Bassam Tohme (B.S.'83, M.B.A.'95) will be starting construction in Aein Saade in 2010. He has two children, Carole and Carl.

Salim Takieddine (B.S.'86) started General Line International (GLI) in 2004, and is currently the chairman and general manager.

Nada Abdel Samad (B.S.'90) works as the regional manager at Orbit Showtime Pay TV Network. She is married and has four children: two boys and two girls.

Amal Khatib (B.A.'90) opened a new shop that specializes in cake making, cake decoration and 3D creations.

Tarek Ayass (B.S.'93, M.B.A.'95) received his doctorate in business administration from the University of Phoenix. He worked as a part-time instructor at LAU's Business School from 1998 to 2000. He has recently been named Middle East regional director for GE HealthCare IT Business, located in Dubai, where he lives with his family. He and his wife, Ola Al Shakhshir (B.S.'00), have two children.





Aad Makhoul (B.S'97) Samar completed her M.B.A. at the University of Liverpool and her postgraduate certificate in education from the University of Sunderland. She works as the head of ICT at the British International School, in addition to being a certified examiner

with the CIE and IBO boards. She is married to Elias Makhoul, a mechanical engineer, and they have one daughter, Bella, who is five years old. The family has been living in Jeddah since 2002.

Nisrine Abu Mrad Tadros (B.S.'97) currently lives in Cairo with her husband and two daughters. She works as a freelance trainer for managerial soft skills.

Nada Nehme Mansour (A.A.'97, B.A.'98) taught for 10 years in American schools in Lebanon and UAE, and is now devoting herself to her family. She is married and has two children, and she lives with her family in Dubai.



Ruba el Amine (A.A.S.'98, B.S.'03), upon graduating from LAU in 2003, spent the next several years teaching at the university level. In the spring of the 2008-09 academic year, el Amine was promoted to the position of chairperson of LIU's Fine Arts and Design Department, which encompasses the university's five campuses.

Raef Hachache (R.C.D.'99, A.A.S.'01) married Nadine Marashli (B.A.'04) on September 23, 2009.



Rania Zghir (B.A.'99), after graduation from LAU, completed her M.A. in educational psychology at AUB. In 2000, she began her career as an author of children's books. Twenty-seven of her books have been published, and in 2007, she started her own publishing house. Al Khavvat Al Saghir. In addition to this, she also serves as vice president of the Children's Book Publishers' Association in Lebanon

Minas Missirian (External Degree '00) has a love for cars, which led him to create Milcar immediately after graduation. He describes it as an automotive freelance business that trades in 20 car brands, including "avant premieres" and supercars.



Wael Sharif (B.S.'00) is currently the food and beverage director at the Sheraton Riyadh Hotel and Towers. He is married to Dana El Kaissi.

Nisreen Wehbe (B.S.'00, M.B.A.'03) is presently living in Oman with her husband and their one-and-a-half-year-old son. Ali, Wehbe served as a volunteer for the LAU chapter in Oman but will be moving to Jeddah shortly.

Maya Harb Najem (B.E.'02) is the procurement manager and head of human resources at Phoenix Machinery. She married Elie Nejem on December 26, 2008.

Alia Noueihed Nohra (B.S.'02) opened "Art Circle: Visual Arts Space" in Beirut in October 2009.





Mounir Sharif (B.S.'02), after graduating from LAU, worked for British American Tobacco (BAT) in Beirut as a trade marketing representative. In 2008, after four years of working for BAT, he decided to move to Dubai to gain experience in the Gulf. He currently works for Coca-Cola, handling key accounts.

Dana Shdeed Sayyour (B.E.'02) married Saleh Sayyour on July 5, 2008. They met on a plane and were engaged that same year. The couple welcomed baby daughter Souline in August 2009.

implementing the ISO 9001 requirements.





Rola Talih (B.S.'03) has been working for the past three years as a business process analyst for the Qatar Financial Centre Authority in the Ministry of Economy and Commerce in Doha. She is also a lead auditor for ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 27001:2005. She was recently presented with the "Shukran" Award for excellent performance in

Karim Okais (B.A.'04) received his M.B.A. from the ESSEC Business School in Cergy, France. Since September 2008, he has been working as an external auditor for PricewaterhouseCoopers in Paris.

Vicken Pehlivanian (B.S.'04) is currently pursuing his M.B.A. at LAU. He was promoted to branch manager of Formatech in Antelias, and he launched his own web design company, Alienative.net.



Hadi Zakhem (B.E.'04) is the territory manager at the Oracle Corporation. He married Rawia Jeitani on September 12, 2009, and they are now living in Dubai.

Charbel Deek (B.S.'05) founded CS Trading SARL in February 2009 with LAU alumni Shada I. Kobrossi. More information about the company can be found on the following website: www.cstrading-lb.com.

Alain Hasrouny (B.A.'05) graduated from Tufts University in Boston with an M.A. in international business. He returned to Beirut in September and is pursuing job opportunities.



Grace Makaroon (M.B.A.'05) recently got married and is living with her husband in Boston, where she is seeking employment in the business/retail field.

Lucine Missirian (B.S.'05, M.B.A.'07) is the assistant general manager of Armico, her family's business. She recently married Talal Naim, an architect.





Samer Zeinni (B.S.'05) married Roula Saleh (B.A.'05). The couple recently had a daughter and named her Yara.

Dina Aylabouni (B.A.'06) is currently working as a segment director for Abu Dhabi TV.



Zaher Hallab (B.S.'06) married Judy Halaby on September 23, 2009.

Maya Itani (B.S.'06) currently works as an application support analyst at the IS department at Inkript in Lebanon. In May 2008, she married Omar Shourbaji, and she gave birth to a son, Walid, this past summer.



Ali Kodeih (B.S.'06) moved to Paris upon graduation and earned his master's in art directing and advertising creativity from Sup de Pub-INSEEC. He recently launched "Life is a Cabaret by A.K.," a new production house in Verdun-Plaza 1. It specializes in art directing, graphic design and fashion.

Kamel Taljeh (B.E.'06) is currently working for a design firm with Khatib and Alami in Beirut.



Karim Tawil (B.S. '06) recently opened a new branch of Dardachat, a café and restaurant, in Ain Mreisse.



Mohamed Abboud (B.S.'07) has been named to the position of procurement professional for IBM in the Middle East.

Rami Abi Sleiman (B.S.'07) is working as a recruitment and selection officer for Bank Audi.



Charbel Antonios (B.E.'07) has been working in Dubai for EMC, an American multinational company. He covers the UAE and Kuwaiti markets.

Johnny Karout (B.E.'07) obtained his M.Sc. in communication engineering from Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden, where he is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in the same field.





Rima Khalil (B.S.'07) has been working as an account executive with the International Consulting & Training Network (ICTN) since May 2008.

Manale Maalouf (B.S.'07) is pursuing her Ph.D. in chemical engineering from Case Western Reserve University in the U.S., and is specializing in the alternative energy field. She recently took part in the 216th



international conference of the ElectroChemical Society (ECS) in Vienna, where she won first place for her poster presentation.

Hani Farchoukh (B.E.'08) is currently living in Saudi Arabia, between Jeddah and Thuwal. He works on the construction team at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST).



Saad Sraj (B.S.'08) recently opened his own marketing and advertising company, called GlobalMind. For more information, visit www.GlobalMind-lb.com.

Hadi Yassine (B.S.'08) worked at Fresh World International as a sales manager after graduating. He is currently a sales executive for Mitsubishi Motors in Kuwait.



Mohanad Mohamad Zebib (B.S.'08) is based in Jeddah, where he is employed at his family's workshop.













Alumni Events

New Student Orientation Program

At the New Student Orientation Program this October, the Alumni Relations Office launched its inaugural involvement in helping to welcome future alumni to LAU. A souvenir and brochure were presented to new students, introducing the Alumni Association and how it can benefit them after graduation.

Montreal Chapter Party

On September 26, the Montreal Alumni Chapter held its first official activity since the election of the committee. More than 60 LAU graduates, along with their family and friends, attended the party at Al Siwar restaurant in Montreal, Quebec. The crowd had dinner, enjoyed each other's company and danced the traditional Lebanese "dabkeh."

Northern California Chapter Banquet

The Northern California Alumni Chapter organized its First Annual Banquet on October 3 at Tannourine Restaurant. The event was a great success.



Athens Chapter "Salsa Night"

More than 750 alumni and friends attended the Athens Alumni Chapter's "Salsa Night," held on October 17. The night featured Lebanese singer Hanine and her band "Hanine Y Son Cubano." Attendees enjoyed Hanine's exceptional voice and the nostalgic Arabic songs, and danced the night away to the salsa and cha-cha rhythms.

Alumni Relations Office Trip to Rashaya

A group of around 35 alumni enjoyed an October 25 trip to Rashaya, organized by the Alumni Relations Office. The group had breakfast together at Ecolodge Taanayel before walking through the Rashaya souk to reach the Rashaya Citadel, where they had a lunch prepared by the Women's Cooperative of Wadi Al Taym. The trip ended with a wine-tasting visit to the Lebanese winery "Caves de Ksara."

Lecture About Reiki on Beirut Campus

On November 6, the Alumni Relations Office organized a lecture about reiki at the Business Building, Beirut campus. About 100 alumni and friends attended the lecture, which was presented by Lebanese reiki practitioner Farida Khizam, a graduate in pharmacy from the University of South Australia who branched out into complementary medicine and has a master's level in reiki. The event was followed by a reception.

Riyadh Chapter "Tarab Night"

The Riyadh Alumni Chapter organized "Tarab Night" on November 13 at the Lebanese Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. More than 200 alumni and friends attended the gathering.

Remembered With Love



Ziad Beiruty (1938-2009)

Ziad Beiruty—former LAU professor at the School of Arts and Sciences in Beirut passed away in November 2009.

One of the first graduates of Lebanese University's Institut des Beaux-Arts, Beiruty studied interior design under some of the most renowned designers in Lebanon during its golden age in the 1960s. He began teaching at LAU (then BUC) during the 1986-7 academic year and retired last year at the age of 70. He taught with great determination in the university's strenuous years during the Lebanese Civil War, and was well loved by students and fellow faculty members alike. Beiruty was always ready to help his department, teaching as many courses as necessary to accommodate demand from students in interior design, arts and architecture.

The beloved professor passed away after complications from a heart operation. He had been suffering from heart problems for more than a decade, and in the mid-1990s he was once taken to the hospital by his students. Beiruty is survived by his wife and a daughter, who graduates from LAU this year.



Margaret Flory (1914-2009)

Margaret Flory, a visionary Presbyterian leader who created several seminal programs connecting Christians around the world, died on October 1 in Asheville, North Carolina. She was 95.

Flory spent more than three decades on the national staff of the former United Presbyterian Church (USA). During that time she founded such programs as the Junior Year Abroad for college students, Frontier Interns (which sent Presbyterian mission workers to unreached areas), Frontiers in Mission (a similar program that still operates out of Switzerland), the Overseas Scholarship Program (which brought foreign teachers and pastors to the U.S. to study), and Bi-National Servants, a program for people who have lived in two cultures and want to share that experience in a third.

The Junior Year Abroad (JYA) program was founded in 1953, when few U.S. colleges offered overseas study. The program brought many young American women to Beirut College for Women (BCW) as JYA students in the 1950s and 1960s. Throughout her life, Flory was a great friend of BCW, BUC and LAU.

UPCOMING EVENTS—Mark Your Calendar!

- **February 12** Poetry Reading/Singing: poems from Dr. Fouad Rifka's latest book, Irwin Theatre, Beirut Campus, 6:30 p.m.
- February 18 English Creative Writing Workshop, presented by LAU's Center for Lebanese Heritage. Creative writing techniques, challenging writer's block, and inspiration vs. perspiration. Beirut campus, 6:30 p.m.
- > February 24 Houston Alumni gathering and meeting with Abdallah Alkhal and Ed Shiner
- February 26 28 Annual National Gathering of Alumni, Las Vegas, NV
- > March 1 Southern California Alumni Chapter gathering with Abdallah Alkhal and Ed Shiner

- March 4 Oman Alumni Chapter Annual Gala Dinner, Grand Hyatt, Muscat, 8:30 p.m.
- March 22 26 The 25th ACM Symposium on Applied Computing (SAC 2010), Chaired by LAU Professor Dr. Ramzi A. Haraty, Division of Computer Science. Sierre, Switzerland
- > April 7 World Health Day
- > April 8 Arabic Creative Writing Workshop presented by LAU's Center for Lebanese Heritage, Beirut campus
- > April 30 Inaugural Gala Evening, Presented by the New York Office of LAU, University Club, New York, N.Y.

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Once a year, make a gift of any amount to the LAU Annual Fund. Every gift makes a difference including yours.

THE LEGACY **CALL** & THE **PROMISE** LAU CAMPAIGN FOR EXCELLENCE Why I Give Back Tarek Fawaz, '84

WHY I GIVE BACK



Tarek Fawaz, '84

"It is the duty of every person to contribute in any way he can to institutions that help the advancement of future generations." DEGREE A.A./A.S., Personnel Management

CAMPUS Beirut

WHERE HE LIVES NOW Beirut

OCCUPATION

Owner/partner of Fawaz Holding SAL, a wholesale and retail sales and distribution company specializing in perfumes and cosmetics, spirits, electrical home appliances, and clothing. The group also has real estate interests in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.

WHY HE GIVES TO LAU

I give back to LAU because of my belief in supporting the institution that opened its doors for me to learn and develop myself.







Wilbert "Bill" Newton has enjoyed a long association with Lebanese American University. Bill has been giving his time and resources to LAU since the 1980s, when he was first appointed to the Board of Trustees of Beirut University College.





✤ WILBERT "BILL" NEWTON IS THE LEGACY AND THE PROMISE.



Today, as an Emeritus Trustee, Bill remains a strong advocate of LAU and represents an important link in the chain of University leadership over the years. At the same time, he continues to contribute generously to LAU and to stay abreast of University activities.

For more information, please contact:

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