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& ALUMNI BULLETIN





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Technologia Humanitas

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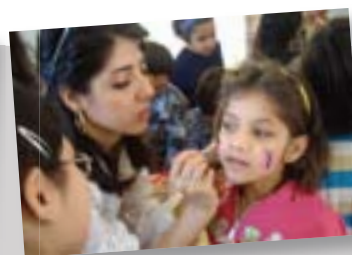
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"Romeo and Julia," performed at LAU in early March as part of the Al Bustan Festival



An LAU NAPHASS student paints faces at the SOS Children's Village in Kfarhay

Wherever You Go

LAU Magazine is your platform to share photos and news about yourself, your family and your friends. We encourage you to update us on your professional and personal activities and achievements—from wherever you are!



Help Tell Our History

We welcome news from alumni, friends, supporters and current and former faculty and staff representing all the university's current and former schools and colleges. Submit your stories and photos for inclusion in LAU's online and print publications.

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MEPI Tomorrow's Leaders students raised funds for Haiti in February on the Byblos campus

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From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

The advent of the personal computer, with the programs and networking abilities that make it come alive, was a revolutionary event. Thanks to this technology, our lives have changed in remarkable ways and our ability to handle our business, conduct research, make calculations and connect with others have all improved in ways that we never dreamed possible only a short while ago. In this issue of LAU Magazine, we will address some of these remarkable technological advances and look at how we at Lebanese American University are taking advantage of the remarkable opportunities that technology has afforded us.

Though the advances of the last three decades have fundamentally changed so much about how we connect and engage with one another, modern technology can still do more to enrich our lives and expand our understanding of the world. The use of computers for academic research and for teaching has become a prerequisite for institutions and organizations that engage in such endeavors, and we have taken note of this by using technology more directly. LAU students benefit from libraries, wireless internet access and smart classrooms that help important subjects come alive for the students inside. Professors can take advantage of the machines at their desks to make calculations that took far longer by hand or to connect with colleagues half way around the world.

Harnessing these tools and improving on them are essential for the generation of adults leaving higher education institutions now. Luckily, LAU already has examples of students who have been able to do this. Two of our alumni, Elie Khoury and Jad Younan, are responsible for Woopra, the successful website analysis firm that has helped its clients understand more about who is visiting their websites and why. We can also claim Georges Harik, one of the early employees of the famous technology firm Google.

Understanding how to use this technology to better improve commerce, recreation and knowledge is going to be a serious test for the world's newest graduates, just like it was for people like Elie, Jad, and George, and I wait with bated breath to see the results of these new endeavors.

Sincerely,



Joseph G. Jabbara
President





Women in Technology in the Middle East

By Brooke Anderson

In a man's world, technically

Lebanese women make gains in this male-dominated field, but equality is still a distant goal

Once Lama Baajour decided to study computer science, she then had to prove to everyone else that it was the right field for her.

"It was a challenge," recalled the 21-year-old LAU senior. "I always heard that only guys do computer science. They can get things faster, and they're more into computers—this mysterious machine."

After three years of studies, which have included becoming president of the LAU chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery, winning an award in computer science and working as an instructor for two semesters, she appears to have found her niche.

And she has faith that her peers can do the same. "Women have the ability, they're more patient, and they can manage time," Baajour said.

More and more women are entering the technology field, still largely a male-dominated sector.

"It's the women that are taking the initiative," said Ramzi Haraty, associate professor of computer science at the LAU school of Arts and Sciences, who has been involved in promoting women in technology through the Arab League. "If you ask their parents, they'd rather their daughters study the humanities."

"The best students are women," Haraty said. "They consistently win awards and perform better in computer science. They study and concentrate more."

Still, he predicted challenges ahead.

"It will take a lot for them to have equal representation in companies, probably at least a decade," he said.

Last spring, there were 11 women out of 30 total enrolled as master's students in LAU's IT department—a big difference from just several years ago, when women were a rarity in the department. Still, the number of women enrolled as first-year undergraduates this year is low, accounting for 13 out of a class of 121. This represents a ratio similar to the one seen in 1995.

"That's really bad," said Haraty, who seemed a bit taken aback as he looked at the student enrollment figures.

"It's the women that are taking the initiative."

—Ramzi Haraty, associate professor of computer science at the LAU school of Arts and Sciences

Worldwide, the rate of women pursuing careers in IT appears to be stagnating. In the United States, a pioneer in both women's rights and science, the National Science Foundation reported that women account for 46 percent of the labor force, but hold only 22 percent of the science jobs, including ones in the social sciences and teaching. Women still play minor roles in many high-tech occupations. For instance, they account for only 5 percent of computer programmers, 10 percent of system analysts and 10 percent of electronics technicians. Additionally, women lead only 5 to 6 percent of major high-tech companies in the Silicon Valley.

Perhaps the most alarming statistic is this: The number of women pursuing science and technology-related careers is decreasing. In 1984, women earned 37 percent of bachelor's degrees in computer science. But by 1995, this number had fallen to 28.4 percent, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. The downward trend may well continue if the issue is not addressed.

Throughout the Arab world, however, there appears to be an increase in the number of women pursuing degrees in technology. In fact, in science and engineering, enrollment numbers for women often exceed those in the United States. Women from the center of technology at Dubai University represented 39 of graduates in the academic year 2008-2009. At Dubai Women's College, 55 percent of the graduates had specialized in technology. In addition, 7.5 percent of graduates specialized in related fields.

Still, in general, few of these women go on to careers in science and engineering. In Egypt, for example, women hold nearly 50 percent of postgraduate positions in universities, but they occupy just 2 percent of high-level professional positions in science and technology, according to the Cairo-based Arab Science and Technology Foundation (ASTF).

"Even though I'm a woman, I don't think we'll see equality, especially in this domain,"

—Mira Hindawi, software manager at Geovision in Beirut and an LAU alumna

A number of reasons may account for why women do not tend to enter the field of technology. Probably most important is that the nature of the job often requires working overtime, a difficult requirement when raising children.

"Even though I'm a woman, I don't think we'll see equality, especially in this domain," said Mira Hindawi, a software manager at Geovision in Beirut who graduated from LAU in 2000.

"IT requires late hours, and that's difficult if you want to have a baby. That's why most companies prefer to hire men."

However, Hindawi added that one of the reasons she chose IT



LAU students work in an engineering lab

was because of the work opportunities. She was able to find a job shortly after graduation and has been with the same company ever since.

Another obstacle to Lebanese women pursuing IT is that some of the best jobs in the Middle East for computer experts can be found in the Gulf, where it's not always practical for women to travel or work.

"There aren't a lot of IT companies in Lebanon, and most women don't go to the Gulf alone," noted Mariette Awad, associate professor in AUB's electrical and computer engineering department. Nonetheless, Awad said she believes Lebanon offers equal opportunities for women.

Tania Zaroubi, senior ICT project manager at the office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform, agreed. "Here in Lebanon, I've never felt any discrimination," she said.

Zaroubi attended high school at IC (International College) in Beirut, where her classmates were mostly boys. From there, she earned a degree in computer science at the University of Essex in the UK, graduating in 1980. She was one of the few women in her class. Zaroubi said it was not until she went to Dubai that she felt real discrimination as a woman.

"In Dubai, as a woman, I felt like I had to fight more," she said. "There, the guys were able to get promoted more easily. In Lebanon, I never had that feeling."

Instead, Zaroubi said she finds that the main problem facing IT workers in Lebanon, regardless of gender, is low pay, compared with other white-collar professions such as banking. ☹️



A member of LAU's IT team

Maya Jajeh Arakji, a fellow ICT project manager at the ministry, said she thinks that the tendency for Lebanese men to go abroad for work might actually work in women's favor.

"With guys traveling from Lebanon, this gives us a good haven to prove ourselves," said Arakji.

Arakji said she believes Lebanon will change its laws to accommodate working mothers in all fields, including IT.

In many developed countries, maternity leave lasts three months, whereas in Lebanon it typically lasts one month, depending on the company. The shortened leave forces many women to return to work before they're ready to spend the day away from their newborns.

But possibly the most basic barrier is the reluctance of many young women to enroll in classes made up almost entirely of men.

Melissa Stockman, a Ph.D. student at AUB who previously worked as a software engineer in California, recalled that when she was doing her undergraduate and master's degrees, she was often the only woman in her class.

"It's a boy's club," she said. "When you get in, you're the only girl, and there's no one like you, or maybe one other person like you. I remember going through my career feeling strange being the only female in the room. Guys would act differently when it was almost all guys, as if I wasn't there. It can be embarrassing."

Stockman dislikes the idea of simply observing the number of women entering technology. To get more women working in IT, she believes the process of getting them more interested and involved should start as early as childhood.

"Computer games geared toward girls might spark an interest at an early age," she suggested.

In recent years, initiatives have been undertaken to encourage young women to enter the field of technology. For example, last year the ASTF organized the first conference for Arab Women in Science and Technology in Dubai, allowing young women to learn about education and employment trends as well as to meet a variety of panelists in the field. The next conference will be held at the University of Aleppo in Syria in November 2010.

Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, director of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World at LAU, makes a connection between the improvement of medical care for women (resulting from an increase in women doctors) and women in technology. As an example, she noted the decrease in hysterectomies over the past several decades.

"I assume that having more women in technology would not only lead to equal opportunities," she said, "but also affect content. If [programmers are] thinking about women, they might be more sensitive."

Mohamad Daher, a 2004 graduate of LAU's computer science department, who founded Warmstudios the same year, has a woman programmer working for him, and he acknowledged that he is not among a majority in his field.



"This is something you don't normally see," Daher says. "Usually those who do programming start with video games. It has to do with hobbies."

Mariette Awad is determined to put Lebanese women in technology on the map, by encouraging that they both enter the profession and develop innovative ideas. For example, she is working on a patent for a device that would send advertisements from shops within a certain vicinity to mobile phones.

"We try to come up with creative solutions to improve people's lives, and we can make something that can be applied anywhere else in the world."

—Mariette Awad, associate professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, American University of Beirut

"We don't have lot of resources in Lebanon," said Awad. "But we try to come up with creative solutions to improve people's lives, and we can make something that can be applied anywhere else in the world."

Awad, who spent much of her career in the United States, said she would sometimes hear her country referred to disparagingly.

"This negative image of Lebanon compels me," she said. "I want to show that we're a country with some cool ideas." ■

"With guys traveling from Lebanon, this gives us a good haven to prove ourselves."

—Maya Jajeh Arakji, ICT Manager, Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform





Sustainable Energy, Technology and Pollution in Lebanon and the Middle East

by Marc Abizeid

The cause is simple, the effects devastating.

As more and more people are aware, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and other greenhouse gases being released into the atmosphere are trapping solar radiation, which is increasing Earth's temperature.

Melting ice caps are leading to a rise in sea levels, which have begun to erode coastlines while diluting the concentration of salt in our oceans—a process that threatens the ocean habitats.

Almost on a daily basis, meteorologists are reporting record-high temperatures across the globe. And while climate change is affecting every corner of the world, people living in warm and dry regions like the Middle East and the sub-Sahara find themselves struggling more than others to cope with the rising temperatures.

"People living in cold places are benefiting from global warming," said Dr. Ahmad Hour, associate professor of chemistry at LAU, during a recent two-hour conference on climate change. "Those who should be worried about the situation are us."

Hour was selected last year as the Euro Arab Chair for Renewable Energies by the Granada-based Euro Arab Foundation for Higher Studies. He warned of impending droughts in Lebanon, raising fears that the country may soon lose its only natural resource: fresh water.

This concern was echoed during the conference by Minister of the Environment Mohamad Rahhal.

"Alone, I can't do anything," Rahhal said. "The minister[s] of energy, of agriculture: They can't do anything alone." 🌱

"We wanted to...devise a way for these communities and olive oil mills to not only curb pollution, but to also earn benefits."

—Fuad Hashwa, dean of LAU's School of Arts and Sciences—
Byblos



A Toyota Prius hybrid on display at the LAU Beirut campus

So what's the solution? It's the burning question with no convenient answer.

As a tiny country with only around four million people, Lebanon's contribution to global warming is a drop in the bucket. But that's not stopping local activists and academics from speaking up and taking action to protect the environment.

The dual challenge activists face is the apathy of the general public on the one hand, and the difficulty of convincing the government to recognize and prioritize environmental issues on the other.

"In the region, you have a lot of other priorities, especially when faced with political instability and security issues," said Dr. May Jurdi, professor of environmental health sciences at AUB. "When it comes to the question of where to direct your resources, environmental concerns are not really focused on."

Sustainability of energy and water resources is a continuing issue.

"You can never be 100 percent sustainable," Jurdi said, "but you can at least have a goal."

The largest emissions of greenhouse gases in Lebanon come from transportation, which accounts for more than 40 percent of the overall gases leaked into the atmosphere. Transportation is followed by the energy industry, at about 25 percent.

Manufacturing industries and construction are next at about 20 percent, while the others each account for under 5 percent.

To reduce harmful emissions from automobiles, Houri and others have proposed a system to reward drivers of efficient cars

while penalizing those who purchase gas-guzzlers with heavy taxes.

Already, hybrid and other efficient automobile technologies have been catching on globally as fuel prices have dramatically increased over the past several years, but so far the popularity of these technologies has not grown enough to make a sizable impact.

According to Houri, who spent three months last year in Spain studying the environmental and economic impact of hybrid cars, the only way a plan to encourage a switch to efficient autos could work would be if it made financial sense—both for the consumer and for the government.

"Those who should be worried about the situation are us."

—Ahmad Houri, associate professor of chemistry at LAU

For the consumer, that means efficient cars that are more affordable than standard cars. The purchase price must be low enough that money saved on gas would exceed the difference.

"You cannot be an environmentalist without paying close attention to financial issues," Houri said. "As long as you don't have a financial mechanism by which you want to protect nature, it's very difficult for you to ask someone to [invest in sustainable technologies] if there is no payback for them—as individuals, as corporations or as governments."

"When it comes to the question of where to direct your resources, environmental concerns are not really focused on."

—May Jurdi, professor of environmental health sciences,
American University of Beirut



Around 98 percent of the country's electricity is now produced from imported petroleum and coal, while the remaining amount is generated from hydroelectric power plants.

The figure contrasts sharply from 20 years ago when, according to Dr. Raymond Ghajar, is an advisor to the Minister of Energy and water who is a professor in electrical engineering-power systems at LAU, hydroelectric power produced 40 percent of the country's energy supply.

The water running through Lebanon's rivers is no longer able to produce the same level of electricity as before, which is forcing the government to import increased amounts of fuel.

"We have not built a single power plant since 1996," Ghajar said, "so the energy requirement has doubled. But our power plants have not increased in capacity."

Cost remains the biggest obstacle toward adopting renewable technologies to produce electricity. Despite the high market prices to import petroleum fuels, Ghajar said those traditional methods remain the most cost-effective.

Each kilowatt-hour of electricity costs the government between nine and 23 cents to produce. This amount is subsidized and passed on to consumers for seven cents per kilowatt-hour. Each year, the government pays \$1.2 to 1.3 billion to subsidize electricity.

Ghajar said wind is the cheapest renewable energy, but it would still cost at least 13 to 15 cents per kilowatt-hour and would never be able to produce enough energy to keep up with demand.

"We are short between 700 and 900 megawatts," Ghajar said. "If you put a wind turbine on every square inch of Lebanon, you wouldn't be able to generate that much electricity on a sustainable basis."

When it comes to solar energy, the government should not expect to pay less than 30 cents per kilowatt-hour.

"Once the technology makes a significant penetration, the costs will come down," Ghajar said. "And at that time, perhaps we will invest."

Until then, Ghajar said Lebanon should attempt to influence the "demand side" of energy by encouraging people to install solar water heaters, insulate their homes, and use efficient light bulbs.

"All these things take very little," he said, "and when you consider that there are four million people who could be making these wise decisions, that would make a massive difference and translate into huge savings."

Blame for the energy problem in Lebanon can also largely be placed on the government, for its lack of initiative and poor laws. The government's monopoly over Lebanon's electricity prevents private parties from feeding electricity to power grids, causing untold amounts of energy waste.

In 1972, the government issued decree 4517, which

established Electricité du Liban as the sole provider of electricity.

Then in 2002, a new law was passed to permit the sale of electricity by private entities. But after eight years, the law has yet to be applied—because the government has failed to appoint a new committee, called the Energy Regulatory Authority, which would be required to apply the law.

"You can't apply the old and you can't apply the new," Ghajar said. "The laws are preventing us from doing our job."

According to Dr. Nesreen Ghaddar, chairperson of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at AUB, half of the energy produced in Lebanon is consumed in buildings.

She explained that to help promote the development of sustainable buildings, she and other faculty train students to learn about renewable technologies.

"If you educate engineers, they will advise customers," she said. "They will accelerate progress."

More than a decade ago, the U.S. Green Building Council developed a set of building standards called Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) that are more efficient and environmentally friendly than traditional buildings. The standards apply to both the construction and renovation of buildings.

LEED-certified buildings have been growing in popularity around the world, including in Arab Gulf states where real-estate development has boomed over the past decade.

But in developing countries like Lebanon, investments in this sector are difficult to secure.

As Ghaddar pointed out, renovating old buildings to meet LEED standards can be extremely costly. In some instances, renovating an old building could cost more than constructing a new one.

Until investors feel secure pouring money into sustainable technologies in Lebanon, the solution to the country's energy and pollution problems remains in the hands of individuals, who must take it upon themselves to conserve electricity and other resources.

"We are ready to generate so much waste, throw it outside, and have someone else pick it up for us," Ghaddar said. "We need to think about civic responsibility."

Fear over the expulsion of greenhouse gases is not the only issue of concern for environmentalists in the country. Waste generated by olive oil mills, for instance, is a major pollution problem in Lebanon and the Mediterranean region and does not receive much coverage or attention.

According to Dr. Fuad Hashwa, dean of LAU's School of Arts and Sciences—Byblos, waste accounts for roughly 80 percent of the output of olive oil mills (50 percent is liquid wastewater and 30 percent is solid waste), while just 20 percent of the product is actual olive oil. 🌿



While the governments of most Mediterranean countries enforce strict policies regarding the treatment and disposal of wastewater, olive oil mills in Lebanon simply dump it in rivers, streams or valleys. The practice wreaks havoc on the ecosystem.



“As long as you don’t have a financial mechanism by which you want to protect nature, it’s very difficult for you to ask someone to [invest in sustainable technologies] if there is no payback for them—as individuals, as corporations or as governments.”

—Ahmad Hour, associate professor of chemistry at LAU

*Waste water from the
production of olive oil
is among nature’s least
biodegradable substances*

Olive oil wastewater is one of nature’s least biodegradable substances. There is no sustainable method of disposal.

While the governments of most Mediterranean countries enforce strict policies regarding the treatment and disposal of wastewater, olive oil mills in Lebanon simply dump it in rivers, streams or valleys. The practice wreaks havoc on the ecosystem.

The problem caught Hashwa’s attention about ten years ago after residents in South Lebanon began complaining about discolored water. He brought the issue to LAU, where researchers began examining biological treatments to remove toxins from the waste, with promising results.

“We thought that something must be done about this problem, so we wanted to use our project to devise a way for these communities and olive oil mills to not only curb pollution, but to also earn benefits,” Hashwa said.

An experimental facility was constructed on LAU’s Byblos campus using a relatively cheap process called aerobic treatment. The process achieved high rates of success.

Research on alternative solutions to treat olive oil waste remains ongoing at LAU, but the aerobic treatment process appears to be the best solution for local mills that cannot afford to construct and maintain expensive treatment plants.

With the correct formula and treatment, the wastewater can be converted into economically valuable products, such as fertilizer—while the solid waste, which holds a high nutritional value, can be converted to animal feed.

The mills can potentially earn a profit by developing a sustainable system to convert and sell their waste. But alone, Hashwa explained, the mills would likely find initial set-up costs to be financially overbearing.

“The problem can only be solved if you do it at a more centralized level through cooperatives,” Hashwa said. “If you divide the regions of North and South Lebanon and organize coops, this will be the only way to tackle the problem in the future.”

Whether looking at olive oil waste byproducts, auto efficiency, or energy production, proponents of sustainable technologies agree that facing the monumental challenges ahead begins with making a plan.

“We need to set a goal,” Hour said. “Any goal is better than not having one, because without a goal, we’ll never get anywhere.”

“If you educate engineers, they will advise customers. They will accelerate progress.”

—Nesreen Ghaddar, chair, Department of Mechanical Engineering, American University of Beirut





Many people in Beirut go to cafes to use faster—often free—internet



The Internet Crisis in Lebanon

By Saba Haider

Beirut-based graphic designer Elia (not his real name) is one of many Lebanese professionals who fly to Cyprus two or three times a month—not to enjoy the local cuisine or to have a meeting, but to use the internet.

It's a seemingly ridiculous but essential expense for his employer, a design agency in Beirut.

Faced with cut-price international competition, Elia's agency has worked hard to build its client base. Over the past few months, the agency has been working diligently for a client in Europe that—attracted by lower costs—has decided to outsource to Elia's Beirut firm, which is savvy to European tastes and offers service in French and English.

The client represents high revenue and potential opportunity. So every two weeks, Elia's employer sends him off to Cyprus with a DVD of data to upload. To send the same data from Lebanon could take days—even weeks.

The maximum bandwidth in Lebanon is a meager one-megabit per second (mbps). A standard household in the developed world has access to a 25-mbps bandwidth.

Poor infrastructure, an outdated offering of DSL internet service and a government telecommunications monopoly are the three main reasons that internet access and service in Lebanon is out of date.

Lebanon's internet infrastructure is "among the worst worldwide," said Dr. Haidar Harmanani, professor and chairperson of the Department of Computer Science and Mathematics at LAU.

In other countries, internet customers have been able to benefit from their existing fixed line with bundled services such as HDV channels, faster broadband internet connections and unlimited VOIP communications; households are charged a flat fee because of their fixed-line communication. In Lebanon, the use of VOIP is illegal.

"Most countries are moving away from DSL to cable or fiber optics," Haidar added. "It is being said that the next challenge in communication is to secure gigabit connectivity to houses. We still sell DSL in the 32, 64, 256k range in Lebanon!"

"Lebanese companies have installed such services in Saudi Arabia's Etisalat. So the problem is not expertise," Harmanani said.

"Businesses in Lebanon are suffering on two fronts," he explained. "Local businesses pay too much for connectivity and for communication services. No legal VOIP adds more overhead [expenses] on the business. This makes it harder to attract companies that sell internet services to Lebanon." 🐞

"It is being said that the next challenge in communication is to secure gigabit connectivity to houses. We still sell DSL in the 32, 64, 256k range in Lebanon!"

—Haidar Harmanani, professor and chairman of the Department of Computer Science and Mathematics at LAU

Pushing for evolution: the TRA

The Beirut-based Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) in Lebanon was established in 2007, around the time the first ADSL services started being offered in Lebanon (almost ten years after they were available in more developed countries). The TRA has been the strongest observer and regulatory voice in Lebanon of the government's telecommunications monopoly—which spans internet, telephone and mobile, among other services.

Broadband is something the TRA has been working on liberalizing and opening to competition. In fact, the same problem that plagues broadband plagues mobile, international, and other services.

By raising awareness of telecommunications issues and actively pushing for an end to a government monopoly, the TRA might be the closest thing Lebanon has to a champion for a national strategy. It wants government to introduce competition and not just privatization in the telecommunications sector, and to consequently make IT a “national priority” for key areas such as education and healthcare, as well as e-governance.

“The internet service in Lebanon has been open to competition since 1995,” said Patrick Eid, commissioner and head of the Market and Competition Unit at the TRA, “when the pioneer internet service providers in the country started operating.”

“The moment you open the market and allow competition, it expands.”

—Patrick Eid, commissioner and head of the Market and Competition Unit, TRA

At the time, the monopoly of the Ministry of Telecommunications was broken, and several internet service providers (ISPs) were issued licenses to operate. The only available infrastructure in the country at the time was designed by the ministry, and the ISPs relied on the sole international gateway facilities—also owned and operated by the ministry.

Although international bandwidth was in line with the needs of the time—dial-up—by 1999 ISPs were complaining that the ministry infrastructure was insufficient. Fixed infrastructure destroyed during the Civil War was being rebuilt.

Since then, there has been a need for other providers to enter the market.

So the ministry began issuing data service providers (DSPs) licenses for five-year terms, which were to be renewed annually. Of the six DSP licenses issued, four were purely wireless, to increase internet connectivity in key population centers of Lebanon.

The DSPs do not have the right to build additional international gateway facilities and have to rely on the ministry's facilities. So the only benefit the data service providers brought was to complement existing infrastructure between the end user and the ISPs.

In January 2010, the Minister of Telecommunications, Charbel Nahhas, announced that Lebanon's bandwidth would increase up to 3,000 percent this May, when Lebanon is projected to be connected to a new underwater India-Middle East-Western Europe (IMEWE) fiber optic cable, with a 3.84 terabit/second capacity.

Nahhas told media at a press conference that Lebanon would benefit from the cable by receiving bandwidth at a speed of 30 gigabits per second—a far cry from the current 1-gigabit per second.

In late March, Nahhas added that “in the coming weeks,” a number of regions in the country that were formerly on dial-up, including the Zhalta, Hammana, Aley, Chouf and Metn regions, would soon be getting DSL internet.

Last summer Gabriel Deek, the president of the Professional Computer Association (PCA), told the Beirut newspaper the Daily Star that “slow broadband connectivity in Lebanon is behind the success of Dubai in attracting business opportunities that should have come to Lebanon instead.”

The regional overview

According to a broadband report published by UNDP for 2009, Lebanon is significantly behind other regional countries with international gateway facilities, which, as Eid said, “often have five, six, or even 10 times more technical capacity than Lebanon.”

Eid attributed this to a lack of available competition in Lebanon. “The moment you open the market and allow competition, it expands,” he explained. “In Lebanon, it is still a state of monopoly.”

“In other countries where it has opened, the internet [service and access] has developed rapidly,” he said.

According to the TRA's figures, there are approximately 200,000 broadband subscribers in Lebanon at present (representing just under 5 percent of the total population). However, a much greater number still subscribe to dial-up internet services, which are more cost-effective for casual users.

Karina Rodriguez, a web specialist at LAU, has been an ADSL subscriber at her home in Beirut through the government provider Ogero. For approximately \$47 a month, she gets a 512-kbps connection, which she said is quite limited, considering it has a download cap of 4 GB.

“I can't wait for the new underwater cable to go into effect this summer,” she said. “But we won't believe it until we see it.”

For the time being, Rodriguez said, this is the best she can afford in Lebanon. But it does not seem satisfactory compared to the services and pricing available to others in the region.

Rising to the challenge

Harmanani said LAU is among the best institutions in Lebanon in terms of internet services, and that this comes at a high price.

“For example, all students have accessibility from the labs or from any access point on campus,” he said. “The services that are provided are comparable, or even better, to world-class institutions.”

By raising awareness of telecommunications issues and actively pushing for an end to a government monopoly, the TRA might be the closest thing Lebanon has to a champion for a national strategy.



Mr. Adel Rizk presents "The Trends in the ICT Industry" at LAU Byblos

"It would be nice of course to have more bandwidth," he added, "but this again has been increasing over the past 10 years, and LAU has been on the forefront."

Dr. Ramzi Haraty, associate professor of computer science at LAU, agreed that LAU is offering its faculty, students and staff strong internet compared to what is available in the rest of the country. However, this is a national standard, he asserted—not an international one.

"In Lebanon, we are not near other countries in the region such as in the Gulf, which have very advanced networks," he said.

Eid said the TRA is showing the true benefit of opening competition in the IGF market to the government by illustrating the impact on the economy, through both direct and indirect revenues.

A 2009 World Bank report affirmed that a 10-point growth in broadband penetration is linked to a growth of 1.38 percent in GDP, and that a one-point increase in broadband penetration would result in a 0.25 percent increase in jobs.

"The government needs to support that view and make some key decisions, such as opening the international market and authorizing national broadband carrier licenses," said Eid. "The government has other concerns."

The way forward

Throughout Adel Rizk is the engagement partner and head of data center consulting and engineering services at the Lebanon-based Edarat Group. The firm builds what Rizk described as "state-of-the-art communication and information infrastructure" for governments, telecommunication companies, banks, and large and medium-sized businesses in the Middle East and Gulf region.

He said the reason Lebanon's internet services are lagging behind other countries is partly due to "a lack of capital."

Haraty added that internal communication between ministries is also lacking. "We need reliability, and we don't have that yet,"

he said. "I mean we don't even have electricity everywhere yet. So you can't have e-commerce service in a remote area, because when the electricity goes out it's a loss of business and a loss of money."

But some progress is being made, said Rizk. He explained that the government is starting to introduce a technology called Wimax, which, he said, "uses the same principle as the [mobile] telephone." The technique uses microwave signals that are transmitted by air, versus by laying out cables. The minister of telecommunications has already announced that some areas will be covered using Wimax.

Rizk said that while it may take a year or two, "I think at that time, the internet in Lebanon will improve."

He said Wimax is as fast as fiber optics. But, he explained, "you need a bigger investment on the technology side than you do on the civil work or electric work needed to lay down fiber optics." Rizk does not think investors are willing to invest in this, due to the often-volatile political situation in the country.

"We are talking about millions of dollars, or even billions of dollars for an infrastructure capable [of catering] to our IT needs," he explained.

Rizk added: "With the aid coming in from the U.S. and Europe, I think the government should adopt an IT strategy for all of Lebanon. We have done this work for Yemen. I do not see why we cannot do this for the Lebanese government. Today in Saudi Arabia, every transaction—paying utilities or insurance bills, for example—everything is done on the internet. We have to adopt a paperless e-government."

"We are talking about millions of dollars, or even billions of dollars for an infrastructure capable [of catering] to our IT needs."

—Adel Rizk, engagement partner and head of data center consulting and engineering services, Edarat Group

Haraty pointed to another challenge: "We don't have lobbying groups to ask for better internet access, for better service, and to apply pressure on the government. We don't even have an order of computer scientists in Lebanon."

"Everything basically resides on the government," Haraty added. "And they have to get their act together"

Considering the disdain and frustration among Lebanese internet users, Minister Charbel Nahhas's announcement that fiber optics will be launched in Lebanon by May could not have come at a better (and more necessary) time.

However, the real test for Lebanon and its economy will be in how businesses are able to expand and progress from improved telecommunications and internet bandwidth.

After all, for professionals like Elia, catching a flight to Cyprus to email data is simply not a sustainable solution. ☒





Lebanon's network providers Alfa and MTC Touch

Competition Reigns—Or Does It? The Quest to Deprivatize Lebanese Telecommunications

By Austin Mackell

Debate over competing plans for Lebanon's telecommunications infrastructure is once again heating up, following a statement by Minister of Telecommunications Charbel Nahhas that a decision on "the pattern or forms of private investment" for the currently state-run system will be announced by the end of the year.

One thing almost everyone in Lebanon can agree on is that the mobile phone industry is in desperate need of reform. The average monthly bill is around \$50—one of the highest averages in the region. Frequent connection dropouts plague users. And penetration rates hover below 50 percent. It is clear that the situation is dire.

In the words of Chadi Abou-Rjeily, assistant professor at LAU's Department of Electrical and Compute Engineering: "There are no technical reasons to justify the high cost of mobile services in Lebanon."

Abou-Rjeily pointed out that the deployment and maintenance costs for mobile phone service providers in Lebanon are "several orders of magnitude smaller" than those faced by companies in Europe, where end-user prices are substantially lower.

According to Abou-Rjeily, apart from delivering better and cheaper services in general, a privatized and liberalized telecom market would allow for the introduction of specific perks, such as free calls to a chosen number, free calls or reduced rates for late-night or weekend calls, and lower prices for students.

This perspective is widely shared among telecom experts in Lebanon. The most commonly prescribed solution is the privatization of the now government-owned industry. The government did in fact commit itself to this course of action some years ago, but has not implemented it yet. Apart from political instability, which makes any serious policy initiatives difficult to enact, there are unique hurdles to overcome and a vigorous debate to undertake about the details of any such move.

First and foremost among these hurdles is that the government would have to surrender the revenue it receives from its two telecom companies. In addition to collecting the profits from both companies, the government also imposes a tariff of 65 percent on services. These revenues combined are equal to 38 percent of Lebanon's budget—the second largest income stream for the country after sales tax.

Given Lebanon's public debt of more than \$50 billion—which, at 150 percent of GDP, leaves the country with among the highest debt-to-GDP ratios in the world—many Lebanese oppose the elimination of such a profitable state-run enterprise. Others, however, argue that this is exactly the reason why these valuable assets should be sold, and why the proceeds should be used to pay down this debt.

The telecommunications minister himself, who is popular among the left-leaning sections of the population, appears to have reservations about such a plan. In a paper presented to the constitutional court, "The Noble Petitioner's Guide to the Secrets of Wondrous Accounting," he argued that allocating "the proceeds of privatization, the foreseen primary surplus in the budget, and the proceeds of the sale of future public revenues" to the servicing of the public debt would be similar to "the formulas of the public debt funds that the colonial powers imposed on the Ottoman Empire or on Egypt or China in the 19th century."



Elsewhere, the minister has written that "though most of the rest of the world has moved on from the attitude that had been prevalent in the 1990s, according to which privatization was the solution to all problems relating to public finance, Lebanon still adheres to that old mentality, either as a result of intellectual laziness or opportunism ... What we need in Lebanon is a 'better state,' and not a 'lesser state.'"

These, however, may be views he has to work around, as the government has committed itself both internationally and domestically to market-based reforms of the sector.

Kamal Shehadi is the chairman of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, an independent body dedicated to opening the sector to competition. He pointed out that the government is bound to such a course of action by an act of parliament.

"When I talk about competition in telecommunications, I'm talking about a reform that has been enshrined in a law—telecom law 431 of 2002—a commitment from the parliament, the legislators, the elected representatives, to the people who elected them, and this law today is binding on all of us."

"There is always, in my opinion, in the press, miscommunication about how we privatize. Privatization doesn't mean we sell the whole sector."

—Walid Touma, director, LAU's University Enterprise Office

There are also agreements made with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Union and Lebanon's partners at the Paris Donors' conferences. Shehadi criticized the current lack of competition, pointing out that although there are two operators currently servicing the Lebanese market, both must have any meaningful decisions approved by the minister, and some by the council of ministers.

"We could end up with a private monopoly if we privatize without opening the way for a third competitor," Shehadi said.

Others, however, are less concerned with the lack of competition, and see the problem as having more to do with the government's reliance on the industry as a cash cow. Walid Touma, director of LAU's University Enterprise Office, said that the government's reliance on cellular profits prevents it from properly reinvesting in the company. 📶



Touma said that partial privatization, without the introduction of a third provider, could deliver huge benefits for end users, even while maintaining the much-needed income the industry currently provides to the government.

“There is always, in my opinion, in the press, miscommunication about how we privatize. Privatization doesn’t mean we sell the whole sector,” Touma said.

Touma advocated a four-step plan of action that would begin with a partial sell-off, somewhere between 10 and 20 percent. This would, on top of the initial cash injection, allow the companies to borrow money and issue bonds. The extra revenue could then be used to increase the network’s capacity—a necessary step before penetration rates can be increased.

“I’m talking about a reform that has been enshrined in a law—telecom law 431 of 2002—a commitment from the parliament, the legislators, the elected representatives, to the people who elected them, and this law today is binding on all of us.”

—Kamal Shehadi, chairman of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority

Once this was achieved, there could be a lowering of rates without a drop in the revenues collected by the government.

The plan seems to have a solid precedent. According to the previous Minister for Telecommunications, Gebran Bassil, quoted in the Daily Star, the average monthly cellular bill in Lebanon dropped from \$75 to \$50 between August 2008 and November 2009, while revenues to the government rose by \$139 million (as of September 2009) due to an increase in subscribers from 1.2 to nearly 2.3 million.

Minister Bassil also pointed to the \$230 million invested during 2009, as opposed to the \$40 million invested in 2008. That

such a massive increase in subscriber numbers could be achieved on the back of what is still relatively modest investment (when compared to the amount of money that could be generated by a partial sale) seems to give credence to the plan espoused by Touma.

The fourth and final phase would involve a further liberalization at some stage down the road, and a move into the regional market. Touma posed the question: If Saudi and French telecom companies, which also have the government as a major stakeholder, can offer services in foreign markets, why should Lebanese companies not do the same?

As to whether such a plan—or any plan for privatization—could succeed, Touma is not keen to make predictions. When asked why such predictions are so difficult, he said, “The problem is very much political.”

Previous proposals for privatization may have been based around valuations of the companies that were simply too low. Any successful plan, therefore, would need to be preceded by a formal valuation process.

But the most serious political problem is a depressingly familiar one: instability. A successful deprivatization project, Touma said, would require long-term leadership, and the vision to deal with the nation’s financial situation as a whole.

Such prospects look dim, Touma said, given Lebanon’s tendency to appoint a new council of ministers every nine months. ☐



Top 10 Most Influential Tech Advances for Lebanon

By Olga Habre

A look at developing technologies that have had the greatest impact in Lebanon in the past decade

1. Google

Search engines in general have changed the way the world obtains information. The Google search engine was launched in 1996. Ten years later “Google” was added to Webster’s dictionary. The company has expanded into a multinational publicly traded corporation with services and products ranging from the Android mobile service operating system to Gmail, Google Earth and the new web browser Chrome. Google is the most popular search engine on the planet.

2. Online social networking sites

According to LAU research, Facebook is the most-visited website in Lebanon. Other social-networking sites have become popular throughout the world, but Facebook—with its 400 million active users—tops the list both internationally and locally. Despite privacy concerns, the social networking phenomenon has enabled people all over the world to stay in touch and has helped businesses grow. One reason social networking sites might be so popular in Lebanon is the combination of a huge expatriate community and strong family ties. Facebook is also a place to meet people—especially for dating purposes—in a relatively conservative society. Launched by Harvard students from a dorm room in 2004, Facebook competes with other social networking websites such as the original Friendster—launched in March 2002—as well as other favorites like MySpace, Twitter, Hi5, and many sites that cater specifically to varied language communities.

3. Smartphones

Smartphones offer an array of functions and applications, including web-based utilities, maps and GPS devices, compasses, musical instrumentation, finance tools, and games, in addition to their old, “primary” use: as phones. Two of the many internationally available smartphones have dominated the local market: BlackBerry and the iPhone.

BlackBerry was first introduced in the U.S. in 1999. What sets this smartphone apart is that it delivers information over the wireless data networks of mobile phone service companies. More than 140 countries use BlackBerry services through 350 operators. The service was not introduced in Lebanon until late 2008, when it was launched by one of the two mobile operators in Lebanon—MTC Touch. A year later, the second company, Alfa, offered the service also.

The iPhone is not just another smartphone, but actually revolutionized touch technology. Introduced in 2007, the device combined the iPod with a phone and offered mobile internet and vastly extensive applications—now totaling over 100,000—via Apple’s App Store.

4. Robotic surgery

Technological innovations have become an integral part of health care in Lebanon in the past decade, especially in the field of surgery. Robotic surgery—in which surgery is performed with the help of robotic technology—is one of the most prominent advances. Surgical robots aid in remote surgery, minimally invasive surgery and unmanned surgery. As a result of these advances, patients undergo and recover from procedures more quickly and efficiently. They are left with less scarring, as many robotic surgeries reduce scalpel usage. The use of robots often diminishes the number of personnel in attendance, or as in the case of remote surgery, allows those not physically present at the location of the operation to aid often-complicated procedures. 🌐





5. User-generated content

Over the past decade, those with computers and internet connections have had the chance to no longer be passive end-users; they can now also function as active contributors, with unprecedented influence on the media. Blogs have become popular in the region, not only for personal use, but also for expressing political views and exposing local (especially political) information that does not always make it into the “regular” news. In addition, many popular websites are based on content generated by users, including Wikipedia—a multilingual, web-based, free encyclopedia launched in 2001. Since then many other sites have joined the user-generated and partially user-generated boom, notably YouTube, the hugely popular video-sharing website launched in 2005. Even popular news channels like CNN now have a user-generated portal, such as iReport. The user collaboration on content prompted Time magazine to name “You” the person of the year.

6. iPod/iTunes

Although the iPod wasn’t the first MP3 player, it is definitely the most popular. Digital music players hit the market in the 1990s, but the iPod came out in 2001 and, with its superior design and the 2003 launch of the music system and marketplace known as iTunes, Apple revolutionized the music business. Now the same technology is used by iPhone and other smartphones, as well as by the iPod Touch, but the iPod started it all. Although a key element of the iPod in the West is iTunes, this feature is used less in Lebanon and the region. Piracy remains a problem here, and most music-lovers get tunes from other sources. Yet that has not hindered the popularity of the device, as well as of other MP3 players.

7. Instant Messaging and Voice-over Internet Protocol

The ability to chat and talk online with people from across the world has become customary in Lebanon, as well as in many other countries. While instant messaging began to take off in the mid-1990s, today it is offered by many more sites, and often includes voice and video chat capability. With the introduction of email, and even more so with IM, the English language has also changed; abbreviations like LOL and BRB have entered international usage. In non-English speaking parts of the world, challenges faced by the predominantly English-based computer software and hardware are being overcome by the emergence of new “languages.” In the Arabic-speaking world, for example, “Arabizi” (a combination of “Arabic” and “Inglizi”—the Arabic word for English) is an evolving trend practiced many by young people in which Latin letters and numbers are used to write Arabic words in IMs, as well as in text messages. The addition of VOIP has taken it up a notch: With technologies that deliver voice over the Internet and other networks, programs like Skype allow Lebanon’s massive expat community to reconnect through two other senses—sight and sound. This is especially useful, considering the high cost of phone calls in the country.

8. USB flash drives

In 2000, flash drives began to appear on the market and to offer a capacity of about 8 MB. Today, these tiny devices offer up to 16 GB of space. In Lebanon, many cars today have USB ports for playing music.

9. Digital cameras

Analog cameras, dark rooms and film are largely a thing of the past. Digital cameras save photos on digital memory, and allow users to “reminisce instantly.” With space no longer an issue, digital cameras have become capable of taking more and more high-quality images.

10. The cloud

Cloud computing is a way to use the Internet to share computer resources, rather than saving software and using storage space on local computers. The system began around five years ago with pioneers Amazon, Salesforce and Google, among other companies, offering software-as-a-service, renting computing time on a virtualized server, and assigning productivity applications and storage to the cloud. Many people now trust large corporations online with their data more than they trust their own PCs, and with the ability to access software not stored locally, powerful local computers are less vital. The cloud is widely considered to be the future of computing. ☒



Grace Abou Jaoude Estephan, assistant professor at the LAU School of Engineering

Women in Engineering

By LAU Staff

With women penetrating traditionally male-dominated job markets around the world, LAU's School of Engineering has begun a partnership with the Engineering Information Foundation in New York (EIFNY) to study Lebanese schoolgirls' opinions about the field—and encourage them to enter it.

The EIFNY has given LAU a \$15,000 grant to implement the Recruitment and Retention of Women in Engineering project. The project will be led by Dr. Grace Abou Jaoude Estephan, assistant professor at the LAU school of engineering. LAU is subsidizing another \$10,000 of the cost.

The project aims to engage more middle and high school girls in the field—specifically in civil engineering. With the grant approval received late last year, the first phase involved research about the current situation. Surveys were given to more than 2000 girls from six local schools.

Estephan wants to begin by understanding the existing knowledge and attitudes of young girls and their parents about engineering. Then, based on the findings, an outreach program will aim to create more awareness. The goal of the outreach is to increase and widen the scope of enrollment at the school.

Estephan said her purpose is to get the girls “to understand that a civil engineer is not just a builder. There are different areas within civil engineering,” she said, “and I want to make sure that they know [about them].”

In May, girls will be invited to attend a one-week event at the LAU Byblos campus. The event will introduce attendees to famous female engineers. Attendees will also learn about the jobs of civil engineers, and discover the benefits of a career in engineering. A website for girls and their parents—as well as a student club at LAU for female peer mentoring—will also be in the works. “We will give them more information on the areas of civil engineering, and show them that the involvement of women is at all levels in all areas,” said Estephan.

Estephan said similar studies in the area have found there is a “trend not to go [into engineering] because it’s stereotypically not a women’s field.”

Dean of the School of Engineering George Nasr affirmed that neither men nor women are “better” at engineering. By increasing the number of girls who apply to LAU, and thus the range of overall students applying, LAU will be able to select the most qualified students from a deeper pool.

“We want to provide engineering education to all [male and female] qualified students,” he said. “Above all, I really believe that we should not limit male or female choices when it comes to pursuing education and careers. That’s why it’s important for us to encourage this program,” said Nasr.

Estephan—who graduated from Purdue University in 2006 with a degree in geotechnical engineering and started at LAU the following year—said she understands the challenge girls face. Although she herself never faced resistance, she said some girls might not have all the knowledge they need to make the decision to go into engineering.

“It’s not specifically math or science that we need,” she said. “We need the logic: You have to love doing it, not just study for it.”

“A career in engineering provides unparalleled flexibility when compared with other professions,” she said. “Engineering is a very exciting profession, one that encourages young women to be imaginative and creative in their careers. Engineering is also one of the most respected professions in the world, and a degree in engineering reflects a well-educated individual, not to mention that it can be well-paid and rewarding.”

“From what I’ve noticed since I started working here, we have had an increase in women in engineering at LAU,” said Estephan. She hopes to increase it even more.



LAU's Facebook and Twitter pages

New features are constantly being added and implemented to keep the communities interesting and personal

Pushing Forward with Facebook and Twitter

By LAU Staff

Keeping up with the pace of today's ever-expanding digital age, LAU launched a new social media program earlier this year, using Facebook and Twitter to distribute university news and information while offering LAU community members a portal to communicate and share ideas.

With more than 11,000 fans to date on Facebook and hundreds of fans on Twitter—and the numbers growing by the minute—these sites have proven to be a powerful tool for engaging a large audience of interested students, friends and alumni.

“Using social media has provided us with a great opportunity to reach a wide scope of people who are opting to receive our news.”

—Greg Houle, LAU advancement communications manager

“Using social media has provided us with a great opportunity to reach a wide scope of people who are opting to receive our news,” said Greg Houle, LAU advancement communications manager. “It has enabled us to not only disseminate information, but to also be interactive and creative about it.” Houle is based in the New York office and oversees the university's social networking outreach.

In addition to receiving university news, fans of LAU can read about relevant regional issues, participate in discussions, and ask questions about the university. Students and alumni have even been using the sites to share tips on how to find work and give tips on potential job opportunities in Lebanon and the Gulf countries.

Given the interactive and evolving nature of these sites, new features are constantly being added and implemented to keep the communities interesting and personal. One of the recent additions to the Facebook site is “Friday Spotlight,” a feature designed to take LAU's constituency behind the scenes of the university by

highlighting a member of the faculty, staff or administration with a brief question and answer session. Recent “Spotlights” gave fans a chance to hear from Dr. Nancy Hoffart, the founding dean of the new Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing, and Mimi Jeha, the director of LAU's Summer Institute for Arabic Language and Culture (SINARC).

Emphasis is placed on listening to suggestions and improving the Facebook site to make it more useful for everyone. For example, Houle noted that within minutes after a fan suggested that LAU create a discussion board for fans to post links and chat, his team responded by doing just that. “We really try to give our followers what they want as much as we possibly can,” he said.

Like many LAU students, Nadine Maknieh, a third-year marketing student, said she became a fan of LAU's Facebook page simply to stay in the loop, but was surprised to find the site offered more than just news.

“Most students spend much more time on Facebook than they do surfing the LAU website,” she said. “So this is a good way to stay up-to-date with what's going on at LAU while at the same time hearing about jobs and discussing different issues.”

“Most students spend much more time on Facebook than they do surfing the LAU website.”

—Nadine Maknieh, third-year marketing student at LAU

Additional social media avenues will be explored going forward. LAU will soon be launching a YouTube channel, where the university will upload a range of short videos, including interviews with faculty and administrators and clips from campus lectures and guest speakers.

“This is a constantly changing and evolving new world of communication,” Houle said. “We're working hard to make it most useful for us and our community.”

Celebrating International Women's Day by Honoring Celebrated Women

LAU initiates online database of leading Lebanese female experts

By Brooke Anderson



Lebanon's First Lady Wafa'a Michel Sleiman

Women have come a long way, but they still have a long way to go.

That was the consensus at the Women's Day conference at LAU on the evening of March 2.

LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) has initiated a database in both Arabic and English to honor Lebanese women who have played an important role in Lebanese society. The database project is titled "Who is She in Lebanon?"

The impetus for the initiative comes from the realization that history books have consistently documented the accomplishments and contributions of great men—whereas their female counterparts have often been omitted.

"If this greatness, as defined by historians, is the combination of talent and opportunity to use this talent, then we all know that talent is not exclusive to men," said Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, director of the IWSAW.

"If being denied the opportunity to live up to their potential is the primary reason which prevented women from achieving and therefore earning a mention in history books, the second reason for this glaring absence entails even more injustice and prejudice," she said.

Dabbous-Sensenig cited examples of great women from history who were never recognized in conventional history books—including Theana of Crotona, the wife of Pythagoras. Theana was the first female mathematician known to humankind, and was part of a team of 24 female mathematicians.

Dabbous-Sensenig also cited an example of an Arab woman: Fatima Al-Fihri, founder of the world's first university in Fez, Morocco, in 829.

The new database features today's female leaders from Lebanon. Its purpose is to give journalists and researchers a resource for accessing prominent Lebanese women, providing them with biographical and contact information.

"We're so disappointed that every time the media quotes experts, they're men," said Dabbous-Sensenig. "If finding women is difficult, then we'll make it easy for them."

The project is modeled on a Danish database for women that began in the 1990s as a way to expand the pool of women experts in the news media. The Danish database has proven successful. The first of its kind in the Arab world, the Lebanese version took more than five months to launch. The database currently includes 70 Lebanese women, but is expected to grow as the site is updated every six months. Representatives in Egypt and Jordan are now working on their own women's databases.

"We're so disappointed that every time the media quotes experts, they're men."

—Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, director, LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World

"Hopefully this will not stop," said Dabbous-Sensenig. She added that the organization is still looking for more women in the traditionally male-dominated professions.

"We have a lot of women in NGOs and education. But we're looking for more women in IT, business and banking," she said. ■

The project is modeled on a Danish database for women that began in the 1990s as a way to expand the pool of women experts in the news media.



In Profile, LAU Tech



Roy Majdalani,
Vice President for Human Resources
and University Services

Smart classroom at LAU

IT: The Engine of LAU

By Marc Abizeid

Many organizations have a habit of tooting their own horns to promote their products and services, even if it means stretching truths and decorating brochures with elaborate adjectives until the words no longer hold meaning.

Not the team at LAU's Department of Information Technology, which has, often quietly, been on the cutting edge for years in the areas of technology use, efficiency, support and effectiveness.

"LAU is a leader in the use of IT in Lebanon," said Vice President for Human Resources and University Services Roy Majdalani. "It is interwoven in the texture of the university."

We took a tour of the Beirut and Byblos campuses to witness firsthand how the IT Department is employing the latest technologies to meet LAU's needs and establish LAU as a digital pioneer in the region.

Among the dozens of advanced instruments and systems IT has implemented, the department recently installed "smart classrooms" on both campuses. These rooms are equipped with a host of digital tools, including multimedia LCD projectors, digital audio and video equipment and fast internet connections.

The first part of the two-phase project has recently been completed, and includes 29 smart classrooms and two smart conference rooms divided between the Beirut and the Byblos campuses. The second phase, which is currently underway and will be completed by the end of June, includes the addition of 13 more smart classrooms in Beirut and 10 in Byblos.

This project was financed by USAID, which offered \$550,000 through its ASHA grants program for the purchase and installation of electronic screens, multimedia projectors, and control systems, as well as civil works.

A new online university portal page is also in the works. The

portal will allow faculty, staff, students and alumni to log onto one web page that personalizes and presents applications and internet content according to the users' roles and preferences. As a first phase, the Alumni Portal (Net Community) was launched as of April 2010. The complete University Portal will be ready to launch in the 2010-2011 school year.

By the year 2011-2012, the implementation of the new Document Management system will be completed. This system will archive all university documents for faster access, and will help steer the university toward a paperless environment. Even thesis and research papers of faculty and students will be available online. As a first step, the IT Department started implementing the new Document Management system. This will be ready by Summer 2010 for the Library of Institutional Research and Registrar's old transcripts.

"Everything we do always boils down to what is best for our students, our faculty and our staff."

—Nicolas Majdalani, director of IT Infrastructure and Support at LAU

In Fall 2008, the IT Department implemented a Course Evaluation System that automates the evaluation of courses by students.

Further down the road, IT will launch a radio frequency tag system that will identify all of the university's assets, and that will be used for an up-to-date inventory. The system, which is expected to be prepared by 2011, will also be utilized by the library.

"Instead of taking two days to check the inventory of the library, now it will be done in just hours," Majdalani said.



In 2004, LAU became the first university in the Middle East to launch a comprehensive wireless network system.

The university-wide upgrades are all part of the department's mission and vision, Roy Majdalani said, to create a world-class IT environment that fosters teaching, learning and research by providing robust, reliable and secure IT systems and services.

In 2004, LAU became the first university in the Middle East to launch a comprehensive wireless network system. In comparison to other universities that were offering some wi-fi access at the time, LAU's Cisco system was the most advanced, with coverage reaching every inch of both campuses. The system provides fast and secure access in support of voice and data.

LAU was nominated in 2009 for the Cisco Networkers Innovation Award and became a finalist under the "Best Unified Communications Project of the Year" category. The Cisco Unified Communications project provides a platform for students, faculty and staff across the two campuses and LAU's New York office, and also to alumni around the world.

"It's not about competition..." said Nicolas Majdalani, director of IT Infrastructure and Support. "Everything we do always boils down to what is best for our students, our faculty and our staff. It's about streamlining their tasks and ensuring that our students are benefiting from these technologies to enhance their learning experience."

The roots of IT

Although most students today couldn't imagine entering campus without instant access to Facebook from their BlackBerries, it goes without saying that IT at LAU wasn't always what it has come to be.

"Before 1978, when I was a student, we were using punch card readers that we had to run down to AUB in the evenings to use on their computers," said Brigitte Baroudy, director of IT Security. Baroudy has been working with the university for 32 years.

During that time, the country was immersed in its terrifying civil war. Baroudy remembers coming to work under snipers' fire while crossing the demarcation lines that divided Beirut.

Baroudy recalls how the university used to open student dorms for employees to sleep in when the situation was too dangerous for anyone to leave campus.

"We don't like to remember these horrible days," she said.

In 1980, LAU acquired its first set of computers, Texas Instruments 990 models. The university's computer network was launched in 1995. In 1996, email was provided for all faculty and staff, and regular internet access was launched the following year.

"They suffered throughout the war, under the bombs and in the shelters, to build the university the way it is today."

—Roy Majdalani, Vice President for Human Resources and University Services

LAU also launched its university website in 1997. E-learning for students through the WebCT tool followed in 2000, and is now on Blackboard Learning Management System. The Library e-reserve system was established in 2003.

In 2007, the department implemented a disaster recovery system that backs up and ensures the redundancy of the university major applications like Banner, email, Library and others.

"There is a heartbeat that the main application gives off," said Camille Abou-Nasr, director of IT Applications and Solutions. "And if the heartbeat is not received ... whether it is a minor problem or if the whole data center crashes, the [rescue] application will automatically kick in, in less than a minute."

Dozens of other major accomplishments for the IT Department over the decades exemplify the efforts of the IT team, revealing the dedication and loyalty to the university and its community.

"They suffered throughout the war, under the bombs and in the shelters, to build the university the way it is today," Roy Majdalani said, thinking back on the department's pioneers. "They risked their lives to build it." 🧱



Pages from Haltabees, a children's book featured on Lebrecord. Haltabees was written by Rania Saghir and illustrated by David Habchy.

Medium: The character is molded from clay, then photographed; the photograph is then digitally altered and collaged.



Maroun Kassab



Tony Faddoul

LebRecord Founders Faddoul and Kassab Bring Lebanese Art to the World

By David Pengel

LAU alumni feature Lebanese gallery scene online

Now that Beirut and Lebanon are regaining the interest of world travelers and art aficionados alike, LebRecord.com founders Tony Faddoul and Maroun Kassab see opportunity. LebRecord.com is their way of telling the world about the Lebanese art scene and the people who are driving it.

To tell the story, Kassab, who is based in New Jersey, and Faddoul, who lives in Florida, work with several colleagues to provide updates on Lebanese art and architecture projects. In addition, LebRecord has also featured artists who are active in Lebanon today. The artists featured since the website's launch have been active in a variety of fields, from graphic design to font design to comics. The website also maintains a calendar of gallery events in Lebanon.

Kassab said he started the website out of a need to keep a connection to his homeland.

"That was the only way for us as Lebanese artists living abroad to stay in touch with the Lebanese art scene," he said. "This frustration presented itself as an opportunity, and we decided to fill this niche."

Kassab started planning for the website in 2006, and convinced Faddoul to join the project.

"I was then doing some individual artwork and exhibitions," Faddoul said, "which made me realize the necessity of giving the Lebanese artists the global touch of coverage and interaction that they deserve."

The LebRecord team looks for artists who are helping move the art scene in Lebanon forward. But they're also interested in artists who make a global impact. In addition, LebRecord helps artists looking for a chance to show their work.

But selecting the right kind of artists and features for the website requires care.

"This frustration presented itself as an opportunity, and we decided to fill this niche."

—Maroun Kassab

"Playing the curator role for emerging visual artists is a project by itself," Faddoul said. "It is simple if you know what you're doing, yet it involves lots of processing."

Both founders say they benefited from the environment at LAU even after they graduated.

"The university atmosphere at the architecture department, especially for the group that started at Amchit and moved later on to Byblos, is one of solidarity," Kassab explained. Both he and Faddoul keep in touch with fellow alumni, and some of LAU's graduates are now contributors to the website.

Visit the project online: www.LebRecord.com

"I was then doing some individual artwork and exhibitions, which made me realize the necessity of giving the Lebanese artists the global touch of coverage and interaction that they deserve."

—Tony Faddoul





Zebian with her students



Dr. Samar Zebian

LAU Psychology Brief: Never Underestimate the Power of the Brain

By Marc Abizeid

As one of a small handful of cognitive scientists in Lebanon, Dr. Samar Zebian, assistant professor of psychology at LAU, believes she can help offer the public a new perspective on pressing issues of public concern.

Whether showing how to boost the brain's potential across its life span, or how Botox and plastic surgery affect brain systems, Zebian says science is helping to shed new light on the possibility of altering the brain and discovering cures to genetic conditions that scientists previously believed were irreversible.

"The brain is plastic," Zebian said, "and that means we should think a bit more flexibly about the potential to change peoples' brains after accidents, and how to enhance brain potential in the elderly [and] among the learning disabled, and also how to support people who have addictions, mental illnesses, and people who just want to get smarter."

That's why, starting in April, Zebian will begin publishing a monthly column called "The Amazing Brain: Brain Science and Society," using case examples to reveal how cognitive functions are influenced.

Her columns will be featured in *The Monthly*, a Beirut-based research and statistics-oriented journal that publishes articles and columns on a wide variety of topics ranging from political and social issues to matters concerning science and health.

"I don't know if science is king in our country—probably it isn't—but there is a bit of leeway and acceptance that scientists are saying something that we should pay attention to," Zebian

said. She explained that she hopes the column will be used to spread knowledge on diverse issues from a perspective seldom considered in the country.

Her first column takes the issue of love and romance and describes scientifically what goes on in our brains when we're in love. The article attempts to explain why young people sometimes do the foolish things they do when they claim to be madly in love, and how some couples still succeed at preserving passion after decades of being together.

Another upcoming column will articulate a correlation between brain fitness and the ability to kick bad habits and addictions.

"The more perspectives you have on issues of public interest, the better," Zebian said.

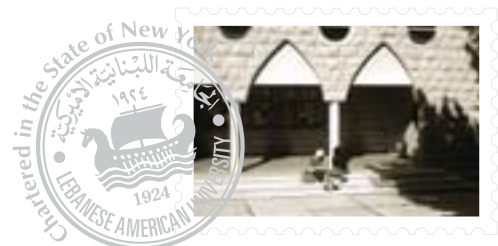
One of Zebian's main focus points in research, which will also be examined in a future column, includes the so-called "living in history effect," which she discovered to be unique to societies like Lebanon that have lived through long periods of chaos.

Rather than benchmarking significant moments in a person's life using a personal timeline, many middle-aged Lebanese instead tend to organize their memories around battles, invasions, assassinations, and other political and historical events.

"When cultural events reach down into your brain and reorganize your memory, that's really, really deep," Zebian said. "When memories are reorganized, other things happen to you. Your daily practices, your beliefs, commitments and your identity can be affected."

"The brain is plastic, and that means we should think a bit more flexibly about the potential to change peoples' brains. ..."

—Samar Zebian, assistant professor of psychology at LAU





Technology Advances Research and Scholarship at LAU Libraries

By Saba Haider

Up-to-date international journal collections and an e-books library that numbers in the hundreds of thousands are only two of the features that have made LAU's libraries an information powerhouse in Lebanon

The electronic resources at LAU's libraries have expanded considerably in recent years, driving the university to become a leading institution in Lebanon for faculty, students and researchers.

LAU's libraries have been able to use technology to advance their services, and this has contributed substantially to the advancement of scholarship and research at the rapidly expanding university, which has opened four new schools in the span of two years.

Today the research and informational needs of faculty and students at LAU, across its seven schools, is being met by the university's strategic development of research tools and resources, including one of the most impressive journal collections in the region.

LAU's libraries boast 132 full-text online databases of journals—some of which are updated every 15 minutes—in addition to

52,098 full-text electronic journals. The library includes close to 50,000 electronic books—of which 16,000 are owned by LAU—as well as 393,000 print books, and other informational records.

Of the 2,450 journals and magazines that the libraries carry, 70 percent will be available online by 2013.

"Our online databases are growing on a yearly basis by 4-6 percent," said Cendrella S. Habre, the director of the Riyadh Nassar Library at LAU Beirut. She said technology has facilitated the impressive growth and expansion of LAU's library collection, facilities and resources, resulting in library resources that are second to none in the country.

"By 2013, our plan is to have only 500 journal titles in print," said Habre. "Right now we have almost 700 in print."

One of the most noteworthy services the libraries offer is an international interlibrary loan and document delivery service.

Habre said the university's libraries offer "everything users need to study or do their work."

This also extends to a range of services available to library users, including specialized research training sessions, and live chat service to ask for assistance.

In addition to research tools, the library also offers both desktop and laptop computers for borrowing, as well as state-of-the-art network-connected furniture. ☺

"Our online databases are growing on a yearly basis by 4-6 percent."

—Cendrella S. Habre, director of the Riyadh Nassar Library at LAU Beirut



Students use the Beirut library's computers

The success of the new and constantly evolving services and facilities offered by LAU's libraries is evident in the attendance numbers, which are growing year after year. Habre said attendance has increased by a massive 134 percent year-on-year from the fall of 2008-09 to the fall of 2009-10—although she says borrowing books has decreased because more books are now available online.

Byblos library expansion on the horizon

Joseph S. Hage is the director of the campus library at LAU Byblos, for which a new and significantly expanded structure—to be named after the revered Lebanese writer Khalil Gibran—is scheduled to begin construction toward the end of this year.

First established in 1987 at the former LAU campus in Amchit, the library, now at Byblos, was launched in 1991 with around 10,000 volumes in a space of 600 square meters. Enrollment on that campus at the time was approximately 1,000 students. Now serving a student population of nearly 2,400 in Byblos, the library, in addition to its local stacks, has three remote access storage areas.

The Byblos campus is set to grow rapidly in both facilities and student enrollment over the coming year. Growth will include the opening of the new School of Medicine and School of Nursing, as well as the restructuring of the School of Engineering, in addition to the other schools of Pharmacy, Arts and Sciences, Business, and Architecture and Design.

"Naturally, the increase in student numbers leads to an increase in the library attendance," Hage said. He explained that the average student attendance at present is 750 students per day. However, Hage said the current Byblos library facilities are already stretched thin.

Despite the increase in general and specialized electronic databases at the Byblos library, Hage said the circulation of books has increased by 100 percent over the last 10 years due to the growth in student numbers, along with a highly efficient inter-campus loan program fuelled by a rich collection.

A steering committee for the Byblos library has been established and has met with architects, who will soon be submitting plans, said Hage. The new library will be completed in two to three years. ■

**"The increase in student numbers leads to an
increase in the library attendance."**

—Joseph S. Hage, director of the LAU Byblos campus library



Student Achievement

Helping Haiti

LAU students held several events to raise funds for the victims of Haiti's January earthquake. On January 21, Beirut's UNESCO, Social Work, Red Cross and Events Organization clubs set up boxes on campus to collect cash donations from passers-by. The funds were later sent to Haiti via the United Nations Development Programme. In February, 30 students in the MEPI Tomorrow's Leaders program organized a weeklong initiative. Students passed out flyers, set up a stand, held a film screening and sold raffle tickets for more than 100 prizes, including airline tickets. More than \$10,000 was raised.

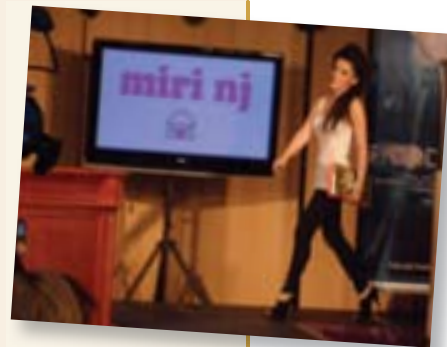


Bottle Caps to Wheelchairs

In late January, Beirut's UNESCO club and Byblos' Civic Engagement and Pulse clubs collaborated with their respective guidance offices for a project to collect caps from water bottles. The plastic caps will be recycled to buy wheelchairs for local NGO Arc en Ciel. One ton of recycled caps pay for one wheelchair, so the student clubs plan to expand the initiative and attempt to make it permanent on campus.

Class Projects for Goodwill

A group of students taking the Introduction to Public Relations course organized a charity event called "Sobriety in Style" on January 16 at the Commodore Hotel in Beirut, raising more than \$9,000 for Oum el Nour, a drug rehabilitation and prevention foundation in Lebanon. For a class project that required students to organize an event, the 10 students—Alia Samman, Natalia El Mani, Jihane de Freige, Nicolas Hadad, Maria Antoun, Tala Tourbah, Karim Jamaledine, Myriam Agha, Raha Richani and Ali Yassen—collaborated with around 15 companies and individual sponsors, as well as 31 volunteering students from various high schools and universities in Lebanon. A fashion show, raffle and alcohol-free cocktail party were held, and designers who were featured in the show—some of whom were alumni—sold their works at the event.



On March 2, eight more students in the same class held a fun-filled fundraiser for the Children's Cancer Center of Lebanon, bringing the children to LAU to watch Lebanese singer Cyrine Abdelnour perform, and to play games with a clown and receive special gifts. Rouba Jaafar, Omar El Koussy, Taima Al Farouqi, Farah Shami, Layan Doueik, Mirna Baydoun, Youssef Khaizaran, and Samia Buhulaiyem hosted around 250 people and raised over \$2,000 for the foundation—and put a smile on the children's faces.



Dean Farid Sadik

Doctor of Pharmacy Program Earns ACPE Re-accreditation

LAU's renowned Pharm.D. program achieves re-accreditation by the U.S. Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education, based on the success of a stringent self-study by the school

by Saba Haider

LAU's School of Pharmacy is celebrating its latest success after its renowned Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) program achieved re-accreditation in January 2010 from the U.S. Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE). The award is based on the success of a rigorous two-year self-study conducted by the school, through which it achieved ACPE's requirements.

Accreditation is a tool for ACPE to control pharmacy education in the United States, by making it uniform with contemporary methods of teaching and ensuring that changes are in line with new practices of pharmacy education, namely patient care.

LAU boasts the only ACPE-accredited Pharm.D. program outside the United States.

The ACPE re-accreditation process occurs once every six years. Dean of the School of Pharmacy Dr. Farid Sadik explained that it takes the university two years to prepare the self-study that must be submitted to the ACPE accreditation evaluating team for review three months prior to the team's visit.

"When they conduct their visit, they compare their observations with what they have read in the study in order to verify the accuracy of the information," Sadik said. "There are a number of sections that they explore, such as school mission, faculty, students, curriculum, assessment and facilities, including practice sites."

"ACPE gives their detailed expectations, and universities need to compare and match to that," Sadik said.

The self-study to prepare for the most recent visit by the ACPE accreditation team in the fall of 2009 began in 2008.

The school organized committees for every section that the ACPE team would be examining and the chair of the Steering Committee.

"Dr. Yolande Saab, who is now the associate dean of academic affairs, did a tremendous job with the support of faculty, central administration, students and staff," said Sadik. "Throughout the process, I observed all work done very closely."

At the end of its visit, the ACPE team conducted an exit meeting with the school's dean, as well as with the university's president and the provost. Then, within two to three months, they submitted their report to the ACPE Board of Directors—which meets twice a year in January and June—for review.

"It was excellent from the beginning," explained Sadik. "This year, they [the ACPE Board] met in January, and afterwards we received the decision for our re-accreditation. It wasn't easy, as we had to work really hard to achieve this, but in the end we did a marvelous job. ACPE has been impressed by LAU's investment in the [Pharm.D.] program."

Upon receiving the news of the re-accreditation decision, LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara sent a message on behalf of the LAU community, congratulating the dean, faculty, staff and students of the School of Pharmacy. President Jabbara added, "For continued accreditation of the Doctor of Pharmacy program, a comprehensive on-site visit must occur in 2016 prior to the June ACPE Board of Directors meeting. A focused visit will take place during the 2011–2012 academic year."



Pharmacy students



Sadik and faculty at the School of Pharmacy Hooding Ceremony

Growth and evolution

“Our school has done a good job in writing the self-study report when the accreditation team visited. We worked very hard to achieve the accreditation and we have improved the School of Pharmacy since 2006,” explained Sadik. “This is not a routine accreditation—because there are some schools in the U.S. that have been placed on probation.”

“There has been significant growth in the School of Pharmacy since 2006, when it had nine full-time faculty. Today it has 21 full-time faculty and over 600 students,” added Sadik.

The dean also explained that the School of Pharmacy only admits 75 students per year to the B.S. in pharmacy program, and between 25 to 30 students in the Pharm.D. program, highlighting that admission is a competitive process. Last year the program received 118 applicants. The success of LAU’s Pharm.D. students in passing the North American Pharmacy Licensing Exam (NAPLEX) has been consistently 100 percent.

“ACPE checks on faculty to student ratios, which need to be maintained,” Sadik explained, adding that the school has revised the curriculum, in line with ACPE requirements, since 2006. While much of this has already been implemented, it will go into full effect by next year. Curriculum changes occur in various ways, such as ensuring that the number of credit hours in specific subjects, as required by ACPE, is met.

That said, Sadik proudly stated that LAU pharmacy students have more clinical training than many other ACPE-accredited institutions. “They are required to finish clinical training in order to obtain the B.S. degree,” Sadik said. “The Pharm.D. program offers further clinical practice and academic training for students.”

LAU boasts the only ACPE-accredited Pharm.D. program outside of the United States

LAU’s School of Pharmacy is one of the only ACPE-accredited schools to offer both the B.S. in pharmacy and the Pharm.D. degrees, as in the United States, students typically enter a Pharm.D. program after the completion of two years of pre-pharmacy. Virtually no schools or colleges of pharmacy in the United States offer a B.S. in pharmacy. Such degrees have been phased out as of 2000.

“At LAU we require the B.S. in pharmacy degree to enter the Pharm.D. program because the Lebanese government requests it,” explained Sadik.

“We worked very hard to achieve the accreditation and we have improved the School of Pharmacy since 2006.”

—Farid Sadik, dean, LAU School of Pharmacy

Faculty on the Move



DR. LAMIS KARAOUI

Dr. Lamis Karaoui joined LAU in 2008 and was promoted to clinical assistant professor at the School of Pharmacy this academic year. She currently teaches Pharmacotherapeutics and Pharmacy Seminar to second-year professional pharmacy students. Karaoui also precepts third- and fourth-year pharmacy students in their respective professional pharmacy experiences. She was appointed director of experiential education in the Pharmacy Practice Department in February. The position entails assigning, managing and evaluating multiple aspects of the professional pharmacy experience, and the coordination of students and preceptors in the various practice sites. Karaoui serves on two committees at LAU and is a member of several professional societies locally and in the U.S. Hoping to make a difference in future generations of pharmacists, she deems herself lucky to be working with such supportive and professional peers, and enjoys investing in every student she teaches. Karaoui earned a Pharm.D. from LAU in 2005 and is a licensed pharmacist in New Jersey and Lebanon.



DR. SAMER SAAB

Dr. Samer Saab received his B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. in electrical engineering and an M.A. in applied mathematics from the University of Pittsburgh. He joined LAU in 1996 and was recently promoted to full professor of electrical engineering. Saab also serves as chairperson of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department. He is the recipient of the first LAU Best Research Award in engineering and physical sciences. In addition to his work with LAU, he has served on the editorial board of the IEEE Transactions on Control Systems Technology since 2005, and served on the Editorial Board of the IEEE Control Systems Society-Conference from 2005 to 2009. Saab hopes to see LAU recognized as one of the region's best institutions and attracting capable students from diverse backgrounds, as well as superior research-oriented faculty. "Rising to the top of academic institutions will require the unified commitment, spirit, imagination, ingenuity and creativity of the faculty, staff, students and administration," he said.



DR. BASSEL SALLOUKH

Dr. Bassel Salloukh has recently been promoted to full professor in the Social Sciences Department. Having joined the university in 2006, he finds LAU to have just the right atmosphere for his teaching and research needs. He hopes to maintain LAU's high standards of teaching and research as he continues to teach undergraduate and graduate courses in the politics of the Middle East and the developing world, as well as domestic politics and international relations. He is also teaching a new seminar on political philosophy. Salloukh also serves on several committees at LAU and—among numerous other projects—is working on a three-year IDRC-funded project that aims to examine the relationship between external democracy promotion efforts and citizenship empowerment in Lebanon, Iraq, the occupied Palestinian territories and Sudan. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from McGill University and previously taught at the American University of Sharjah.

Staff on the Move

CHARLES ABOU RJEILY



Charles Abou Rjeily has recently been promoted to assistant vice president and university comptroller. He joined LAU in 2000 as university comptroller. He oversees the University Comptroller's Office, providing financial and accounting systems that monitor and assess the financial position and internal controls of the institution, and oversees the Business Offices on both campuses. The offices are responsible for the LAU student loan system as well as the implementation and division of several LAU operation applications, such as the Banner and the Oracle Financial systems. Abou Rjeily has previously worked at KPMG in Dubai and Lebanon, as well as Mobil Oil Lebanon. He holds a licenses degree (with master's equivalence) in commercial sciences from Université Saint-Esprit Kaslik.

KARINA RODRIGUEZ



Recently promoted to associate director of the Marketing and Communications Department, **Karina Rodriguez** has been working at LAU since 1998. Also an alumna, she graduated with a B.A. in communication arts and began working at the then-Publications Office. While still a student, she helped launch the university's first website. Now she is in charge of the development of the LAU website, leading the redesign of the central website (launched in 2007) as well as school and other university sites. Rodriguez also helped found the *LAU Magazine and Alumni Bulletin*.

Remembered With Love

Ms. Amal Nakhoul

IT Maintenance Contracts and Quality Assurance Administrator 2004–2010

It is with great sorrow and deep sadness that LAU experienced the loss of a great friend and dear colleague, Amal Nakhoul on Monday April 5, 2010.

Nakhoul Amal had been a valued member of the IT Department at LAU since 2004, where she faithfully performed her multiple duties as the IT Maintenance Contracts and Quality Assurance Administrator, as well as the Administrative Assistant to the IT Directors.

Beyond her great professionalism, hard work, loyalty, and unwavering commitment to the university, Nakhoul Amal was a peacemaker whose positive attitude was infectious. As her illness weakened her, her spirit only strengthened.

She continued to work beyond the call of duty as she always did in spite of the disease that threatened to consume her. Eventually, she gave in to the illness, but not without a fierce fight.

Amal, our dear friend and sister, will always be remembered for her loving heart and indomitable spirit. Early on Easter Monday, coinciding with our Lord's Resurrection, she passed into eternal life. Our loss has become heaven's gain.



— As remembered by Mr. Roy Majdalani,

Vice President for Human Resources and University Services

Campusnotes

Art & Culture

On December 3, award-winning Lebanese novelist Nada Awar Jarrar gave a lecture entitled **“Writing Lebanon: Of Belonging and Displacement”** at LAU Beirut. She recounted the inspirations, influences and deep impact her experience of leaving Lebanon at a young age had on shaping her books.



Late Lebanese poet **Jawdat Haydar** was remembered at an LAU gathering on December 4 in Beirut campus' Irwin Hall Auditorium, held to commemorate the third anniversary of his death. Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences in Beirut Samira Aghacy, as well as guests Dr. John Monroe, who formerly taught at the American University of Beirut, and Lebanese University professor May Maluf, took turns speaking about Haydar—who published numerous works in Arabic and four volumes of poetry in English before his death at the age of 101.

On January 2, poets from many Arab countries came to LAU Beirut to recite poetry dedicated to the city of Beirut. The **Arabic poetry festival** was organized by LAU's Center for Lebanese Heritage and featured poets such as Wafa'a Al-Omrani from Morocco, Sadik Al-Mujtama from Sudan, and Lebanese emigrant May Al-Rihani.



Following the Ministry of Education's decision in May 2009 to introduce the study of the famous Lebanese artists the **Rahbani brothers** into Lebanese curricula, LAU's Center for Lebanese Heritage paid tribute to the artists on January 4. The tribute will continue every Monday of each month until June. The event featured two guest speakers as well as a short film by Ghadi Rahbani about his father Mansour, and segments of film footage from a few of Mansour's theatre productions.

Renowned poet, philosopher and LAU professor emeritus **Dr. Fuad Rifka**—who served LAU for more than 30 years—was honored on February 12 on the Beirut campus. The night was filled with poetic and theatrical performances celebrating his latest book, “Marthiyat Taer Al Qata.”



An **English creative writing workshop** was held on February 18 in Beirut to help aspiring novelists and poets learn new techniques. Led by LAU English instructor Abir Ward, the workshop explained basic organizational and mental exercises and tackled issues like overcoming writer's block and developing story characters. The workshop was divided into several sections that included prose, poetry, proofreading and editing, and publishing.

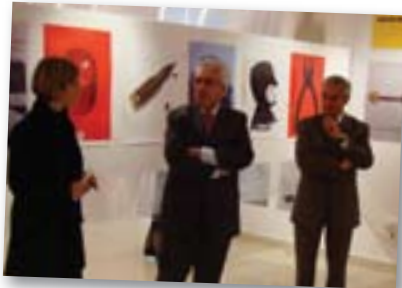
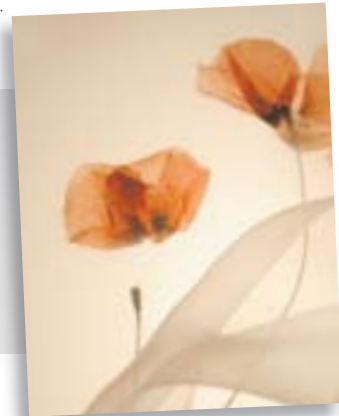


On Display



Leading architect Zaher Abou Ayache, a partner at London-based Foster + Partners, gave a talk on December 9 on the Byblos campus. He introduced his company and showed examples of their notable projects—such as London’s Wembley Stadium—in more than cities and explained the firm’s mode of operation. Abou Ayache met with many of the LAU students in London last September during their nine-day tour of architectural sites in London as part of **LAU’s Traveling Studio Program**—an annual program that takes fourth-year architecture students to visit various locations, each time with a different architecture instructor. The lecture was followed by the opening of LAU’s 2009 Traveling Studio exhibition. This year faculty member Elie Harfouche accompanied students on the trip to London, requiring each to research two buildings and present facts they had learned at the exhibit.

Melissa Plourde Khoury, LAU faculty member at the Graphic Design Department—Byblos, held a solo exhibition called **“Translations: Perceptions of Lebanon Through Foreign Eyes”** at the Galerie Surface Libre d’Art from December 9-31. The exhibit featured 34 digital prints created by the American artist over the past three years in which she has lived in Lebanon, with each print telling a story about the experience she has had here.



The **“Poster4Tomorrow”** exhibition, an international graphic design exhibition of posters that are all based on the common theme of freedom of expression, was held from December 10 to 17 at LAU Beirut. It was launched simultaneously across 21 countries last week to mark the 61st anniversary of UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights and featured 100 posters made by artists from more than 70 countries.

In March, **architecture** students on both campuses displayed their final year projects from the Design Studio courses from various levels. Projects included plans for a youth hostel in Jounieh and a commercial residential building in Beirut.



A poster from the Poster4Tomorrow exhibition

Center Stage

LAU's annual **Christmas concert** was held on December 14 at the Byblos campus. Organized and created by composer, musician and LAU faculty member Joseph F. Khalife, it was attended by students, faculty, staff and guests. Performer Joumana Medawar, a renowned international singer, known for her many performances in Europe, the United States, Canada and the Gulf countries, was the highlight of the evening and was accompanied by pianist Marc Abou Naoum.



This year's first **major theater production**, "In the Heart of the Heart of Another Body," directed by Nagy Souraty, drama and theater instructor in the Department of Communication Arts at LAU, attracted crowds to the Gulbenkian Theater on the Beirut campus January 9–10 and 14–17. The play is inspired by texts written by Etel Adnan, specifically Adnan's book of poems, "In the Heart of the Heart of Another Country." The non-traditional performance is not based on a specific script and does not have a specific plot; it is an impressive experimental performance featuring a cast of 15 student and professional actors who play themselves, along with a crew of 40.

Prominent British stage actor Adam Coleman of the **Shakespeare's Globe Theatre** gave a series of workshops February 17-20 on the Beirut campus for LAU students, as well as for 320 students from 13 local high schools and two other universities. He taught students a 10-step program to bring words from the page to the stage, as well as techniques such as communication skills, body language, tone, and brain gymnastics, in addition to self-awareness and self-knowledge.



On February 22, American comedian Tim Orr gave approximately 25 LAU theater students a four-hour **improvisation workshop**. He taught tools and techniques of the trade that help performers clear their minds and react impulsively during performances that force actors to think on their feet.

The **Al-Bustan Festival** came to LAU Beirut for two workshops and a theater performance of the play "Romeo and Julia." On March 2, Italian actor, author and theater director Antonio Fava gave a workshop to 25 students, and an improvisation workshop was held on March 11.



Live Science

On December 2, LAU's schools of business and engineering organized a lecture by Didier Moretti, the vice president of Emerging Technologies Group at Cisco, titled **"Innovation@Cisco."** Held on the Beirut campus, the talk focused on how Emerging Technologies Group is undertaking business incubation—the process of providing a favorable environment for nascent ideas to morph into business units, and then nurturing these small, newly established businesses toward full development.



A conference at LAU Beirut on December 14 called **"Impact of Pesticides on Agricultural Products: Reality and Solutions"** gathered Lebanese scientific experts to discuss the human health and environmental consequences of the use of toxic chemicals in agriculture in Lebanon, as well as the economic implications of exporting toxic-induced agricultural products. Among other guest speakers, the Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Hussein Hajj Hassan, announced that the ministry would soon begin implementing a plan for controlling and monitoring the use of chemicals and pesticides, and that he will establish an awareness unit in the ministry to advise farmers on the use of toxins.

On January 14, Dr. Jeffrey Murray, professor of neonatology, genetics, biological sciences, dentistry and epidemiology at the University of Iowa gave a talk at LAU Beirut on how the cutting-edge innovations in genomics are being applied to patient treatment and disease study. Titled **"Personal Genome for All,"** the lecture focused on several examples of how scanning and analyzing a human's personal genome can benefit individuals with treatable conditions, and can lead toward more individualized treatments.



Dr. Diane Evans, director for earth science at NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab in California, gave a lecture on **"The Critical Role of Satellites in Understanding the Environment"** on January 21 on both campuses. She warned attendees about the urgency of climate change and revealed data from NASA illustrating shrinking icecaps and rising sea levels. Information gathered through satellites using different techniques helps build models to predict what changes are likely to occur in the future, she said, predicting that climate issues are going to become increasingly more dramatic.

On February 24, representatives from the government and civil society gathered on the Beirut campus to discuss the urgent need for Lebanon to address the issue of **climate change**. The talk was headed by Dr. Ahmad Houry, associate professor of chemistry at LAU, who was selected as the Euro Arab Chair for Renewable Energies by the Granada-based Euro Arab Foundation for Higher Studies last year. It also featured Environment Minister Mohamad Rahhal; Abdo Tayyar, a representative for Water and Energy Minister Jubran Bassil; and Wael Hmaidan, executive director of IndyAct, a group of environmental NGOs.



Politics

On December 3 on the Beirut campus, LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World hosted a conference entitled **"Literary Readings in the Bible and the Quran,"** focusing on the role of women in both texts. The event gathered researchers and academics from a number of universities across Lebanon, as well as several religious figures of different denominations and sects and Lebanese Minister of Culture Salim Warde. The conference was held as part of a nationwide event celebrated by the Ministry of Culture and titled "Beirut as World Book Capital 2009."



As part of an ongoing guest lecture series in the Lebanese Politics and Administration course, assistant professor of political science Dr. Imad Salamey invited Middle East legal expert Issam M. Saliba—a legal specialist at the Law Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.—to give a lecture called **"The Lebanese Presidency in the Constitutional Discourse"** at LAU Beirut on December 3. Saliba gave a historical overview of the changes to the Lebanese Constitution that have led to the reduction of presidential power in the country over the decades, detailing several changes over the years due to three major agreements that limited the president's powers: the National Pact of 1943, the Taif Agreement in 1989, and the 2006 Doha Agreement. On January 12, former Lebanese Finance Minister Georges Corm gave a lecture entitled "Sectarianism and Lebanese Communal Conflicts," criticizing sectarian tendencies in Lebanon and challenging students to develop a strong program to fight sectarianism.

On December 5, more than 15 international affairs and political science students, along with faculty members Dr. Makram Ouais and Dr. Marwan Rowayheb, toured the **Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants** as part of a Diplomatic and Consular Services course. Junior Diplomat and LAU graduate George Jallad guided the group around different departments of the ministry, and introduced them to the secretary general of the ministry, Ambassador William Habib, and several diplomats in various departments.



Robert Fisk, renowned Middle East correspondent for the British daily newspaper The Independent, gave a lecture at LAU Beirut on January 12. Students, faculty and professionals listened to his thoughts regarding the failure of Western media to report on the truths of war and conflict in the Middle East. Fisk talked about how the Western world has adopted ideas since September 11, 2001, that had not been heard since the end of the First World War, making reference to the new wave of senseless xenophobia and prejudice that has swept the Western neo-liberal mindset. He added that the West's approach to peacemaking does not qualify as peaceful. Fisk criticized what he described as "propaganda campaigns" that editors in the Western media conduct in order to spin the coverage of conflict and news in the Middle East. He offered several examples of articles from around the world that display gross inaccuracies and mistruths, namely by not verifying independent sources. The lecture was the first of this year's "Distinguished Journalists Lecture Series," organized by LAU's Institute for Media Training and Research.

Goodwill

The university's **LAU AL WALID GC – Model United Nations program** kicked off its yearly activities for the fifth consecutive year with an inauguration ceremony held on December 12 in the Irwin Hall Auditorium on the Beirut campus, marking the beginning of a series of training sessions that will culminate in the Fifth Annual LAU Model U.N. High School Conference in April 2010. In addition to preparing participants for U.N. simulation and the final conference, the sessions aim to impart an ethic of compromise and understanding. A record number of 125 schools and 1,200 students are participating in this year's program, which has the motto "Peace Starts in the Mind."



Around 20 hospitality management students teamed up with chefs and representatives from the Rotana Hotels staff in mid-December, preparing more than **1,500 boxes of treats** to donate to orphans. The boxes, which contained sandwiches, muffins, chocolate milkshakes, potato chips, candy and apples, were distributed to several non-profit groups including Caritas, Dar Al Aytam and AFEL. The volunteers also spent time interacting with the excited children.



On January 15, representatives from the charity organization **Beirut for the Ethical Treatment of Animals** visited the Byblos campus. Bringing along several rescued dogs, the group came to promote the organization and raise awareness about abused animals in Lebanon.



A group of pharmacy students who participate in the No Apathy Pharmacy and Health Awareness Student Society visited **SOS Children's Village in Kfarhay** on February 20. Accompanied by Dr. Aline Saad, the students spent the day bringing some joy to the children who need it most, dressing in costumes, painting faces, as well as warning kids against the unsupervised use of medication.

Sidelines

On January 23, students from LAU Beirut won eight gold, one silver and two bronze medals at the 2010 Inter-Universities Taekwondo Championship of the Lebanese Federation of University Sports, held at the Notre Dame University in Louaize. Forty-five competitors from nine of Lebanon's universities competed in different belt and weight categories. LAU attained second place overall at the championship with a score of 66 points — losing to NDU by just five points.



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



THE LEGACY & THE PROMISE CAMPAIGN



Medical students in a smart classroom with Dr. Maya Khairallah

Reflections at Midpoint: LAU's Legacy and Promise Campaign

By LAU Staff

As we approach the midway point in The Legacy and the Promise, LAU's comprehensive fundraising campaign, it is a useful time to reflect on the ongoing importance of this effort, not only for LAU and its current and future students, but also for Lebanon, the region and the world.

The campaign has already touched the lives of students, faculty and staff at LAU by providing valuable support for financial aid and merit scholarships, funding the construction of valuable new additions to our campuses, and strengthening our academic foundation through endowed professorships. And it will continue to make a difference in people's lives throughout the Middle East and the world, now and for generations to come.

One of the more tangible, visible changes on campus is the Frem Civic Center, which will soon be inaugurated at LAU Byblos. In many ways this new building embodies LAU's commitment to its students, to building its infrastructure, and to supporting a broad range of practical scholarship on the university's campuses. The state-of-the-art facility will sit adjacent to a new, cutting-edge medical school that is currently under construction on the Byblos campus. The Frem Civic Center will house a number of the university's institutes. It will also become the focal point for courses, seminars and conferences on important themes such as ethics, leadership, citizenship, transparency, tolerance and democracy—all areas of vital importance—and will make pragmatic contributions to Lebanon and the region.

Another new addition, a library and administration building under construction near the Frem Civic Center, will not look anything like the dusty book depositories of the past. The six-level building, which has breathtaking views of the Mediterranean Sea, will function as an Information Commons—a one-stop location for teaching and learning that will feature a comprehensive repository of print and digital information resources. Technology will be pervasive throughout the facility, and will include full electronic links to the Riyadh Nassar Library on the Beirut campus.

Last September, LAU admitted the inaugural class of students into its new medical school on the Byblos campus. In the words of founding dean Dr. Kamal Badr, the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine was "conceived and designed to create a new physician, one who is superbly trained in the skills of 21st-century medicine, but who believes deeply that a physician is, above all, a merciful healer." The 25 pioneering students currently enrolled at the school are the beneficiaries of one of the most modern and progressive forms of medical education available today.

THE LEGACY 
& THE PROMISE
LAU CAMPAIGN FOR EXCELLENCE



Construction on the medical and nursing schools building, the Gibran Khalil Gibran Library and the Frem Civic Center on the Byblos campus

Not all of the university's capital projects involve the building of new structures. The business school on the Beirut campus has benefited from new "smart-classroom" features installed to provide high-tech integration between teaching and learning. Smart classrooms fully integrate technology into the learning process, ensuring that students have access to the latest instructional techniques and gain a mastery of the technology that will be an integral part of their adult lives—an important asset for students in any discipline, but of particular importance for those students trying to get a handle on the fast-changing world of business.

It is not just improvements in infrastructure that are making a difference; it is also the direct support that the campaign provides to students. By offering financial aid to qualified applicants, LAU can ensure that its student body remains diverse—a goal of paramount importance. To achieve this goal, the university must be able to admit as many qualified students as possible, regardless of their ability to pay tuition. Financial aid and merit scholarships play an important role in reaching this objective. Recently LAU increased the number of merit scholarships it provides more than four-fold—from 10 to more than 40. This has dramatically enhanced the opportunities available to talented applicants: Business student Farah Chihadeh, for instance, is confident that without such a scholarship, she would have needed to work two jobs to afford tuition.

The establishment of several endowed scholarships—from donors like Yvonne Aajine Kabban, Ghada Boulos, Allan and Reda Riley and others—will help supply a first-class American education for many students now and into the future.

Like any university, LAU's backbone is built on exceptional teaching professionals, and with a wide range of excellent faculty, LAU is making a difference, not only in the lives of its students, but around the globe. This is thanks in large part to the valuable research being conducted outside of the classroom. For example, Dr. Pierre Zalloua, a renowned geneticist who is a principal investigator with the worldwide Genographic Project sponsored by National Geographic, is examining the legacy and origins of the people of the Middle East, and training a new generation of young scientists at LAU.

Although the campaign itself is only temporary, its effects are long-term. The enhancements that LAU's supporters secure through this campaign will continue to benefit students, Lebanon, and the cause of education for many future generations. The new additions to our campuses, for example, will leave a long-lasting gift to the students who will use and benefit from them. And the availability of merit scholarships is a powerful way to address the need for affordability in higher education while rewarding ambition. With this campaign, Lebanese American University is truly making a difference in the lives of students and the world they live in. ■

THE LEGACY & THE PROMISE CAMPAIGN

Lebanese Businessman Said Fayeze Khalaf Renews His Commitment to LAU Students

By LAU Staff

In addition to playing a leading role in one of Nigeria's largest construction companies, prominent Lebanese businessman Said Fayeze Khalaf, who comes from the southern Lebanese town of Khiam, has been finding time to contribute to growth and development in more philanthropic fields. Since 2008, Khalaf, chief executive of Setraco-Nigeria Limited, has supported several scholarships at the Lebanese American University.

Khalaf's initial series of donations to LAU were directed at students pursuing master's degrees in international relations. On one hand, Khalaf is committed to furthering knowledge in this discipline because he believes it will enhance civic and social responsibility. "A broader understanding of history and international relations on both a macro and micro scale will result in more rounded individuals and professionals," said Khalaf.

On the other hand, Khalaf chose to support the study of international relations over other subjects for a deeply personal reason: In 2002, Khalaf's son, Nadim, then a student in international relations at Boston College, suddenly passed away at the age of 24. In his memory, the Nadim Said Khalaf Endowment Scholarship Fund was established alongside the Nadim Said Khalaf Annual Scholarship Grant in order to provide financial assistance to international relations postgraduates at LAU. Khalaf's combined donations to both funds have reached a quarter-million dollars.

Recently, Khalaf decided to diversify his commitment to furthering education at LAU. While continuing his support of international relations students, he is encouraging a new generation of Lebanese engineers by offering financial support tied in with offers of future employment. Thanks to Khalaf's support, two lucky engineering students will have their tuition fees at LAU covered for a four-year period and, upon graduation, will be offered jobs in one of Khalaf's companies. Two full engineering scholarships at LAU are now estimated at more than \$140,000.

LAU alumni who work for Khalaf's companies in Nigeria explained why recent graduates stand to benefit from this course of action: "In Nigeria, I'm able to save money, and within one year and a half, I was able to establish a new career and a new lifestyle," said Khalil Jabbour, an LAU engineering alumnus and Khalaf employee. "For instance, I was finally able to pay a down-payment for an apartment." Raed Saliba, another LAU graduate who has been hired by Khalaf as project manager for a 420-meter pre-stressed bridge in Ondo, West of Nigeria, added that, in Nigeria, "Life is not so demanding and you can save some money. As for work, you can develop your career to a great extent. You surely learn something important from this experience."

LAU is not the only academic institution to benefit from Khalaf's generosity: Students at other Lebanese universities have received financial assistance on a case-by-case basis, and Khalaf's companies have established scholarship funds for excelling and underprivileged Nigerian students as well. Nevertheless, the educational vision of LAU's leadership and its decision to open a second campus in Byblos, which Khalaf describes as "the ancient cradle of international relations in Lebanon," have caused Khalaf to hold LAU in particularly high esteem and to continue supporting the university.

Khalaf's renewed pledge to LAU and to students in different academic fields illustrates his longstanding commitment to education and growth. "I hope," said Khalaf, "that the donation will have a positive effect on producing a group of free-thinking young Lebanese professionals and entrepreneurs of the future."



GOAL \$65 Million

RAISED \$44,065,918



THE LEGACY
& THE PROMISE
LAU CAMPAIGN FOR EXCELLENCE

Alumni News

Faiza Fawaz Estrup (A.A.'51) went on to receive a B.A. in physics from Boston University, a Ph.D. in molecular biophysics and biochemistry from Yale University and an M.D. from Brown University. She practiced rheumatology, became medical director of the Arthritis Center of Rhode Island, and worked as chief of rheumatology at Memorial Hospital in Rhode Island. She took on the role of associate dean of medicine at Brown in 1999 and has received numerous awards and honors, including America's Best Physicians (Rheumatology) in 2003 from the Consumers Research Council of America. She married Peder Estrup in 1960. They are currently retired and reside in Santa Barbara, California, traveling often to Lebanon and around the world.

Hadia Harb (B.A.'66) has released a new book aimed at students of Arabic as a foreign language.



Hanan Patel (B.A.'68) became a grandmother on September 3, 2009, to twins Zak and Abeer. Her husband passed away in 2003.

Maral Kilislian (B.S.'70) was married in 1968 and moved to Canada in 1976. She and her husband have three children.

Roula Hussami (B.S.'84, M.B.A.'91) currently works as an independent consultant for small to medium-size companies in the Middle East and Africa.

Ahmad Rabi Issa (A.A.S.'85) was promoted to the position of country business manager for Nestle Professional, covering all of the Equatorial African Region starting in August 1, 2009, and lasting three years.



Fouad Moussa Ghandour (B.S.'86) currently manages and operates Roots Group offices in Malaysia, Hong Kong and China. Roots Group is considered to be one of the major global players in the manufacturing, distributions and retailing fields.

May Nasr (B.A.'88) works as a microfinance consultant in Lebanon and the Arab region, with more than 10 years of experience to her name. She also enjoys music and gives solo concerts in Lebanon, the U.S, Europe and most of the Arab countries.

Roger Semaan (B.S.'91) is currently working as the director of the Internet and Satellite Department for the Ministry of Information/ National News Agency.

Samir Gharzeddine (B.S.'93) moved to Saudi Arabia in 1994. He and his wife, Rana, have two children, Celine and Cybelle. He currently resides in Jeddah and works as an IT manager for a big company.

Samir El-Hoss (B.S.'96, M.B.A.'98) resides in Beirut with his wife, Shirine. Both are following their careers with multinational companies. They are proud to announce the birth of their second child, Ali, who was born on September 14, 2009. They also have a two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Leana.

Nadine Jammal Sabbagh (B.A.'96) currently lives in Beirut with her husband, Omar. They have three children: Karim, Malek and Lynn. She stopped working upon the birth of her first child.

Roula Chami (B.A.'97, T.D.'97) is an assistant branch manager at Byblos Bank's Mar Elias branch. She has three children. Her oldest daughter, Farah, recently entered LAU as a pre-med major.

Mosbah Jalloul (B.S.'98, M.B.A.'01) has recently relocated from Dubai to Switzerland, where he is working for Robert Bosch Headquarters as an area manager for Eastern Europe and Turkey. He and his wife, Hiba Darghawth (B.S.'01), announced the birth of their daughter, Luna, on August 19, 2009.

Firas Abouzaki (B.E.'99) welcomed a son, Caesar, on January 25, 2010.

Ahmad Amer el Rifai (R.C.D.'99) obtained two master's degrees in Italy in interior and industrial design. He is currently the general manager of two leading companies in the furniture business. He married Rewa Mahrus on March 3, 2010.

Nada Bazih (B.A.'99) currently resides in Texas. She is excited to announce the publication of her first novella, entitled "My Heart's Journey."



Imad Nabil Majdalani (B.E.'99) worked in Kuwait for six years and returned to Lebanon at the end of 2006. Since then, he has worked at the Mudeirej Bridge reconstruction, and then as a project engineer at the residential towers. Imad is also active in alumni events, serving as the secretary of the Engineering and Architect Alumni Chapter. He married Joumana Madi on January 31, 2010.

Adnan Tarabishy (B.S.'99, M.B.A.'08) founded Y2ad, a leading advertising agency in Syria, 10 years ago. He married Farah Saffaf in 2001, and they have two children, Yara and Nadib. He serves as current president of the Damascus Alumni Chapter.



Rania Agha (B.S.'00) is presently working as a business development manager for Asset Management.

Tariq Judeh (B.S.'00) was promoted to business development manager in the consumer finance division of SABB Bank in Riyadh.

Salim Shamel Haidar (B.S.'00, M.B.A.'08) is now working at BBAC in the Risk Management Department as well as teaching business courses part-time at the Lebanese International University. He was married in July 2009.

Zein Zein (B.A.'00, M.A.'09) had a daughter, Yara, on January 28, 2010.

Zaher El Itani (B.S.'01, M.B.A.'04) married Nivine Shmaiteh on December 20, 2008. They are expecting a son, whom they plan to name Adam.

Makram Malaeb (B.S.'01, M.B.A.'04) has been named the chief commercial officer for the Sultan Center in Oman.

Mohamad Marouf (B.S.'01) works as head of the payroll division at Diyar United in Kuwait. His wife, Hadeel, is a junior at the American University of London in Kuwait. They have two daughters, Maya and Tia.



Nina Rahal – Lott (B. Arch'01) completed her M.Phil. in architecture at the Glasgow School of Arts, and she currently lives and works in Surrey, U.K., with her husband.

Nohal Saab (B.S.'01) has been living in Dubai since 2002. She married Nasry Abou Zaki in 2003 and gave birth in Canada to her daughter, Joy, in 2009. She currently works as senior account manager for Landmark PR and Events.



Bilal Arnout (B.S.'02) previously worked for the Intercontinental Hotels in KSA, but has recently joined the Four Points Sheraton Le Verdun as a guest services manager.

Raed El-Hajj (B.S.'00) attended LAU before transferring to Ohio State University, where he received his Doctor of Pharmacy in 2002 and later his M.S. in pharmacology. He is married to Manal Kamar. They have two daughters, Sally and Meera. He is currently practicing as an oncology pharmacist at Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute.

Dalal Ghadban (B.A.'02) currently lives in Abu Dhabi with her husband, Mazan Imam, and two children. She worked for two years at Almurkai, an architecture company, but is not working at the moment.



Gina Sarkis (B.Pharm.'02) married Toufic Dina in 2003 and moved to Vancouver, Canada. They have three sons: Mitchell, Jad and Teo. In addition, they own a franchise of Shoppers Drug Mart, a Canadian pharmacy chain.

Rami Hajj Ali Ahmad (B.S.'03, M.B.A.'06) was selected by Citibank to be one of a group of 13 from Europe, the Middle East and Africa to be an assistant manager and do projects in various countries. After completing several projects in Bahrain, Egypt and Dubai, he decided to move to the Local Commercial Bank within Citibank Dubai as a relationship manager.

Elsie Nassar (B.Pharm.'03) married **Patrick Abdel Karim (A.A.S.'00)**. They welcomed a son, Kevin, on May 19, 2009.

Safaa Abdouni (B.A.'04) married Mohamed Smadi, a business analyst, on June 23, 2009, at Owens Corning. She moved to the U.S. and currently lives in Toledo, Ohio.

Karim Abdullatif Fakhoury (B.S.'04) opened Corners, a new furniture gallery on Verdun Street, in 2008.



Fadi Hammoud (M.B.A.'04) was married on September 25, 2009.



Nadine Marashli (B.A.'04, T.D.'05) married **Raef Hachache (R.C.D.'99, A.A.S.'01)** on September 23, 2009. In February 2010, they opened the second branch of Raef Hachache Art & Craft, a supplies shop based in Hamra.

Mohammad Naamani (B.S.'04) spent one year with Dubai Islamic Bank, then moved to Kuwait, where he worked for four years for Gulf Bank as a private banking manager. He is currently in the U.S. working on his master's in finance and accounting at Bradford University.

Nadine Arasoghli (B.A.'05, M.A.'09) completed her master's in counseling from Webster University in California. She is currently working on receiving her license in marriage and family therapy. Nadine also received the "Counselor of the Year" award.



Ralph C. Bistany (B.S.'05), after graduating, became a member of his family's business, SABIS® Educational Services s.a.l., a global education management organization. He is currently the H.R. officer for the company's head office in Lebanon.

Karim Boustany (B.E.'05) is currently working as a health-care management engineer while simultaneously pursuing his Ph.D. in industrial engineering at Purdue University.



Mohamad Daher (B.S.'05) is presently working as the regional brand manager for a cosmetics company in Dubai.



Mahmoud Ghalayini (M.B.A.'05) started his own hiking club, called Footprints Nature Club, on October 18, 2009. The club organizes weekly hiking trips to different places in Lebanon. For more information, visit www.footprintsclub.com.

Hani Jardali (B.S.'05) is working at Saudi Oger Ltd. in Riyadh, where he has been promoted twice already, most recently to analyst programmer.

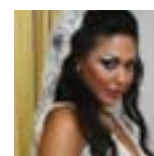
Ayman Abi Hussein (B.E.'06) was engaged to Lody Jourdi on December 20, 2009. He also started his own company in the flower industry.

Mohammed Al-Othman (B.A.'06) is married and has two children. He currently works in the General Department of International Health for the Ministry of Health in Riyadh.



Haitham Afif Ghaddaf (B.S.'06, M.B.A.'09) worked with P&G in Saudi Arabia as a sales manager for two years. He also spent a year working for BLOMINVEST Bank. He is now an inspector at Direction General de La Surete General.

Nadia Marwan Houssami (B.A.'06) previously worked as a CSO at the head office of the Federal Bank of Lebanon. She currently lives in Dubai with her husband, Houssam, who owns two subcontracting companies. They anticipate the arrival of their son in April.



Mohamed Abboud (M.I.S.'07) is now handling the procurement operations for IBM Middle East, focusing on the MENA region, which the company recently added to its scope.



Ibrahim Ballout (B.S.'07) obtained a master's degree from HEC Liege in 2009. He is currently working as a project manager at Pagen, a construction and steel company based in Luanda Angola, with some projects in Lebanon. He is also pursuing a Project Management Professional (P.M.P.) certification.

Abdel Rahman Sabban (M.B.A.'07) has moved back to Lebanon to work for Lebanese Credit Insurance (LCI) as a credit analyst.



Rami Abi Sleiman (B.S.'07) is currently employed by Bank Audi-Audi Saradar Group as a recruitment and selection officer.

Maroun Aad (B.E.'08) is working at Dar Al-Handasah as a telecommunications engineer.

Salman Alayan (B.S.'08) has been working in Kuwait as a financial analyst. After starting at the Sultan Center, he moved to Kuwait Danish Dairy Company (KDD). In addition, he has completed Level 1 of the CFA and is preparing for the remaining two levels.



Eman Al Ali (B.S.'08) was married last November to Mohammad Al Khayat. She also recently joined AlBaraka Islamic Bank in Bahrain, where she currently lives. She greatly misses Lebanon.

Sami Hamidi (B.S.'08) is currently employed by Medgulf Riyadh at Motion Al Saudia.

Ziad Tarchichi (B.E.'08) works for the Contracting and Trading Company (CAT). His first year was in the procurement department, but he is currently working on site.

Oussama Ajouz (B.S.'09) joined CMCS Lebanon as a specialist in the professional services department. He is a Certified Associate in Project Management from PMI.

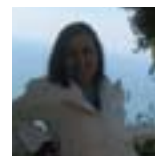
Dima Assaf (B.A.'09, T.D.'09) is currently working as a third-grade homeroom teacher in Abu Dhabi. She plans to return to Lebanon in two years.



Alaa Malhas (B.A.'09) went back to his hometown in Jordan after graduating and at first worked for Jordan TV. He applied for jobs in several places before finding work at WHO Iraq office in Amman, Jordan.

Sarah Sharief (B.S.'09) is pursuing her M.F.A. in filmmaking at UCLA. She is also opening her own online business for Paper Mart as well as working with Jouhina Magazine, for which she has written a few articles. As of May 2010, she will be working for Warner Bros.

Rana Shehadi (B.A.'09) was offered an opportunity by the Palestinian Human Rights Organization (PHRO) to work in Nahr el Bared Palestinian camp as a reporter for the abused women and children. She has also been selected, along with seven others, to write a report to show and discuss at the U.N. in Geneva this coming June.



Mohanad Mohamad Zebib (B.S.'09) is presently in Jeddah, where he is expanding his family's business in the paper industry. He is also working on updating the database of the Jeddah Alumni Chapter.

Rachad Atat (B.E.'10) recently graduated from LAU, and King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) has accepted him as part of its student exchange program, allowing him to take graduate courses at the University of Melbourne. He will take courses in the field of communication and signal processing, which he will pursue later at KAUST.

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Every year.
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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.

Alumni Events



Byblos Alumni Chapter Halloween Night

The LAU Byblos Alumni Chapter celebrated Halloween night at the Mexican restaurant O-Cacti in Zouk on December 4—the day of St. Barbara. Members of the chapter surprised other alumni by bringing along two former teachers. More than 50 alumni attended.

Abu Dhabi Alumni Chapter Lebanese Night

The Alumni Association's Abu Dhabi Chapter organized a "Lebanese Night" on December 10 at the Marina Al Bateen, Abu Dhabi. More than 300 alumni and friends attended the event.



Amman Alumni Chapter Lecture

On Tuesday, December 15, the Amman Alumni Chapter organized a lecture entitled "Jerusalem City, Between the Past and the Present." Sebastian Bishop Atallah Hanna and Dr. Mohammad Mostapha Al Alami presented the lecture, which was followed by a reception honoring the two guest speakers.

School of Engineering Alumni Chapter Dinner

The School of Engineering Alumni Chapter held a dinner on Saturday, December 19, at Salmontini restaurant, Ashrafieh. The feast drew more than 100 alumni and friends.



Damascus Alumni Chapter Discussion

The Damascus Alumni Chapter organized a one-on-one discussion titled "Why: We Were Born To Win" presented by renowned media figure Neshan on Saturday, January 16. The discussion gathered more than 200 alumni and friends and was followed by a Q&A session and a networking and cocktail reception.

Dubai and Northern Emirates Alumni Chapter Cultural Event

The LAU Alumni Association–Dubai and the Northern Emirates Chapter joined efforts with the American University of Beirut and the Université Saint Joseph alumni associations in organizing the annual cultural evening, which honored singers Um Kalthoum and Fairouz, on Monday, January 18, at Madinat Jumeira Amphitheater. More than 400 alumni and friends attended.

The highlight of the evening was Orchestra Al Sharq, an amazing group of musicians of various nationalities—Arabs and non-Arabs—paying tribute to the golden age of music with Um Kalthoum and Fairouz.



Alumni Relations Office Lecture

On Friday, January 22, the Alumni Relations Office organized a lecture on "Emotional Intelligence in Management" at the Business Building on the Beirut campus. The lecture was presented by LAU professor Dr. Michel Chalhoub, who has academic as well as industry experience in the field. Chalhoub discussed how EI offers new ways to look at management style, attitudes, interpersonal skills, and behaviors as it has applications in human resource management, customer relations and management development. The event, which brought in more than 230 alumni and friends, was followed by a reception.



Beirut Chapter Elections

The Beirut Alumni Chapter held partial elections for its committee on Monday, February 1. Bassel Zein was voted vice president, Mazen Baydoun was voted treasurer, and the members now include Mahmoud Baydoun, Haitham Kebbi, Mohammad Khalil, Hani Kreidieh, Zeinab Nassar and Elissar Hajj Zarwi.

Theatrical Poetry Evening

The Alumni Relations Office organized a "Theatrical Poetry Evening" at LAU Beirut's Irwin Hall Auditorium on February 12. To read more about this event, kindly go to the LAU's website: http://www.lau.edu.lb/news-events/news/archive/honoring_renowned_poet_and_phi/



Qatar Chapter Movie Screening

On February 17 the Qatar Alumni Chapter held a special screening of the LAU production "When Maryam Spoke Out" at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Qatar. The screening was the first event for the chapter in 2010. More than 80 alumni and friends attended.



KSA Eastern Province Chapter and AUB Alumni Chapter Dinner

The KSA Eastern Province Chapter and the American University of Beirut's Alumni Chapter organized a joint dinner on Thursday, February 18, at Nesma Compound. In addition to dinner, a theatrical performance by "Les Diseurs"—who flew in from Lebanon especially for the occasion—entertained the more than 600 alumni and friends present.



Houston Gathering

A group of Houston alumni gathered for a dinner at Alexander the Great Restaurant in Houston, joined by alumni relations directors for the Middle East and North America, respectively, Abdallah Al Khal and Ed Shiner.

The group discussed plans to develop a chapter in the Houston area, and they displayed a positive outlook and commitment to the effort, even though the planned chapter would currently only have around 25 members. Key members have already begun work toward the development of the chapter, and plans will likely be finalized by this summer.

2nd Annual Gathering of Alumni of North America

Following last year's inaugural gathering for all North America chapters in Florida, the 2nd Annual Gathering of Alumni of North America was held in Las Vegas, Nevada, February 26-28 at the Trump International Hotel. A welcome reception was held on Friday night to greet the alumni. On Saturday morning, the group attended a presentation and discussion on "Alumni Mentoring," given by Hiba Yazbeck of Detroit and Director of Alumni Relations Abdallah Al Khal, followed by a dinner that evening. Sunday's events included brunch and a discussion on "Connecting with Your Alma Mater," led by Edward Shiner, Director of Alumni in North America. Plans for next year's gathering were also discussed. During their free time, the attendees explored Las Vegas, and many people stayed on a few extra days to extend this vacation weekend. Participants came from Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago, Phoenix, Washington, D.C., and Toronto. Some were new to the alumni community and eager to get more involved in their local chapters.



UPCOMING EVENTS— Mark Your Calendar!

- > **June 6** Annual Picnic, Toronto Chapter, Centennial Park, Toronto
- > **June 11** Alumni Lecture, "Body Language" presented by Mr. Imad Mkahhal, LAU Beirut Campus, Business Building Room 904, 6:30 p.m.
- > **July 14** Alumni Dinner, Bellucci's, Gemmayze, Beirut, 9:00 p.m.
- > **July 15** Alumni Reunion, Byblos Campus, 7:00 p.m.
- > **July 16** Alumni Reunion, Beirut Campus, 7:00 p.m.
- > **July 17** Annual President's Forum Brunch, Beirut Campus, 10 a.m.
- > **July 18** All Day Alumni Trip
- > **August 8** Toronto Chapter Breakfast in the Park, Adams Park, Toronto
- > **July 1st** 20th Annual Graduation Ceremony - Byblos campus
- > **July 3-4th** 85th Annual Graduation Ceremony - Beirut campus

WHY I GIVE BACK



Rose Clark

ATTENDED

Junior Year Abroad Student, 1967–1968

CAMPUS

Beirut

WHERE HE LIVES NOW

Buckley, Washington

OCCUPATION

Spent 31 years as an elementary school teacher before retiring to travel and do volunteer work.

WHY SHE GIVES TO LAU

I had a wonderful experience studying at BCW as it was known when I was there. I know that a lot of students struggle financially to complete their higher education degrees and I want to do my part to help

“I’m simply giving back in a small way. I believe that higher education is a great investment.”



As a prominent and successful contractor Abdallah Yabroudi understands the importance of a quality education and practical experience. This is why he is committed to LAU.



✧ ABDALLAH YABROUDI
IS THE LEGACY AND THE PROMISE.

In 2009 he established an annual scholarship for LAU engineering students, and offered them the opportunity to receive invaluable, hands-on training at the Dubai Contracting Company. Because of his contributions and leadership, LAU students are receiving state-of-the-art training that will help them achieve more in the future—both for themselves and for the Middle East.

For more information, please contact:

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