


# LAU magazine

VOLUME 13 | issue n° 3 | Fall 2011-2012

## & ALUMNI BULLETIN



### Arab Spring Harvest

Food and revolution

### Souks and Salad

Lebanon's growing organic movement

### Objects in Mirror are Thinner than They Appear

Body image and eating disorders

### Whither the Mediterranean Diet?

*Food for Thought*



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Guided by goodwill and a firm sense of social responsibility, the LAU community is dedicated to the realization of a more humane and just world. The university encourages community development and citizen-building projects, motivated by a belief in the common good that transcends the particular interests of individuals and concentrates on the well-being of society. In addition to the many LAU institutes that are routinely involved in social activities, the newly created Outreach and Civic Engagement department places social development at the heart of its mission and solidifies the university's position as a concerned institution.

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## Letters to the Editor

"As an ex-LAU staff retiree I read your magazine almost cover-to-cover. "Migration Studies Finds a Home at LAU" in your last issue really caught my attention. I have lived abroad for much of my career — a year in Central America, seven years in the U.S.A., and two years in Qatar before my 23 years at LAU. I look forward to your next issue."

—Ramzi Namey

"Well done! I like the subjects — very useful and up-to-date."

—Sawsan Khanafer, managing director, Promo-I

"I just finished reading the latest LAU Magazine over the weekend. It is great! My thanks and congratulations to you and your staff for a job very well done!"

—Joseph G. Jabbara, president, Lebanese American University

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## From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

*Nothing quite encapsulates a culture's values like its culinary traditions. Food rituals provide the fabric of family, kin, and communal bonds in a given culture, revealing its notions of hospitality and openness, its ideals of individual pleasure and collective wellbeing, its relationship to nature, even its aesthetic imagination. The dawn of human civilization arrived with the shift from hunting and gathering food to cultivating and preserving it, and by no mere coincidence the first streaks of that dawn appeared here in the "fertile crescent" of Mesopotamia and the Levant.*

*As fractious and divided as Lebanon has been in its contemporary history, one place those divisions can be counted on to dissolve is at table. At mealtimes we all know what it means to be Lebanese. Our mezze are not only world-renowned in culinary circles; they are emblematic of a national ethos of hospitality, graciousness, artful conviviality and the pleasures of sharing.*

*LAU is a university unusually invested in this ethos. It's an investment that goes beyond culinary traditions, touching on everything from business and entrepreneurship to health, nutrition and wellbeing to the economic and political stability of the region. Our Institute of Hospitality and Tourism Management Studies is a leader in its field, preparing students for careers in an industry witnessing tremendous regional growth (the summer of 2010 saw Lebanon's largest wave of tourism in the country's history). Students in LAU's recently launched B.S. program in nutrition train alongside students in the medical, nursing, and pharmacy schools, preparing for in-demand careers as dieticians.*

*The subject of food in the twenty-first century transcends culture and health; it now has geopolitical implications. The global food price crisis that began several years ago has hit developing countries the hardest, and many economists and political scientists now recognize it as a major factor in the regional upheavals of this year's "Arab Spring." The features in this issue of LAU Magazine and Alumni Bulletin approach food holistically, as central to our social, cultural, emotional, political and economic lives. They are food for thought; I hope you enjoy them.*



Joseph G. Jabbara  
President





# Commencement Fever Ripples Through LAU

Hundreds of black mortarboard hats, fireworks and waves of resounding cheers went skyward in a series of commencement ceremonies, where 487 students received their degrees at LAU Byblos (June 30), and 1,212 at LAU Beirut (July 2 – 3).



*Dr. Mouna Elias Haraoui*

*Dr. Gilbert Chagoury*



*Dr. Rose-Marie Chagoury*



LAU Beirut spread commencement over two days because of the high number of graduating students. The July 2 ceremony was for all graduate students and for undergraduate students of the schools of Arts & Sciences and Architecture & Design, and the next day's for students of the School of Business.

"May you always find success, happiness, and satisfaction in your future careers," LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra told the graduating class near the close of his speech.

Jabbra's address not only wished the graduates prosperity and success but urged them to live ethical and reflective lives.

"May you be ready and willing to help and comfort all who come to you in need," he said. "May you be wise, strong, gentle, and forgiving. May you always live in the company of your friends, exploring the richness of life, and experiencing the joy of giving all your days."

Honorary doctorates in Humane Letters were conferred on Mrs. Mouna Elias Haraoui, former first lady of Lebanon, founder and president of the Chronic Care Center, and president of the Lebanese Heritage Foundation; H.E. Gilbert Chagoury, ambassador and permanent delegate of Saint Lucia to UNESCO; and his wife, Mrs. Rose-Marie Chagoury; and Mr. Said Tawfic El Khoury, chairman and president of Consolidated Contractors Company (CCC).

Gilbert Chagoury, a diplomat, philanthropist and member of LAU's Board of Trustees who has contributed lavishly to the university's new schools of Medicine and Nursing, told students: "I am extremely happy to become, like you, a graduate and alumnus of an institution that I highly admire and truly love."



LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara speaking at LAU Beirut commencement ceremony

Chagoury's speech at the Byblos ceremony emphasized the importance of education and philanthropy for the future of the region. "Nation building requires individual and collective sacrifices — it demands enlightened leadership," he said. "As I see these qualities reflected in your radiant faces and sense your noble aspirations electrifying this august commencement exercise, my heart fills with hope for a better future for Lebanon, for this region, and for humanity."

Haraoui's honorary doctorate speech on July 2 echoed this theme of national solidarity and idealism. Stressing her dedication to her own chosen causes — "the least privileged and the most needy, women's rights and Lebanon's national heritage" — Haraoui then turned to the next generation's civic leadership.

"Let us dream this evening," she resoundingly concluded, "of a Lebanon where human dignity, integrity and respect of diversity prevail, where human rights, social justice and dialogue dominate, where allegiance to our nation has priority over all other considerations."

In his acceptance speech on July 3, Khoury said he closely followed LAU's transformation through the years from a small college for women to a "world-class" university undergoing continuous growth.

"A quick glance at the path this institution pursued in the past few decades assures us that behind all this success is hard word and creativity at the academic, planning and financial levels," Khoury said.

He added: "There is no doubt that LAU's success also springs from the native soil of Lebanon," he added. "This small country is home to a great people who love education and culture."

Inspiring speeches were also given by the class valedictorians. In his July 2 valedictorian address, Hassan Abdallah Nasser stressed the transformative power of a university education. On the July 3 ceremony, valedictorian Aya Mohammad Dabbous suggested that education does not end with graduation, and she amused the audience by citing wisdom from the children's show Sesame Street.

Byblos valedictorian Antoine Boutros Gebrayel highlighted the importance of "emotional intelligence." He concluded on a wistful note: "As we close this chapter and continue to write the pages of our lives, let's never forget the bridges we've crossed, the bonds we've shared and the memories we've made."

Dr. Said Tawfic El Khoury







# Whither the Mediterranean Diet?

The rising tide of fast food and the slow erosion of tradition

By Emily Morris





The Mediterranean diet has been an international sensation for decades. The subject of bestselling books in the West, continually recommended by nutritionists and doctors for its reputed protection against serious illnesses, its popularity is far from waning.

Although the countries that touch the Mediterranean's shores are very diverse, each has all or some of the same components in its traditional base diet, which in its best-known form is rich in fresh produce, whole grains, legumes, fish, and olive oil, with low to moderate amounts of meat and dairy products.

Why, then, is the birthplace of this diet facing an alarming rise in obesity levels, and a significant increase in heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and certain cancers?

Strolling the streets of Beirut and other Mediterranean cities it doesn't take long to see what might have gone wrong. Burger joints, big supermarket chains and "we deliver" signs are ubiquitous, as if they have been there forever.

But it wasn't so long ago that the traditional neighborhood restaurant reigned supreme, and when a walk to the local grocer would provide a family with everything needed for a home-cooked meal.

In a 2008 report released by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, senior economist Josef Schmidhuber observed that the Mediterranean diet had "decayed into a moribund state" in its home area.

While levels of pessimism vary, experts agree that the defining features of the diet are in decline.

According to Dr. Maya Nabhani Zeidan, who teaches nutrition at the American University of Beirut, since the 1960s the Mediterranean diet in Arab countries has evolved into something more mixed.

### *Rapid development has transformed not only the regions's physical landscape but the dietary habits of its population.*

"We do still have some of the characteristics of the traditional diet, such as high fruit and vegetable intake, and a prevalence of olive oil over other types of fats," she says, "but we can see that the Western-style diet has begun to creep in."

Western diets are usually higher in fats, refined carbohydrates, red meat and animal products. Growing affluence around the region, Schmidhuber's report proposed, has allowed people to add a large number of calories from meat and fats to their diets, and at the same time exercise less and less.

There are other factors behind this trend. Rapid development, globalization and urbanization have not only changed the physical landscape of the region; they have altered the dietary habits of whole populations. Zeidan says this is indicative of a "nutrition transition," or a shift in diet due to large, external influences, which also include changes in food production techniques, ramped-up media advertising and the opening of global markets. All of these factors, according to Zeidan, have triggered changes in food availability for consumers and a gradual shift away from traditional Mediterranean cuisine.



Beirut's university neighborhoods are lined with Western fast-food chains

## *Startling health implications*

As the adage goes, you are what you eat.

Processed foods and condiment-heavy, fatty burgers are wreaking havoc on waistlines around the Mediterranean and beyond. There isn't a country in the region that has been left untouched, from Lebanon and Egypt to Spain and Italy. Today in Greece, the country where the so-called Mediterranean diet originated, 75 percent of the population is overweight (having a body mass index above 25) or obese (having a body mass index above 30). Schmidhuber's report also found that more than half of the Italian, Spanish and Portuguese populations are overweight.

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) obesity is on the rise. A recent review article published by scholars at AUB highlighted studies of adult men and women in the MENA countries showing obesity levels at times exceeding those in the U.S. (where 32.2% of the adult population is reportedly obese). In Syria and Jordan, 38.2 and 34.8% of adults are obese, respectively. And in oil-rich Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, 43.8 and 39.8% of adults are obese. Particularly alarming is the prevalence of obesity among adult women in the Persian Gulf, exceeding 50% in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

The study points to the hot climate and socially conservative nature of the Gulf countries — which especially affects patterns of physical activity in females — as important factors contributing to obesity, along with modernization and adoption of a western lifestyle.

Other MENA countries fare better. In Lebanon and Morocco, for example, only 17 and 16% of adults are reported as obese. 🍷



*Not all traditions are in peril. A woman prepares a saj using old methods.*

Those numbers are growing, however. Lebanon, according to the AUB study, showed an increase in obesity prevalence by almost 33% over the past decade.

"I never used to see extreme obesity, and now we're seeing it more regularly," says Huda Maamari, head of the dietary department at Beirut's Hotel Dieu Hospital. "I'm also seeing more weight problems among children, youth, and ladies."

With obesity comes a higher risk of cardiovascular disease, some types of cancer, hypertension, high cholesterol and diabetes.

"I've had patients come in with type 2 diabetes at ages 35 and 40 rather than 55 or 60," says Maamari. "Of course, it's very troubling."

### *The rise of fast food*

Maamari explains that although a typical Mediterranean diet exists in Lebanon, people are drifting gradually away from it, becoming "westernized" in their reliance on fast food and ready-prepared meals. "Mothers also work longer hours and have far less time to prepare healthy dishes," she says.

She also cites the delivery phenomenon as a catalyst for Lebanon's move away its dietary roots. "Even five years ago going out for a pizza was an event of sorts, but now you can make a call and have them delivered at home. They're available every single day."

One reason for the popularity of the Mediterranean diet among health-seekers around the world is that it doesn't consider fat to be bad, as long as it's good fat. Fish and olive oil

are rich in monounsaturated fats and omega-3 fatty acids, well-known cholesterol fighters.

Given the proximity to the sea one might think that the Lebanese would eat a lot of fish, but experts say that unsafe water and high prices have contributed to a decrease in fish consumption.

"Fish is more expensive these days, especially at restaurants," explains Dr. Nadine Zeeni, director of LAU's nutrition program. "This doesn't make it very motivating to eat. People also tend to have a natural preference for fattier foods, since fat gives palatability to food. Fish is leaner."

### *Socioeconomic factors*

Both price and taste are huge factors when it comes to food preferences; in Lebanon salty, sweet and fatty foods are widely available, usually taste good, and are relatively cheap. As a result, eating unhealthily is often not simply a matter of choice.

"It tends to be the lower socioeconomic strata that have the biggest rise in obesity rates," says Zeeni. "Wealthier people can usually afford to eat healthier meals, and are generally more educated and health conscious."

Poor, rural areas of Lebanon are indeed seeing rising levels of obesity. Dr. Carine Issa, a professor of nutrition at Haigazian University, the Lebanese University, and Université Saint-Joseph, published a study this year on the Mediterranean diet and obesity in rural populations from the Bekaa and Mount Lebanon. She studied the food habits of 798 adult men and





Beirut's Tawlet restaurant features traditional regional cuisine from all over Lebanon. Experts say such cuisine is being eclipsed by Western fast food

women between the ages of 40-60, recruited under the Wild Edible Plants Project (a project directed by Dr. Malek Batal of AUB and funded by the International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada). Results showed that 17% of men and 33.7% of women were obese. Issa found that the calorie intake of the sample relied primarily on two things in large quantities: white bread and white sugar. "These are empty and cheap calories," Issa explains. "In the study we saw that some people were adding up to seven teaspoons of sugar in their coffee and tea, which is around 35 grams of sugar."

**"It tends to be the lower socioeconomic strata that have the biggest rise in obesity rates."**

—Dr. Nadine Zeeni, professor of nutrition and director of LAU's nutrition program

While some components of the Mediterranean diet — the prevalence of fruits and vegetables — still exist among a small group of the studied sample, Issa attributes high obesity levels to a lack of knowledge about healthy nutrition, as well as a sedentary lifestyle. "The aim of the project was to encourage poor, rural populations to look for wild edible plants, which are highly accessible, cost nothing and are rich in nutrients. Many people did not even know these existed in their backyards."

According to Zeidan, the nutrition transition tends to hit developing countries hardest, where budgetary constraints make it difficult to cope with increasingly widespread health problems. "Most of our medical care here in the region is

curative rather than preventive, which means we will be ill-equipped to deal with a growing population with high rates of obesity and non communicable diseases."

"People come into my clinic after they already have hypertension or diabetes," says Maamari. "We absolutely need to be more proactive in preventing these diseases, especially in children, rather than just treating them."

What can be done to buck the region's obesity trend? Experts point to a combination of school- and community-based initiatives, as well as more cooperation from policy makers to identify a national nutrition strategy.

"In Lebanon, we need to be more constructive at the national level. It's not enough for groups of NGOs and universities to periodically initiate nutritional awareness campaigns," says Zeidan.

And maybe the Mediterranean population could benefit from reading some of the bestselling books currently found in the rest of the world's kitchens about the "Mediterranean Diet." Getting back to their healthier, dietary roots has never been more critical. ■





Left: Sahadi's, a Lebanese food institution in New York | Right: Pastry counter in Manhattan's Little Syria, late 1930s

# The Vanished Levant of Lower Manhattan

## Little Syria left living roots in the cuisine of the Big Apple

By Greg Houle

Though situated in the modern and hectic environment of New York City's financial district, Washington Street in lower Manhattan is one of those New York streets that evoke a sense of the past. An urban stroller following its snaking route uptown from Battery Park at the island's southern tip cannot but imagine how it might once have looked. A tiny old stone chapel now serves as an Irish pub, looking out of place amid towering office buildings and snarled traffic but offering a window into the area's surprising past.

In the late nineteenth century, Washington Street — and the section of lower Manhattan a few blocks south of where the World Trade Center stood — was the heart of what was known as "Little Syria." Lebanese, Syrian, Palestinian and other Arab immigrants lived and worked there, Arab-oriented businesses flourished, the leading newspaper in the neighborhood was called *al-Hoda*, and that stone chapel-turned Irish pub? It was the St. George Chapel of the Melkite Rite.

The neighborhood was filled with the aromas of the Middle East. Famous restaurants such as Arta's served up fine Levantine cuisine, and a host of shops sold traditional foodstuffs.

Abraham Sahadi, a Lebanese immigrant, opened the food emporium A. Sahadi and Co. on Washington Street in the last decade of nineteenth century. It grew and flourished in Little Syria until the mid-1940s, when the entire neighborhood was decimated by the construction of the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel. The enclave was no more. But the Lebanese and Syrian population that lived there, their ways of life and the businesses they operated, didn't disappear. They made their way across the East River to Brooklyn, where they have thrived for decades since. They initially settled

along Atlantic Avenue in the heart of Brooklyn, then drifted over time to Bay Ridge, a neighborhood in the southwestern section of the borough, now home to many generations of Arab immigrants.

Sahadi's reemerged on Atlantic Avenue — along with other Middle Eastern specialty food shops like the Mahfoud family's Damascus Bakery, which opened its doors in 1930. Although the Arab population in this neighborhood eventually moved away or assimilated, these two institutions (and many other small businesses) continue to thrive on Atlantic Avenue today.

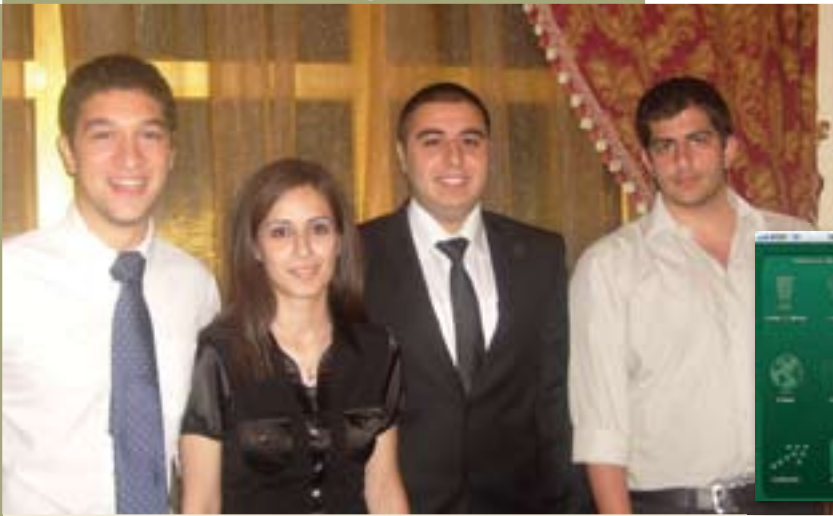
New York, of course, isn't the only region of the United States with deep Levantine culinary roots. Large populations of Lebanese, Syrian and other people from the Middle East residing in Detroit, Los Angeles and elsewhere in America have led to a proliferation of restaurants, bakeries and grocery stores specializing in Middle Eastern food throughout the country.

Former LAU Trustee Joseph Maroun exemplifies how Lebanese ingenuity, coupled with Lebanon's rich food heritage, can lead to success in the United States. More than three decades ago Maroun and his wife founded Caravan Trading Company in Redwood City, California. The company was born of the Maroun's desire for proper-tasting Lebanese pita, but it grew into an empire supplying some of the largest retailers in the United States.

Scores of new Lebanese and Middle Eastern restaurants — from family-owned kebab shops to high-end gourmet establishments — have sprung up across the country in recent years, making it one of the U.S.'s fastest-growing cuisines. This recent growth spurt, however, is only the latest chapter in the cuisine's long and illustrious American history.



## Student Profile



### An Aptitude for Apps

#### The student behind LAU's iPhone application

By Marc Abizeid

Only two years into his undergraduate studies at LAU, Omar Omran is well on his way to becoming one of the most sought-after application programmers for mobile devices in the region.

The 20-year-old computer science student last summer co-founded Virtual Mobiles Apps, a company that specializes in building mobile web applications for smart phones, iPads and other mobile devices. Within months he had commanded the attention of major international companies, including a popular American tobacco company, that have since commissioned Omar to design their mobile device applications.

"I really want the company to grow," he says. "We have international clients and are now developing partnerships with Lebanese companies." The company has expanded since it was launched by Omar and his friend Ralph Khattar, a civil engineering student from the American University of Beirut. It now includes two LAU graduate students in computer science, Mirna Zbib and Tarek Moubarak.

Omar was the mastermind behind LAU's mobile application for the iPhone and iPad, both of which have been available for free download from the Apple's App store website since June.

The application is a simplified version of the LAU website, with convenient access to university webmail, news, financial aid, course catalogue, academic calendar, photo gallery, admissions and student life pages. It is synced with the LAU Facebook page, and includes campus maps.

"It's designed to increase the visibility of LAU," Omar says. "Now high school students, people from outside the country, or anyone who is not familiar with LAU can see the campus."

The LAU application was Omar's first foray into this type of programming. He began learning the computer language used to program the application at the beginning of summer 2010. With the help of Khattar, who worked on design, the app was nearly complete by fall.

The university was unaware of Omar's project until he introduced the prototype last fall to Karina Rodriguez, associate director of Marketing and Communications, who is in charge of the LAU website. Intrigued, Rodriguez brought the application to the attention of LAU's upper management.

"Usually things like this would be planned, approved and budgeted for, and they would take months to complete. In this case, Omar showed up with an almost-finished application and was seeking some support for completing it and releasing it," Rodriguez says. "We couldn't but see this as an opportunity, and it's been great working with him."

Administrative backing for the application was rooted in two principles, says Dr. Elise Salem, vice president for Student Development and Enrollment Management: support for student ingenuity, and enhancement of services for students.

"Our strategy is to reach out to students through social media and applications on their phones," she says. "This is the trend and we want to be part of the technology most used by our students."

The popularity of smart phones has soared over the past two years. They reportedly began outselling personal computers in 2010.

According to LAU web statistics, the main website received 1,322 visits from mobile devices in 2009, 84,372 in 2010, and 98,011 from January till mid-June 2011.

LAU is considering commissioning them to develop a version of its applications for BlackBerry and Android devices.

Omar took courses in computer science at the University of California, Berkeley this summer, before flying to Chicago, Dallas, Denver and Los Angeles to meet with a prominent client to discuss new plans and potential partnerships.



# Green Goes Into the Black

The rising economy of Lebanon's organic food movement

By Emily Holman





Though “Lebanon” and “organic” are not words that traditionally would spring to mind together, the times have for a while now been a-changing. “Organic” is hot. For Lebanese who can afford it, it is now a lifestyle choice. Organic shops are proliferating, most major supermarkets now stock organic produce, and the magic word in all things culinary is “natural.”

That magic word is also a source of confusion. Just what is “natural?” It certainly doesn’t mean organic, though marketers’ images of verdant fields do try to suggest that. A natural product is anything that grows in nature — in other words, more or less any fresh produce.

The next problem comes with the word *baladi*, meaning local, which evokes rural simplicity and increases sales. But a local product is not necessarily an organic one.

Even the meaning of the very word “organic,” in Lebanon at least, is hard to pin down. To be organic a product must be cultivated, without the use of pesticides or fertilizers. It must grow in organic soil untouched by genetically modified organisms. And it must be processed without the use of industrial solvents, additives or other chemical agents.

Unfortunately this definition varies by location. Many countries require producers to obtain certification before they can market their food as “organic,” and even then regulators define the word inconsistently. In some countries — notably the USA, Australia and Canada — an “organic” product can contain up to five percent of non-organic ingredients.

So far, the development of the organic movement in Lebanon has hardly been simple; while organic produce has been remarkably popular across the US and Europe for some time, its popularity here has taken substantially longer to gather momentum.

**“Going organic is about not only the consumer’s health, but the farmer’s health, and the health of the planet.”**

—Jocelyne Karkour, registered nurse, LAU Beirut

The organic boom came about more slowly in Lebanon than in the U.S. and Europe. Certified organic products began to appear in the early 1990s, but even by 2007, they made up just 0.2% of Lebanese agricultural production, compared to seven percent in Italy and 10 % in Switzerland.

LAU Beirut’s registered nurse Jocelyne Karkour, who in Fall 2010 organized LAU’s “Think Organic!” event, which promoted organic awareness among the university community, says that even today “most people have no clue about organic food.”

The figures associated with Lebanon’s organic movement agree that raising awareness is key. Views vary however as to why going organic is a worthy objective. Dr. Rami Zurayk, a professor at American University of Beirut and a prominent writer and blogger on organic philosophy and the geopolitics of food, prizes organic food for reasons more environmental than health-related.

“People tend to forget that the reason for going organic was initially not human health, it was ecosystem health, and so it should remain.”



The movement in Lebanon began with the 2001 establishment of BioCoop Lubnan, an agricultural cooperative aiming to introduce organic farming to Lebanon. In 2002 the NGO World Vision Lebanon (WVL), with the assistance of USAID, began implementing a three-year project to support BioCoop and strengthen organic agricultural infrastructure.

This led to the enrollment of around 160 farmers in BioCoop Lubnan, all of whom are now becoming certified as organic by the Mediterranean Institute for Certification (IMC).

BioCoop farmers now cover approximately 471 hectares of land over 61 villages. Five Extension, Demonstration and Training Centers (EDTC) — located in Bsharre, Zahle, Sidon, Marjayoun and Bent Jbeil — assist BioCoop farmers in improving the variety, quality and yield of their produce, renovating their poultry production systems and enhancing access to new technology.

Initiatives like BioCoop are key to the livelihoods of organic farmers, who face greater economic challenges than non-organic farmers. Farming with fertilizers and chemicals is highly cost-effective, and the cost of transitioning to organic, which takes at least two years, is substantial. Organic products need to be processed or milled separately, a significant expense. If organic food production were large-scale, it would be far more economically efficient.

Lebanon now has over 330 organic farmers and 2500 hectares of organic farmland. The trade group Association for Lebanese Organic Agriculture (ALOA) was established in 2005 specifically to deal with Lebanon’s “organic” agriculture. The challenge of defining that term and verifying its accuracy and applicability remain. 🌿



*Beirut's weekly Souk el Tayeb specializes in organic produce and prepared foods*

ALOA aims to become a national platform for the Lebanese organic movement, to raise awareness of organic agriculture within Lebanon and promote organic agriculture on the Lebanese market. One of its main challenges, according to its website, is "to preserve confidence in organic certifications."

The lack of a national standard has long been troublesome. In 2004, Ali Darwish of the NGO Greenline maintained that only about 40% of produce marketed and sold as organic in Lebanon was certified or even awaiting certification.

Zurayk says that even today the question of the authenticity of produce sold as "organic" is one he "cannot answer."

Soon after Darwish's statement came the establishment of Libancert, the first Lebanese organic certification body, which works in line with EU regulations.

If nothing else, the establishment of a domestic body has lowered the certification costs for farmers considering transitioning to organic.

Nevertheless, the fact that some farms have been certified according to IMC regulations, others by Libancert or Qualité France, and still others by other international bodies (not to mention producers who describe themselves as "almost organic") guarantees continued confusion.

Finally, due to close proximity between many of Lebanon's farms, organic farms risk being polluted by run-off from non-organic farms.

Zurayk surmises that "many people think merely means producing without synthetic pesticides or fertilizers."

In 2008 Lebanese farmers gained EU accreditation and certification to sell their produce within the EU, a significant

milestone in establishing trust in the authenticity of Lebanon's organic foods.

A draft of a Lebanese law establishing a unit at the Ministry of Agriculture responsible for organic agriculture was submitted in 2005, but has yet to be passed.

Regardless of labeling concerns, organic produce has become ever more widely available. The majority of such products, however, are still imported. Caretaker Agriculture Minister Hussein Hajj Hassan recently pointed out that "85% of our consumption is from imports," an astonishing figure considering Lebanon's agricultural potential.

Imported organic products include vegetables, fruits, bread, baby food, cereals, jams, herbs and a wide variety of food and beverages, while organic processing in Lebanon is mostly focused on production of foods typically used in Lebanese cuisine, such as olive oil, oregano mix, orange blossom water, and traditional







*Production of organic honey in Lebanon*

Lebanese jams and recipes. Novelties such as organic sun-dried tomatoes, capers and pomegranate vinegar are also available.

In 2002 AUB launched Healthy Basket, a program of Community Supported Agriculture that offers weekly home delivery of seasonal produce. Bagbio and Biobox have followed suit, offering home delivery of organic processed food as well as produce.

2004 saw the debut of Souk el Tayeb (literally “tasty market”), a Beirut farmers’ market that paved the way for the equally popular Earth Market in Hamra. Lebanon’s first organic grocery store — A New Earth — soon appeared, offering produce, mounneh, organic pasta, baby food, ketchup and even beauty products, followed by similar stores such as Al Marej and Beit Al Afia.

There are other signs that Beirut has begun, however modestly, to “go organic.” Casablanca, a renowned seafront restaurant in Ain el Mreisseh, serves only organic, local vegetables sourced directly from co-owner Johnny Farah’s farm. And the Women’s Cooperative Association for Food Processing in Wadi El Taym became the first women’s cooperative to offer organic certification.

In spite of such progress, the problem of classification remains. Christine Tamsi, a partner at Souk el Tayeb, confirms that “people are more conscious about what they are eating and how it is grown,” while underscoring that “many do not know what organic means technically, and they tend to conflate organic and natural.”

The marketability of “organic” in Lebanon is still rooted in associations with a healthy lifestyle, Karkour says. But she

emphasizes that “going organic is not only about the consumer’s health, but the farmer’s health, and the health of the planet.”

The economic problem remains. As long as organic farms remain few in number, production costs remain high. Karkour says this is the main reason many consumers have not switched to organic. Zurayk agrees that it is still a “fairly elite” lifestyle choice.

A 2007 UK Trade and Investment report described Lebanon as having “the ideal climatic, soil and water resources — the highest proportion of cultivable land and the most reliable rainfall and river assets in the Arab world — to be one of the most productive agricultural countries in the Middle East region.” If governmental problems are resolved, Lebanon’s agriculture could receive the supports needed to become self-sufficient and reliably organic.

Nascent as Lebanon’s organic movement might currently be, Zurayk says that “the area cropped for organic farming has increased.” And any progress, however modest and incremental, can only be good news. ■



### Steady Stewardship

## Dr. Said Elfakhani brings wealth of experience to deanship of School of Business

The leadership background of Dr. Said Elfakhani, the newly appointed dean of LAU's School of Business, runs the gamut from family-business entrepreneurialism and real estate projects to banking and investment consultancies to guest editorships of major academic journals to professorships and administrative positions in universities across the world.

He comes to LAU from Saginaw Valley State University, Michigan (SVSU), where he was professor of finance and held the Harvey R. Wickes Chair in International Business. He has lived between his native Lebanon and North America for more than two decades.

Elfakhani received his M.B.A. in business administration from the University of Texas (UT) at Arlington in 1984, and his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in finance from UT Dallas in 1987 and 1989.

Prior to his appointment at SVSU, Elfakhani was associate dean and professor of finance at the American University of Beirut. He has held professorial posts at UT Dallas, Indiana State University and the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, and an adjunct professorship at the University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates.

Elfakhani has an extensive scholarly publication record, has helped to steward several new universities in the Gulf, and has sat on numerous accreditation-related committees for regional universities.



### Q&A

#### What attracted you to LAU?

I always longed to return permanently to Lebanon, to help realize its extraordinary potential in education and business. For years I watched LAU grow, admiring the administration's persistence in steadily transforming LAU into one of the leading American educational institutions in the Middle East. I wanted to be part of that vision.

#### What will be the main challenge of your position?

My ultimate goal is to turn the School of Business at LAU into the school of choice for students in Lebanon, as well as for prospective employers seeking the best and brightest. In the meantime, we need to achieve AACSB accreditation. AACSB is the leading accreditation agency for business education in the U.S. and around the world. In the Middle East region, there are around seven AACSB-accredited universities, and LAU should join that "Ivy League."

#### What is the biggest achievement of your academic career so far?

Two years after joining AUB, I became the founding associate dean. In just over seven years, a gifted dean and I took the School of Business from nine faculty members and 800 students to over forty faculty members and close to 1400 students.

#### Do you have a message for your future colleagues and students at LAU?

We have a lot to do in the coming years to earn AACSB accreditation, and will need to join hands to do it. Our faculty members are hard-working, dedicated teachers and researchers. I promise them full support, and will take all necessary steps to ensure that their contributions are recognized, their careers nurtured and their endeavors made fruitful.

We will further our efforts to stay connected with our growing alumni. I met with student representatives during my last visit. They are very ambitious, full of plans and a vision for the future. I want to instill in them an enduring sense of pride and belonging with regards to LAU and Lebanon.



# Renaissance Man

## Dr. Philippe Frossard, new dean of LAU's School of Arts and Sciences

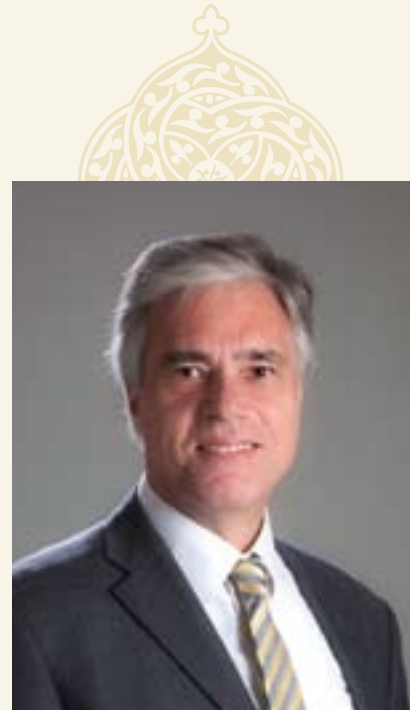
The newly appointed dean of the School of Arts and Sciences is a man of the world. Dr. Philippe Frossard is a medical scientist who comes to LAU with a wealth of scholarly, teaching and administrative experience in the United States, England, Japan, France, Australia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.

Frossard was educated at Louis Pasteur University in Strasbourg, France, where he received his B.Sc. in 1975, his M.Sc. in 1976, his M.Phil. in 1977, and his Ph.D. in 1979, all with honors. In 1996, he received a D.Sc. from the university based on his lifetime achievements.

Frossard has published extensively on cardiovascular and coronary diseases in a number of prestigious journals. He has received over 40 grants to research topics ranging from the causes of heart disease to the genetic determinants of diabetes and stroke. He has won a host of teaching awards, and holds several medical patents.

He has received awards from major international bodies, including UNESCO's Young Scientist Award, which he won in 1971, and the Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite (Knight of the National Order of Merit), conferred on him by France in 2003.

Beyond the walls of the university and the medical laboratory, Frossard is a gourmet and an epicurean, a lover of classical and Western baroque music, and an accomplished athlete.



### Q&A

#### What drew you to LAU?

I feel fortunate and proud to join this university. It is a prestigious institution with an impeccable reputation. Its leaders are committed to a clear vision and mission, and to providing the means to achieve them. Secondly, I am fascinated by Lebanon's unique geographical and geo-political situation, by its rich and diverse history, its culture and heritage. Third, I love Lebanon as a country. I have nurtured friendships here since the early 1970's and feel completely at home.

#### What do you regard as the primary challenge or goal of your new role?

Fostering more effective institutional citizenship will only be achieved by reinforcing SAS in the best tradition of liberal arts education. We must nurture individual skills and talents and shape civilized Renaissance men and women of the 21st century. My ultimate aim would be to graduate students who become job creators rather than job seekers.

Research should be the main academic driving force of SAS. Cultivating a scholarship of discovery, together with moral and ethical values, is the best way to tap into student and faculty creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Members of the modern university need to identify proactively the current and future needs of the communities they serve. I emphasize civic engagement as I am of the view that scholars, students and graduates should play a much larger role in society.

#### What general message would you like to convey to future colleagues and students at LAU?

I have been most impressed with the professional and humane qualities of those I've met. I wish to let everyone know that I will lend my unconditional support to all programs and activities currently in place, while looking forward eagerly to establishing new ones. I am a strong advocate of teamwork, and wish to remain entirely accessible to all.

## Alumni Profile

# Yes He Cannes

## LAU alum reaches top international film festival

By Marc Abizeid



You can't quite be sure how or when Elie Rizk developed his healthy sense of self, but having his short film selected for screening at a screening at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival in May probably played a part.

Rizk, a 2010 LAU graduate who studied film making, exudes confidence as he explains why he thinks *The Examination* (2010), his 12-minute final project for LAU, has been critically acclaimed at Cannes, the world's most prestigious film festival.

"When film students graduate they tend to do experimental stuff that becomes so complicated no one understands it," Rizk says. "They liked my movie because it is simple, they understand it, and most importantly, anyone can relate to it."

His film is about two elementary school students who stay after class one Friday afternoon and plot to steal an exam. A simple story, Rizk says, but with a subtle artistic touch.

"Any colleague, family member or friend thinks they are one of these two kids," he says. "If they didn't steal an exam when they were in school, they tried to, or at least wanted to."

The two protagonists find the exam and scramble to photocopy it before anyone notices. When the door of the copy room opens and they begin to panic, their fearful imaginings take over and become the subject of the film.

One student imagines they've been caught and punished by the school principal. The film unfolds in such a way that the audience believes the scene is real, rather than a manifestation of the boy's worst fear. The fantasy structure becomes apparent when the scene ends and the film shifts to the mind of the other student, whose nightmare scenario involves his teacher entering the copy room.

*The Examination* had previously screened at the Notre Dame University film festival, the Festival International du court-métrage des Écoles de Cinéma (organized by Saint Joseph University), and the European Film Festival, all held in Lebanon.

The film took about eight months to complete, including five months of pre-production, three days of shooting, and over two months of post-production. Rizk says its success would have been impossible without the dedicated efforts of his production team.

"At the end of the day it's the team that counts. The music for example was a key element of the movie. The art director did a great job with the *mise-en-scène*, and they all understood the mood I was after," he says. "I didn't choose my friends for these positions — I chose people I thought would do the best job."

Cannes for Rizk was an experience like no other.

"You wouldn't believe what happens in Cannes," he muses. "For 10 days you think you are dreaming. You get off the plane, go to the festival and the first person you run into is Robert DeNiro."

*The Examination* featured in the festival's "Short Film Corner," which Rizk describes not as a competition, but rather an opportunity to rub shoulders with the film world's most prominent figures.

Rizk also had the chance to attend lectures and workshops about production, including one led by Malcolm McDowell, whose legendary 1971 performance in *A Clockwork Orange* made him something of a film icon.

Rizk is currently working on another short film and a documentary. There may even be a big project in the pipeline, a feature-length film. Pressed for details, Rizk responds with the smooth insouciance of a budding movie mogul: "I can't talk about it."



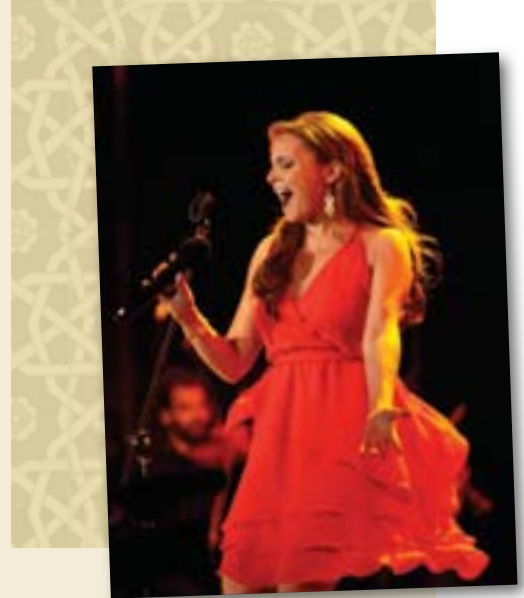


## Alumni Profile

# Hitting the High Notes

## Lebanese soprano sings about diversity, peace

By Emily Morris



Within minutes of sitting down with LAU alumna Tania Kassis you understand why her star is on the rise. Bright, sharp and articulate, she exudes the unmistakable enthusiasm of those who do what they love.

The 29-year-old soprano has recently returned to Lebanon after seven years of studying, giving concerts, recording and touring abroad. She says her music reflects her interaction with the Lebanese diaspora in those years, as well as her own desire to return home.

"When you're far from Lebanon you don't think about power cuts or water shortages," she says. "You remember vibrant people, the landscape, nightlife and cuisine, and you feel the need to come back."

It has been a busy year for Kassis. Her debut album "Oriental Colors" has remained in the top 20 at Lebanon's Virgin Records branches since its 2010 release. She has traveled to Colombia, Venezuela and back promoting it.

After graduating from LAU with a B.A. in Business Marketing in 2003, Kassis attended the Paris Conservatoire, obtaining her master's in opera in 2007. But she wants you to know that she's not your average classically-trained singer. Although she loves classical music, she enjoys her freedom on stage, dabbling in jazz, bossa nova and oriental music.

"I've been bringing in Latin music lately, influenced by all my time in Latin America. I fell in love with their music and dancing, and began taking tango lessons seriously when I returned to Lebanon," she says.

Along with her commitment to musical experimentation (two of the tracks on the debut album are techno remixes), Kassis makes a conscious effort to use her voice to deliver a message.

Kassis caught the world's attention when she sang her "Islamo-Christian AVE" — an original lyrical arrangement of the Ave Maria with the Adhan (Muslim call to prayer) — in front of some 200,000 people in Beirut's Martyrs Square for the 2010 commemoration of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's death.

"The Ave Maria was one of the first songs I learned to sing," Kassis recalls. "Our church was near a mosque, so I used to hear the call to prayer as I arrived."

Although she received some criticism initially, the overall response has been very positive. "The point of the song is to say, 'Look at what we have in common'. My hope is that the next generation will appreciate that despite our different ways of praying and singing, we can coexist peacefully."

Kassis says her years at LAU allowed her to befriend people from religions and backgrounds she hadn't previously been exposed to.

She also credits the university for providing her with a solid foundation for her future. "What if I have voice problems one day? I had to get a degree in something useful."

So what's next for Kassis? "I don't have much free time these days," she laughs. She'll be performing in France, Lebanon, Mexico and the U.S. the coming year.

"We Lebanese have a tremendous musical heritage. I like to think I'm bringing it to a wider global audience by mixing tradition with the new."



# Through the Looking Glass

Body image and the regional rise of eating disorders

By Olga Habre





Rania began her battle with eating disorders at the age of 13. She had gained weight, and her parents took her to a nutritionist. The nutritionist's diet plan was so strict that Rania found it easier not to eat than eat the unappetizing foods allowed by the plan.

Pleased by her rapid weight loss, she began to lie to her parents about what she had eaten, and soon found herself in cycles of anorexia, bulimia and binge eating.

"I would be anorexic for a while, eating nothing but cucumbers and lettuce and skimmed milk. Then I would binge-eat," she recalls. The ensuing guilt would prompt her to purge — never vomiting, but using laxatives, appetite suppressants and excessive exercise to get rid of the calories.

"Being anorexic makes you feel superior because you can control yourself while you watch others eating fries and other things and think to yourself 'they are like animals,'" she adds.

When she was 17 one of her aunts noticed the problem and Rania was hospitalized. She had been vomiting water, and feeling constant weakness, sometimes to the point of barely being able to walk. At her thinnest Rania (who is 165 cm tall) weighed 42 kg. Although she initially reacted aggressively, she came to accept the idea that she needed help.

It wasn't until she was 22 that she was fully recovered. Time, therapy, emotional support, and a well-timed trip to Europe to obtain her master's degree were the key factors in her eventual success.

Now 31, Rania recalls that it took years for her digestive system to return to normal. Psychological healing is an ongoing process. She still can't abide the sight of potato chips. When angry, her impulse is to stop eating, an experience she likens to a recovered alcoholic's sudden urge for a drink.

"But it's hard to overcome because it's unlike other addictions," she reflects, "An alcoholic can swear off drinking. But you can't live without food."

"We live in a society where image is very important," Rania says, recalling a refrain popular among her aunts that "you can never be too thin or too rich." A cousin of hers also suffered from bulimia.

"My parents thought they were doing something good when they took me to the dietitian. They wanted me to look good and feel good about how I looked. This was almost 15 years ago. They didn't know about eating disorders."

## Regional epidemic

Although there are no official statistics on eating disorders in Lebanon, experts say they are on the rise. They have attracted increasing attention in the West in recent years, in the form of media campaigns, prevention and rehabilitation programs, but the Middle East has yet to see such measures.

Eating disorders can be defined as "disturbed relationships with food," according to Dr. Nadine Zeeni, assistant professor of nutrition at LAU. The most common disorders are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating. While women—who are pressured by society to look thin—most commonly suffer from anorexia and bulimia, men suffer increasingly from binge eating.



Anorexia is a refusal to maintain a healthy body weight and a lack of food intake. A person with anorexia is usually extremely thin and suffers from various deficiencies, low blood-pressure, feeling of weakness, growth of lanugo—soft, fine hairs on the face and body—and a loss of menstruation in women.

Bulimia on the other hand is more difficult to diagnose because sufferers are often normal to slightly overweight. Bulimics binge-eat, usually in secret, and later purge what they have eaten. The most common and familiar method of purging is vomiting. Other methods include excess use of laxatives, excessive exercise, and use of diet pills.

"Bulimia results from the obsession to look perfect," explains psychologist Dr. Rosey Abla, a psychologist at International College, who says models and athletes in particular are at risk. Anorexia, by contrast, often has more to do with control, and is sometimes rooted in sexual-identity issues, leaving its victims so thin they no longer resemble women.

Unlike anorexia and bulimia, which stem from body-image issues, binge eating is usually linked to depression. Since the weight gain associated with it can be attributed to other causes, the disorder can be difficult to diagnose.

According to experts, eating disorders reflect sufferers' attitudes not only towards food, but towards themselves.

"There is confusion between being beautiful and being loved," says Abla. "This unhealthy idea that if one isn't beautiful, one won't be loved reveals insecurity and poor self-esteem."

Dr. Sandra Rizk, assistant professor of biology at LAU, says two primary causes of eating disorders are pressure from the immediate social and emotional environment — family, friends, and love interests —and images of women in media and advertising. 🍷



A few decades ago the ideal Middle Eastern woman was plump and curvy, but today's standard of beauty is long and lean, even in a region where natural curves are widespread and hereditary.

While members of a given society are exposed to the same images, however, only a fraction suffer from eating disorders. "When someone is weak and susceptible, eating disorders easily appear," Rizk explains.

**"When someone is weak and susceptible, eating disorders easily appear."**

—Dr. Sandra Rizk, assistant professor of biology at LAU

It is perhaps no surprise then that these disorders can afflict the very young. Hiba Safieddine, a nutritionist specializing in eating disorders at a private clinic in Beirut, recalls that her youngest patient was a ten-year-old girl. She says early diagnosis can be challenging because "kids that age don't know where to turn and won't really speak to their parents."

Anorexia and bulimia often appear in the teen years, Safieddine says, but she has seen cases beginning after the age of 40. Bulimia meanwhile tends to cluster around the 20-35 age range.

In her five years practicing in Lebanon, she has seen around 50 cases of eating disorders. She has fully treated about 20 patients and is currently working with seven girls with anorexia and/or bulimia.

Sometimes these patients know they have a problem and have come to seek help. Others come to Safieddine against their will, usually at a parent's behest. Still others come to see her as a regular nutritionist, hoping to get a diet plan. She says the most important thing is to establish a relationship of trust on the first visit.

Abla says there is an unhealthy obsession in Lebanese society about weight loss and gain, pointing out that people who run into each other often say "oh, you've lost/gained weight"—sometimes even before asking "how are you?"

"It's ok to count calories, leave food on your plate and so on, as long as you are not punishing yourself," she says.

## *A blurry picture*

In a study of eating, exercise and self-image issues in LAU students during several semesters between 2006 and 2009, Rizk and her co-authors found that a majority were physically active and of normal weight. Over six percent of females were underweight, compared to one percent of males. Sixty-four percent said they were not worried about their body image, 19% said they were slightly worried, 13% said they were moderately worried and five percent were extremely worried. Almost nine out of ten "extremely worried" students, however, were female.

Rizk says that while the study gives an accurate overall picture of the situation, its percentages may well be skewed downward. Several students she knew for a fact to have eating disorders





refused to participate in the study at all. More subtle forms of denial can also be a factor in such studies, she says. Although participation was anonymous, students can be anxious about committing their habits and thoughts to paper, for fear of having to face reality.

## Help wanted

What is being done about the problem? With little interest from the government and pervasive social taboos surrounding the very question of eating disorders, the situation looks bleak.

"Going to a psychologist in general is taboo here. Even educated people are shocked and think, 'oh, you're sick?'" says Rania. In her opinion requires changing societal perceptions, in particular "the idea that imperfection is unacceptable."

Ideally, eating disorders should be prevented, or at the very least treated early. It becomes more difficult to treat cases the further they have progressed because treatment involves changing one's ideas, thought patterns and attitudes about food.

Treatment is time-consuming and multidisciplinary, usually consisting of collaboration between a psychologist or psychiatrist and a nutritionist. Depending on the severity of the case, antidepressants may be prescribed. An institutional stay can also be helpful, says Rizk, in light of the pervasiveness and insidiousness of cultural messages about food, beauty and weight.

In this regard, Rania described her years in Europe as an "escape" — not only a needed change of scenery, but

also a temporary release from a culture of intense body-consciousness.

Safieddine is initiating prevention campaigns at schools such as International College in Beirut, giving lectures regularly and establishing a "Nutrition Day" to promote not only healthy eating habits but also healthy attitudes to food. "It's not enough to just to talk to them about the food pyramid," she says.

After such events she often receives phone calls from students and concerned parents. Young people don't know whether or not they are "normal," Safieddine says, and those who suspect they do need help rarely know where to turn.

As crucial as medical treatment and expertise are to recovery, the best preventative measures may well be emotional groundedness and common sense.

"Loving yourself is very important, as well as remembering that your body is your best friend," stresses Abla.

"If you love yourself others will love you," says Rania. "Girls often dislike very small and irrelevant things about their appearance, but what matters most is confidence." ☐





Left: LAU Hospitality Management and Tourism students learn A-Z's of cooking  
Right: President Jabbra and LAU Hospitality Club president Joumana Abdallah present honorary plaque to pop star Ragheb Alame

# Welcoming Business

## Hospitality studies at LAU taps into a burgeoning industry

By Emily Morris

Lebanon in the 1990s emerged from the civil war determined to become the jewel of the Middle East once again. Naturally, rebuilding the country's tourism industry became a main priority.

"Lebanon wanted to capitalize on this service-providing sector," says Dr. Said Ladki, chair of Hospitality Management and Accounting at LAU, "and our program has been helping in this for 15 years."

In 1996, Ladki returned from the United States to establish the Hospitality and Tourism Management program at the LAU School of Business "to help the industry contribute to the overall development of Lebanon."

Today, around 200 students are enrolled in the program, which includes both the B.S. in Hospitality and Tourism Management and B.S. in Business Studies with an emphasis in Hospitality Management. It prepares students for positions in sales, personnel administration, auditing, front office management, food and beverage management, meetings and convention planning and general management positions.

Placement rates in the industry upon graduation are high, owing to the program's emphasis on hands-on training, according to Ladki.

"Our students are required to complete 550 hours of training before graduation. We place them in Lebanon, the U.S., and elsewhere around the world. We're sending eight students to Malaysia this year for an internship program," he says.

High-profile companies — including hotel chains such as Four Seasons, Hilton and Intercontinental — are increasingly recruiting LAU graduates. This past spring Emirates Flight Catering recruited 50 students for their air show in Dubai.

The program has evolved dramatically with the construction of state-of-the-art lab facilities in the SOB and the addition of

new faculty, now numbering at two full-timers and 10-12 part-timers. But perhaps the real strength of the program lies in the enthusiasm of dedicated students like Joumana Abdallah, 21, who served as president of the student-run LAU Hospitality Club for the 2010-2011 academic year.

On May 7 of this year the club hosted a concert headlined by famous Lebanese singer Ragheb Alame at Beirut's BIEL center. The event, which included a gala dinner, was organized by the students to raise money for study-abroad scholarships.

"We sold around 500 tickets — not quite reaching our target — but the experience we gained was incredible. We went on the media circuit, conducted interviews and secured sponsorship from MTV Lebanon," Abdallah says.

The club is active throughout the year, planning holiday lunches, traditional Lebanese buffets and bake sales for the LAU community. With the money raised (about \$6,000) the club traveled to Turkey in June to further their knowledge about the industry. "We took hotel tours with general managers, learning more about their operations, how many rooms they service, and so on," says Abdallah.

Georges Tamer, the hospitality management lab supervisor, provides support for all the club's events. "In both club and course-related events, hospitality students are 100 percent involved in the creation, preparation and execution," he says.

LAU is also home to the Institute of Hospitality & Tourism Management Studies, of which Ladki is director. It conducts research and networks with various stakeholders in the industry in Lebanon and the region. The institute is technically independent of the hospitality program, but student participation in its research projects is encouraged.

"We are very active members of the business school and of the LAU family," says Ladki."





*Dr. Nancy Hoffart gives a tour of the Frem Center's temporary School of Nursing facilities. Below, President Jabbra speaks at the Frem Center's inaugural ceremony*

# Frem Civic Center Opens its Doors

## Highly anticipated hub inaugurated on Byblos campus

By LAU Staff

Members of the Frem family joined state dignitaries and LAU community members June 2 for the inauguration of the Frem Civic Center, a state-of-the-art, 5,240-square-meter academic hub on the Byblos campus that promises to stand as a symbol of civic responsibility and leadership.

Plans for the building were announced in 2004 when the Georges N. Frem Foundation, a Lebanese NGO committed to supporting education, social causes and development programs, announced that it would help LAU finance its construction.

Two years later, the organization's founder, Georges N. Frem, a former minister, deputy and prominent businessman, passed away. Construction of the project, a testament to the Frem's goodwill and commitment to education, would carry on for several more years. For those who knew him, the center has become a monument to his philanthropic vision.

"He may not be physically present with us, but listen carefully — his happy soul is upon us, looking down, and saying 'I am so happy with the family, with all of you, because of this single achievement,'" said Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra, LAU president, during the inauguration ceremony.

The new building is envisioned as a hub for community activists. It will become a venue for workshops, seminars and lectures on transparency and ethical governance practices, with the aim of strengthening Lebanon's democratic institutions.

"The Frem family are longtime friends of LAU," said Roy Majdalani, Vice President for Human Resources and University Services. "Our shared values and common vision and drive to achieve the greater good paved the way for this partnership, and are manifested in every brick and tile of the building."

The School of Nursing is temporarily housed inside the building, where it has set up a modern lab, since the Medical and Nursing Building is still under construction. The School of Business and the University Enterprise Office have also moved into the building, which may in the future house several of LAU's centers and institutes.

"The university has intellectual capital, consisting of brilliant faculty and students," said Tony Frem, brother of the late Georges Frem, at the ceremony. "We will strive to develop and advance these talents as a force for good in the world."

Built on a hill overlooking the city of Byblos and the Mediterranean, the Byblos campus has witnessed rapid expansion and development over the past several years. A 12,500-square-meter building for the schools of Medicine and Nursing is under construction in a lot adjacent to the Frem Civic Center.



# CampusNotes

Edited by Nanor Karageozian

For more details about these LAU activities, visit the news section of [www.lau.edu.lb](http://www.lau.edu.lb).

## Community Outreach and Civic Engagement

### Students win awards at global Model UN conference

Five high school students from the LAU Model UN program represented the university and Lebanon at the 12th Global Classrooms International Model UN Conference held in New York, May 11 – 15. Two of the students won the Best Delegation Award in the UN Conference on Sport for Peace and Development. LAU also won two Honorable Mention Awards in the General Assembly First Committee.



### LAU students shine at Model Arab League conference in Paris

A five-member LAU student delegation participated in the Model Arab League conference held in Paris, April 28–30, and returned with the prestigious Best Delegation Award and three Honorable Mention Awards. This was LAU's first participation in the conference, hosted by the Paris Institute of Political Studies (or Sciences Po). This year, the event gathered around 35 students from seven countries that role-played the Arab League member states' representatives in issues pertaining to the Middle East, particularly Palestine.

### First LAU – UN Day

Representatives from 22 UN agencies and their partners promoted social causes at the first ever LAU–UN Day organized on the Beirut campus April 27, as part of a broad university effort to encourage students to be involved in activism. The agencies staffed booths in front of the Safadi Fine Arts Building, inviting students to learn about job, internship and volunteer opportunities available at the UN. LAU's Outreach and Civic Engagement unit organized the event in partnership with the United Nations Information Center in Beirut.



### Second LAU NGO Fair

LAU Beirut hosted over 90 NGOs on April 13 for the second annual university fair aimed at promoting community activism among students. Building on the success of last year's debut NGO Fair at LAU Byblos, which recorded the participation of about 70 groups, the recently established Outreach and Civic Engagement unit took charge of the effort this year, bringing in more organizations and adding new activities.

### Launch of studies on migrant domestic labor

Two groundbreaking new studies on domestic migrant workers' conditions in Lebanon were launched at LAU Beirut, March 30. The event was hosted by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World and the Institute for Migration Studies at LAU, and KAFA (Enough) Violence and Exploitation, a Lebanese NGO committed to the rights of women and children.







### LAU participates in Harvard WorldMUN for 10<sup>th</sup> time

Twenty LAU students from the Beirut and Byblos campuses took part in the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Harvard World Model United Nations Conference, dubbed the “Olympics of Model UN,” which was held in Singapore from March 14–18. The delegation came back with a much-coveted Diplomacy Award.

## Journalism and Media Training

### LAU Tribune goes online

A group of dedicated journalism students launched an online version of the LAU Tribune student newspaper on May 9 in an effort to reach a wider readership and keep up with the changing times. The initiative was a collaborative effort between Dr. Yasmine Dabbous, assistant professor of journalism and media studies and advisor of the Tribune, and her students in the Journalism Workshop course, which effectively serves as the newsroom where the Tribune is produced throughout the semester.



### Iraqi female journalists train at LAU

Ten Iraqi female journalists participated in a weeklong training program on media and gender relations that was held at LAU Beirut, April 11 – 15. Led by media professionals and faculty, the program aimed to empower participants through intensive courses and discussions. The training was organized by LAU’s Institute for Media Training and Research, and Institute for Women’s Studies in the Arab World.

### LAU assembles journalists for discussion on Arab uprisings

Three journalists (The Washington Post’s Jackson Diehl, Al-Jazeera’s Zeina Awad and Max Fisher from The Atlantic) were gathered by LAU on March 24 in Washington, D.C. to discuss the unprecedented popular uprisings that have spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The panelists discussed the ramifications of the wave of protests in the region, and the role of traditional and new media in it. The panel was moderated by Dr. Graeme Bannerman, LAU’s representative in the U.S. capital and a highly respected commentator on Middle Eastern affairs.



## Health care

### Interprofessional Education faculty retreat

Faculty members from LAU’s schools of Nursing, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Arts and Sciences met for an Interprofessional Education (IPE) workshop on May 28. LAU’s IPE Program is designed to prepare professionals in the university’s health and social care programs to function as effective, collaborative team members in order to improve health care and patient/client outcomes. The program brings together students from the nursing, medicine, pharmacy, nutrition, and social work programs, to take part in IPE learning experiences in classroom, laboratory and clinical settings. The aim of the retreat was to educate faculty about recent IPE developments and new approaches, which can then be incorporated into courses and clinical experiences beginning in the fall 2011 semester.



## Arts, Culture and Language

### Conference on “Trinity State”

Academic and cultural figures made an appeal for Lebanese to invest in education and culture to help build the intellectual strength of the country, during an LAU Byblos conference, April 28. Titled “Trinity State: Homeland, Citizen, Citizenship,” the conference was jointly organized by LAU’s School of Arts and Sciences; the Lebanese Cultural Dialogue Circle, an organization concerned with Lebanese and Arab culture; and the Alumni Association of the Lebanese University’s Institute of Social Sciences.



### International Heritage Day

April 8 marked the International Heritage Day celebrations at LAU Beirut in a display of harmony among the diverse cultures represented on the university campus. Each of the nine participating student clubs set up a stand to promote its culture’s unique customs, food, national products, distinctive attire and other aspects of its heritage.

### Commemorating Shibli Mallat, the “Poet of the Cedars”

LAU’s Center for Lebanese Heritage (CLH) held an event commemorating the late Lebanese poet Shibli Mallat on April 4 at LAU Beirut. The ceremony was followed by an exhibition in the Beirut-campus Riyad Nassar Library showcasing paintings, photographs, books, newspapers, and samples of the late poet’s writings, in addition to his iconic Lebanese red fez. The event marked the 50th anniversary of both Mallat’s death and the first UNESCO Palace Festival.



### LAU hosts national speech competition

For the second year in a row, LAU hosted the 11th Annual National Speech Competition on March 12, where 13 students from seven Lebanese universities presented short speeches on the theme of “Words Are Not Enough.” The event, which was organized by LAU’s Department of Humanities and the English Speaking Union in Lebanon, drew a full house, with participants’ families, friends and professors present at LAU Beirut to support them.

### LAU event honors renowned Lebanese novelist and journalist

The first event of LAU’s Center for Lebanese Heritage (CLH) for 2011 was in memory of the late Karam Melhem Karam, a renowned Lebanese author and journalist, known as “the prince of the Arab novel.” Held on March 7 at LAU Beirut, the event was organized on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the UNESCO Palace Festival, which in March 1961 paid tribute to Karam one year and a few months after his death. Poet Henri Zoghaib, CLH director, moderated the event, which included a number of presentations, followed by an exhibition of Karam’s photos, publications and letters in LAU Beirut’s Riyad Nassar Library.



### Student films capture audience

Six final-year LAU communication arts students premiered their short films before a packed crowd February 24 at LAU Beirut’s Irwin Hall Theatre. The 10–15-minute films tackled a wide range of issues from drug abuse and death, to a satirical critique of Lebanon’s media industry. Wafa’a Halawi, the students’ academic supervisor, organized the event.



# Education

## Education majors display children's books

On March 30, LAU students taking the Children's Literature course, taught by Anita Nassar at the Department of Education, held an exhibition of the children's books they designed as part of their final grade. Each book on display was age-specific and related to a certain theme such as science, physical challenges, friendship and gender.



## Lebanese educators gather at LAU to discuss common challenges

More than 100 school administrators, coordinators and teachers discussed various challenges facing Lebanon's school curriculum during a conference held at LAU Beirut, March 18–19. The event featured presentations and workshops from educators and representatives of various international publishing houses, as well as an exhibit of a variety of new school textbooks. The event was organized by LAU's Department of Education.



# Architecture and Design

## Berlin Traveling Studio presentation and exhibition

On May 16, LAU's Department of Architecture and Interior Design organized a Byblos-campus presentation and exhibition on the 2010 LAU Traveling Studio, which took place in summer 2010 in Berlin, Germany. The event presented the findings and ideas that the 28 LAU participants experienced before, during and after their visit to Berlin, as they immersed themselves in the city's diverse architectural environments, focusing particularly on exposure to ideas developed in key universities, work produced within major architectural practices, and the buildings and schemes in the city.



## PoroCity-Beirut workshops and exhibitions

In April, LAU's Urban Planning Institute and the School of Architecture and Design launched an ongoing project titled "Urban Strategies-PoroCity-Beirut" in collaboration with the University of Applied Arts, Vienna. Workshops and exhibitions were organized in the municipal councils of Hadath/Haret Hreik and of Bourj Hammoud, as well as on the Byblos campus, where LAU students presented their case studies and fieldwork, and local and municipal representatives engaged in assessment and evaluation.



## Celebrating the work of Italian architect Carlo Scarpa

A lecture and an exhibition brought the late Carlo Scarpa, the renowned 20th-century Italian architect, into spotlight. Held at LAU Beirut's Gulbenkian Theatre on March 3, the lecture was given by Francesco Dal Co, a prominent Italian architectural historian and professor of architectural history at the University of Venice who studied under Scarpa. The lecture was followed by the opening of the exhibition "Carlo Scarpa: The Inhabiting Space, Selected Drawings 1931–1963," which run until March 25 in Sheikh Zayed Hall. The events were organized by LAU's Department of Architecture and Interior Design, in collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute in Beirut, Italian Embassy in Lebanon, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Rome's MAXXI Museum.



## Engineering

### Engineering students present hands-on projects

Around 250 industrial and mechanical engineering students from all classes presented their group projects on the Byblos campus, at the fourth annual Design and Manufacturing Day, organized on May 4 by the Industrial and Mechanical Engineering Department in LAU's School of Engineering. The projects ranged from a human-powered submarine, hand-built tandem bicycles, a solar-powered car, to computer-aided designs and small remote-controlled robots.



### Final activities of "Women in Engineering" project

In March, the "Recruitment and Retention of Women in Engineering" project, funded by LAU and the Engineering Information Foundation in New York, wrapped up its activities with two events at LAU Byblos. The implementation of the project, which aimed at turning young women on to engineering, was overseen by Dr. Grace Abou-Jaoude Estephan, assistant professor at LAU's School of Engineering. On March 17, five female engineers (all employed by LAU, either as staff or faculty) gave presentations about their jobs during a panel discussion titled "Women Career Development in the Arab World." On March 8, the student-led Women in Engineering Club organized an event that brought 114 eighth graders from five Lebanese middle schools to the Byblos campus to learn about opportunities in engineering. Then, the middle schoolers were divided into groups and participated in activities designed to teach them about different engineering jobs.

## Science and Business

### Boosting business students' competitiveness in the job market

LAU's Cooperative Learning Center at the School of Business organized a series of workshops on the Beirut campus to train business students, graduates and faculty members on communication and presentation skills (in April), and job interview techniques (May 11 – 12).



### LAU hosts annual meeting of the Lebanese Society for Mathematical Sciences

Scholars of computational sciences and partial differential equations, among other mathematics-related topics, converged upon LAU Beirut for the second annual meeting of the Lebanese Society for Mathematical Sciences, April 1 – 2. Hosted by the Department of Computer Science and Mathematics at LAU Beirut, the convention brought together faculty and graduate students from universities in Lebanon and other countries in the region, to share ideas and research methods.

## Career Guidance and Financial Aid

### Career fairs on both campuses

The annual career fairs took place on May 11 at LAU Beirut and May 9 at LAU Byblos. This year, the fairs gathered 140 (78 in Beirut and 62 in Byblos) local, regional and multinational organizations from various industries, including auditing, banking, advertising, insurance, hospitality, education, media, health care, engineering, and information technology. The events were organized by the Dean of Students offices (Career Guidance Services) on both campuses.





## LAU to offer scholarships for top Lebanese students

LAU is set to offer the top 10 Lebanese Baccalaureate students a full scholarship as well as a lump sum annually, as part of an agreement with the National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS). The university signed a Memorandum of Agreement with CNRS in this regard, during a ceremony at LAU Beirut, April 12. LAU and CNRS will share in the total costs of the scholarships.



## Sports



### Achievements by LAU Beirut and Byblos athletes

LAU's handball team won the first University Sports Conference (USC) Handball League defeating the American University of Beirut in the final game in late May. The team won the title without losing a game. The LAU women's futsal team, coached by Oscar Boustany, won the second USC Futsal League title by defeating Antonine University in the final and deciding game on May 27.

On another front, LAU's number one men's tennis player and last year's champion, Rami Alayli, defended his 2010 national men's singles title and won the 2011 Lebanese Federation of University Sport (FSUL) national tennis championships, hosted by the Lebanese University, in late May. At the same championships, LAU's number two women's tennis player, Reine Alameh, won her first national title, after defeating her teammate and LAU's number one player, Anastasia Kuvalina. Alameh was also selected to represent Lebanon in the Universiade, an international university sporting event, to be held in Shenzhen, China, in August.

earlier this year, the LAU taekwondo team, coached by Marc Rjeily, registered yet another triumph in the Lebanese National "Red Belt" Championships, held April 3 at the Emile Lahoud Complex in Mar Roukoz. The team won five gold and two bronze medals in the various weight categories in which the LAU athletes competed. The gold medalists were automatically upgraded to "Black Belts" by the Lebanese Taekwondo Federation.



### Opening of LAU memorabilia store

LAU launched its first Memorabilia Gallery at Orme-Gray Hall, Beirut campus, April 28. Students, alumni, faculty and staff now have the opportunity to show off their LAU pride through a wide variety of souvenirs and gifts including t-shirts, lanyards, umbrellas, USBs, pens, mugs, mouse pads, hats and frames, among other items. The initiative has been in the works for about four years but really gained speed four months before the launch, and was successfully implemented through a collective effort from several university departments.



# LAU MAGAZINE SURVEY

## What do you think?

Dear LAU Magazine reader,

Tell us what you think about the LAU Magazine and Alumni Bulletin by participating in this survey: [www.lau.edu.lb/magsurvey/](http://www.lau.edu.lb/magsurvey/)

We value your feedback, and it will only take minutes of your time.

Your contribution will be of great value towards developing and improving this major LAU publication.

Thank you,

LAU editorial team







# Playing at Full Pitch

## LAU Rugby sets new records, looks to the future

By Zahi Sahli

With a 16–8 defeat of the AUB Redbacks on May 14, the LAU Immortals won the 2011 national rugby championship for the seventh time in the league's nine-year history.

The victory capped off a second perfect season in a row for the Immortals. Their first perfect season was unprecedented in Lebanese rugby history. They've now broken a new record by going undefeated for 34 games during consecutive regular seasons.

"Most of these guys have been playing together for a number of years," explains Sami Garabedian, director of athletics at LAU Beirut. "This triumph is a testament to their camaraderie, their fighting spirit and their sense of purpose."

Garabedian says the team is reaping the rewards of its unity and consistency.

The Immortals clinched their first international title in early May by winning the RL 9 tournament organized by the Czech Rugby League Association in Pardubice, Czech Republic. The Redbacks and a number of teams from the Czech Republic and Serbia also competed in the tournament.

"We weren't expecting to win that tournament, but the team performed well and really outdid itself," says Remond Safi, the team's head coach.

Safi says the team will continue to add to its trophy cabinet, and that he intends to provide extra training sessions to ensure its long-term success.

"The players want another undefeated season, and that means extra sessions," he says. "We've reached the top but it's always difficult to stay there."

Next season, the team will have a chance to beat the all-time world record for a 31-game undefeated streak during regular seasons including grand finals.

The record has been held by Wigan RLFC, an English rugby club, since 1942, but the Immortals are closing in, having gone undefeated for 24 back-to-back official games since 2009.

"We're proud of our successes this past year, and the Athletics Department and its staff will spare no effort to secure the resources and conditions necessary for future successes," Garabedian says.

"Our plans never stop for any of our varsity teams — we've always striven to be the best."



# LAU Faculty Profile

## Said Ladki

### Expanding the horizons of hospitality and tourism studies

By Curtis Brown



"Have you seen our lab facilities? Let's go down there. Our housing management students learned the specs used by the award-winning Ritz chain ..."

Dr. Said Ladki has just whisked this writer past a chocolate laboratory, an experimental food facility and a simulated hotel lobby — all hidden away on an upper floor of the business school building, in a setting that seems equal parts five-star restaurant, clinical science lab and Hollywood soundstage — and is now offering a brisk tour of a fully appointed hotel room.

To say he is detail-oriented is an understatement. As professor and chair of the Hospitality Management and Accounting Department in LAU's School of Business, Ladki is as versed in the statistics and regional trends of the tourism and food industries as he is in the finer points of LAU's Institute of Hospitality and Tourism Management Studies.

He can tell you — offline and off the top of his head — everything from the number of airline meals Emirates Catering produces each sunrise (126,000) to the percentage of the average tourist's daily budget spent on food (26%) to the number of checkpoints LAU students learn to meet before turning a hotel room over to a new guest (30) to the number of calories needed daily to sustain astronauts in space (2500).

Ladki spent his university and early teaching years in the United States, and has traces of southern and Midwestern accents to show for it. He received his B.S. in hotel management from Oklahoma State University, his M.S. in tourism management from the University of Wisconsin-Stout, and his Ph.D. in hospitality and tourism from Virginia Tech.

After positions at West Virginia University and Georgia Southern University, Ladki returned to Lebanon in 1996, and has been with LAU's business school faculty ever since.

He describes LAU's approach to hospitality and tourism studies as unique in the region.

"There are other programs offering this specialization in Lebanon, but we bring American education to what is, at its core, an American industry," Ladki says.

"The European industry is characterized by mom-and-pop establishments," he explains. "The Americans built an industry. The Marriott, the Hilton, the Sheraton — these are all American concepts."

Lebanon must adapt to this model, Ladki says.

"Last summer was the largest tourism season in our history, but we were overwhelmed," he says. "We can handle occasional peaks, but not yet steady mass tourism."

In Ladki's eyes, this presents both a challenge and an opportunity for young graduates. As people get wealthier they want to travel more, and "we're the sector poised to provide these services."

Lebanon has traditionally catered to wealthy visitors from the Gulf. Ladki says it now needs to expand mid-range options.

He stresses that Lebanon's global reputation for fine food and wine should also be better exploited, noting with enthusiastic approval the recent launch of the national Museum of Vine and Wine in the Bekaa valley.

"These are sustainable industries," he says.

Ladki's command of both the big picture and the minutiae comes from years of research. He has published on topics ranging from meal rations for NASA and U.S. servicemen to travelers with pets to the summer 2006 Lebanese food crisis.

Ladki's broad knowledge of the industry bolsters his optimism about it, and the pride with which he speaks about LAU grads and their prospects. He says the program's job placement rates are high, and the spectrum of career opportunities always widening.

"It's a growth industry," he says. "And our students are well-diversified and savvy enough to create their own opportunities."

# Beyond the Food Pyramid

## Fledgling program brings interdisciplinary focus to the study of nutrition

By Emily Morris



2nd year nutrition students from Byblos on a trip to a dairy factory as part of the industrial production course

"Diseases such as obesity, cancer and diabetes are on the rise because of changes in dietary habits, as well as food safety and security problems," says Dr. Nadine Zeeni, assistant professor of nutrition in LAU's Department of Natural Sciences. "In Lebanon, these are often related to food supply, low levels of community awareness and nutrition campaigns, and ineffective government policies."

Enter LAU's nutrition program, two years in the offing and training the next generation of dietitians, nutritionists and researchers to address Lebanon's health issues by tackling negative dietary trends and inventing new methods to raise community nutrition awareness.

21-year-old Hiba Antoine Akiki transferred to the program after a year and a half of pharmacy studies. She says one of the program's strengths is its applicability to everyday life, from mealtimes to trips to the grocery store.

"We do research and projects that are relevant — the courses aren't restricted to theories," she says.

In addition to taking general courses (biology, organic chemistry, anatomy and physiology, etc.) students are required to take community nutrition, industrial food production, medical nutrition therapy, and food microbiology, among other subjects.

Research projects are an essential component of the three-year program, according to Zeeni. In the community nutrition course, 40 percent of the final grade is based on a project in which students choose a community in Lebanon, then use nutritional assessment tools to survey its population, analyze data, and offer an intervention plan.

This is the first year the "Senior Study in Nutrition" course, which is devoted purely to research, will be offered. Dr. Costantine Daher, chair of the Department of Natural Sciences in Byblos, hopes the course will prove as fruitful as its senior-study counterparts in biology and other majors.

"Senior study is unique to LAU. Students learn research techniques and have access to lab facilities," he says. "This means they can mingle with students and faculty from other disciplines in their research projects."

Daher adds that with the help of an adviser, the final result might be a publishable research paper or the nucleus of an in-depth research project.

Though the B.S. in nutrition is still in its infancy, enrollment has already exceeded expectations. There are currently more than 20 third- and final-year students enrolled in the major on each campus, and the number of first- and second-year majors is growing.

"There is no way you aren't loving what you're studying if you're in nutrition at LAU," says Natalie Hassan Farran, a nutrition major and psychology minor going into her second year. "The access to facilities at the medical and nursing schools is great, and there's such a wide variety of talented faculty and students."

Dr. Fuad Hashwa, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, Byblos campus, says the program was added "after a thorough feasibility study among our science students revealed significant demand."

He credits LAU's state-of-the-art curriculum, education, lab facilities and hospital training for the program's popularity. Its uniqueness, he says, derives from its multidisciplinary nature.

"Students will have internship opportunities at major hospitals in Lebanon — mainly UMC-RH — that optimally prepare them for professional careers in nutrition and dietetics," Hashwa adds.

Zeeni looks forward to seeing her first class of students graduate in spring of 2012. "I am excited to have third-year students and see them succeed. They're my babies," she says with a smile.



A student project illustrating the fast food joints near LAU



## New UMC—RH Appointments



### **Zeina Tannous**

**Harvard scholar-physician to chair dermatology department**

Dr. Zeina Tannous was recently appointed chairperson of the dermatology department at University Medical Center — Rizk Hospital. She comes to LAU from Boston, Massachusetts, where she was assistant professor of dermatology at Harvard Medical School.

Tannous is a recognized and widely published figure in her field. In addition to her academic duties and scholarly research, she has worked for several years as an attending physician at the Veterans' Association Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital.

In order to further her goal of building a top dermatology program at LAU, Tannous plans to maintain her close academic ties to Harvard Medical School. She says her continued collaboration with physicians and researchers is "crucially important," and can generate publicity and exposure for LAU.

"As LAU School of Medicine continues to grow into one of the best medical schools in the region, my mission is to parallel this growth by building the most outstanding department of dermatology in the Middle East," she says.

Tannous received her M.D. from AUB in 1995. She then moved to Boston and undertook a series of clinical and research fellowships at Harvard Medical School.

She became a lecturer at Harvard in 2005, an instructor in 2006, and an assistant professor in 2008.

"I am involved in cutting-edge advances in dermatology that might change our field in such areas as laser therapy, photodynamic therapy and laser treatment of non-melanoma skin cancers," she says. "My multidisciplinary training helps me to take a key role in these studies."

Tannous has won numerous awards and research grants, including from the American Society of Laser Medicine and Surgery, and is on the editorial board of two scholarly journals.



### **Eddie Abdallah**

**MD Anderson cancer specialist**

Dr. Eddie Abdallah was recently appointed professor and chairman of surgery at LAU School of Medicine and chief of surgery and head of hepatobiliary surgery at University Medical Center — Rizk Hospital.

An accomplished scholar and physician specializing in complex gastrointestinal, liver, pancreatic and cancer surgery, Abdallah comes to LAU from one of the most renowned cancer centers in the world, the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.

Abdallah says he was drawn to LAU's new medical school by its ethical mission of serving the needs of students, patients, and communities in Lebanon and the region, and UMC-RH's commitment to recruiting top physicians and building centers of excellence.

"I am certain a much higher quality of care can be delivered in the region — that patients and students who go to the US for training will find the same level of care and education here," Abdallah says, "if we work together and commit to development, innovation and continued elevation of the standards here in our home."

Abdallah pursued his medical school at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where he received his M.D. in 1993. He has held postdoctoral fellowships at the University of Florida, the University of Texas' M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, and the Hôpital Beaujon in Paris.

He became an assistant professor of Surgical Oncology at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in 2003, and was made associate professor in 2008.

Abdallah has received numerous awards for his teaching, research and physician's practice, including an America's Top Surgeons Award from the Consumers' Research Council of America. He has authored or co-authored over 130 scholarly articles for peer-review journals, and has participated in countless clinical studies.



# Magic and Loss

## *Shell in the Heart* strikes a collective nerve

By Marc Abizeid

The theater was too dark to see audience members cry. But you could hear them sobbing.

What would you expect from a play that forces you to relive the universal experience of comforting a loved one on their deathbed, gripping their hand as if that will save them? You look them in the eye. You both know what's coming, and there is nothing anyone can do about it.

*Shell in the Heart* centers on Wahab, a helpless 19-year-old who witnesses the slow, agonizing death of his mother. Throughout the play, he unleashes a whirlwind of emotions. There's grief, of course, and disbelief — but also anger, directed both at himself and at the mother whose pain he's absorbing.

Once strong and forceful, the mother now struggles to call her son into her room, with her dry, coarse voice.

"I'm in pain, Wahab," she tells her son.

"I know, but what can I do?" Wahab shouts. "Just tell me, what can I do?"

You can't help but feel for Wahab, for his torn relationship with the woman who gave birth to him, fed and nurtured him. But is it really Wahab we pity, or is it self-pity? Are we just reminded of our own guilt, as we evaluate the relationships we've taken for granted? In a way, the play is a wake-up call to cherish those who are good to us before it's too late.

"Usually, death doesn't happen on stage," explained Dr. Lina Abyad, the play's director and an assistant professor of communication arts at LAU. "It usually happens behind the scenes, then you bring it in. Here, we witness it as it happens."

*Shell in the Heart* is Abyad's latest major theater production organized by LAU's Communication Arts Department. It is based on the 2007 novel of the same name, written by Majdi Mouawad, a Canadian-Lebanese actor, comedian and author.

The play is set mostly in contemporary Lebanon, but flashes back several times to the innocent days of Wahab's childhood. His mother, wrapped in a stunning summer dress and bead necklace, dances as little Wahab rides his bicycle in circles.

Death was outside then, beyond the walls of his home, amid the explosions and gunfire that rocked the country. Inside, there was serenity.

"Wahab's mother represents the beauty of Beirut before the war," says Abyad.

Toward the end of the play, Wahab's brother summons him to the hospital where his mother, it seems, is about to die. Upon arriving he falls to his knees in the parking lot, under the falling snow, wishing for a bomb, or something, anything, to put an end to the misery.

He goes up to find his family keeping vigil over the mother, remaining by her side until she takes her final breath.

"Mama," Wahab then says aloud. "I would have liked to have known you better. I know you're not here anymore, but you will always be with me."

*Shell in the Heart* was performed most evenings between May 5–15 at LAU Beirut's Gulbenkian Theatre.

# Alumni Profiles



## At Table With Alfred

Young restaurateur serves it up old-school

Table d'Alfred, located in a lovely old building on the posh Rue Sursock in Achrafieh, has in four years already won two Grand Prix Gourmet awards. Such is its reputation for fine French dining that you half expect its founder and namesake Alfred Assayli to be a silver-haired older gentleman.

Instead, it is a spry young 2005 graduate of LAU who ushers you in, offering a glass of Bordeaux and a tour.

The atmosphere is decidedly old world. The lounge — which features “more accessible international cuisine” such as veal carpaccio and foie gras — has a plush if understated elegance. There is a piano, a cigar humidor, and a selection of cognacs over a century old.

The stone walls of the restaurant are lined with 18th-century French paintings owned by Assayli's family. The chef, Sylvain Arthus, prepares such delicacies as Dover sole prepared Grenoble-style and roasted lamb *de pauillac rôti*, and live oysters are flown in from France every Friday. A vaulted wine cellar houses over 500 French and Lebanese wines.

After studying marketing and management at LAU, Assayli completed his master's in gastronomy and French cuisine at the Ecole Ritz Escoffier in Paris. He returned to Beirut in 2006 and began catering “a bit, for fun.” The pastime soon took a more serious turn.

Noting the high turnover of the increasingly oversaturated Beirut restaurant market, Assayli emphasizes that “Table d'Alfred was built to become a benchmark for French cuisine.”

Assayli has since launched Alf Events, which recently introduced “Dinner in the Sky” to Lebanon. An open-air platform — complete with chefs and a tableful of dazzled, seatbelted diners — is hoisted by crane hundreds of meters into the air, where dinner is served.

Who seeks out such a service? “22 privileged people,” he says with a laugh.



The dining room at Achrafieh's Table d'Alfred



## The Raw and the Cooked

LAU grad brings green sushi to Byblos

“It's true that travel broadens the mind,” says LAU alumna Nada Aal, “but it also whets the appetite.”

It certainly whetted hers. Aal, who graduated with an M.B.A. in 2010, established the Byblos sushi restaurant Mon Maki a Moi after traveling the world in search of the finest Japanese ingredients.

“From one country to another, I used to write and rate everything I saw and tasted, she says.

“I found the best ginger in one city, the best sushi in another, the best decoration in a third. I couldn't find everything under one roof. And an old Japanese proverb says: “when you can't find what you are looking for, create it.”

Aal, an environmental activist as well as an aficionado of Japanese cuisine, describes Mon Maki a Moi as “the first green sushi boutique in Lebanon.”

She insisted on making the restaurant itself an eco-friendly space. Everything — down to the napkins, placemats, delivery boxes, bags, chopsticks, covers etc. — are produced using recycled materials, and are sent after use for recycling. Food waste is also minimized by the use of compost.

The interior of Mon Maki a Moi includes the first vertical garden in Lebanon, a live-plant framed wall that serves as a conversation piece as well as adding to the restaurant's eco-concept.

“If you want to stand for a cause,” she says, “start from within.”

To which we say — minds broadened, appetites whetted — *sahtan!*



Mon Maki a Moi's interior



# LAU Faculty Profile

## Dr. Nadine Zeeni

### The frontiers of nutrition

By Emily Morris



While Nadine Zeeni was at McGill University pursuing her master's degree in human nutrition and working as a teaching assistant, her supervisor asked her at the last minute to give a lecture for his course on food fundamentals. She recalls her nerves mounting before the class, then dissipating the moment she stood in front of the 100 or so students and began lecturing.

"I got this incredible feeling during that hour. It was a high," she says. "I knew from then on I just wanted to teach."

Following that epiphany, Zeeni enrolled in a Ph.D. program at the AgroParisTech University in France, where she participated in the NuSISCO (Nutrient Sensing in Satiety Control and Obesity) project, funded by the European Union and aimed at elucidating the growing obesity problem in Europe.

"It was an amazing experience," she recalls. "Nine Ph.D. students from different universities worked on the project, and we'd meet in a different European city every three months to discuss our findings."

Zeeni became the first and only full-time faculty member of LAU's new nutrition program in 2009. She splits her time between Beirut and Byblos campuses, teaching three to four courses per semester. Zeeni still finds time for research, focusing in the areas of nutrient sensing, satiety/hunger regulation, obesity and eating disorders.

LAU Magazine recently caught up with the university's resident nutrition expert.

## Q&A

### How did you become interested in the nutrition field?

I loved biology and physiology during school, and always found the nutrition component of those courses interesting. I also had a neighbor who was a dietician, and as I learned more about her job, I found it amazing. I entered AUB's nutrition program as an undergraduate, without knowing I would ever teach.

### What role does a nutritionist or dietician typically play in Lebanese society?

People need nutritionists for most chronic diseases, actually. Nutritional support, whether in a hospital or outpatient clinic, is needed for cardiovascular disease, diabetes — which is prevalent in Lebanon — and hypertension, for example. With rising overweight and obesity rates, nutritionists are in ever-greater demand. And because of body image concerns and pressure, especially on women, to be thin, eating disorders are also on the rise. In short, Lebanon's communities really need nutritionists for a variety of important reasons.

### What are some of the main issues facing nutritionists in Lebanon today?

There is a lack of community nutrition efforts as well as effective government policies. If you go to schools and survey food options in school cafeterias, you'll see it's scandalous. If we as nutritionists are able to reach youths, I believe we can make a big difference.

### What are your recommendations for having a healthy relationship with food? As a nutritionist you must have a hard time eating junk food, right?

Well, there are behaviors that you modify because you're in the nutrition field, and there are some things I can no longer accept as part of my or my family's lifestyle. Milk for me must always be skim and we hardly eat fried food, for example. They are small changes but add up over time. But saying I will never eat chocolate or cake is completely unrealistic. You shouldn't completely remove sweets or French fries from your diet. Eat a burger once and a while, but certainly not everyday. 30% of your daily energy should come from fat, but try to shoot for the good fats. The idea is to have a balance.

# THE LEGACY & THE PROMISE CAMPAIGN

## Project10

### Grassroots Giving

#### Project 10 sets out to widen LAU's alumni donor base

By Greg Houle

Over the years LAU has built a far-reaching global alumni network with a particularly strong presence in the Middle East, Europe and North America. New chapters have sprouted up in cities like Doha, Geneva and Ottawa. With over thirty alumni chapters and tens of thousands of alumni across the globe, LAU is about to introduce a new initiative — “Project 10” — designed to take its alumni-network-expansion efforts to the next level.

The goal of Project 10 is to increase donor participation to 10% of all alumni. Project 10 team members are conducting research, proposing ideas for new gift campaigns, and initiating new ways to engage current students and young alumni to help increase participation.

“This project is not about the amount of money people donate,” says Vice President for University Advancement Richard Rumsey, who was the project’s catalyst.” It’s about revitalizing — at the grassroots level — our alumni’s sense of investment in the fate and mission of LAU.”

#### Alumni and alumni chapters who contributed between March 1 and June 30, 2011

Theodore and Diana Domian Abdo  
Mihran and Elizabeth Apkarian Agbabian  
Bushra R. Alameddine  
Wayne and Sonia Konialian Aller  
Alumni Association, Abu Dhabi Chapter  
Alumni Association, Amman Chapter  
Alumni Association, Kuwait Chapter  
Alumni Association, Oman Chapter  
Alumni Association, Riyadh Chapter  
Ali and Adalat Jayyousi Atawani  
Edmond and Taline Ouzounian Avakian  
Helen M. Badawi  
Fouad and Madeleine A. Bardawil  
Samira B. Baroody  
Georges K. Chahda  
Nicolas and Abila Salti Chammas  
Leila Shaheen Da Cruz  
Leila Saleeby Dagher  
Bonnie Downes  
David Wharton and Mera Faddoul  
Amine A. Fahel  
Peter and Eva Farha  
Raef and Nadine Hachache  
Reham J. Haddad  
Rodolphe and Nermine Mufti Hage  
Elsi F. Hakim  
Theodore and Saniya Fakih Hamady

Hassan G. Hibri  
Yvonne Agini Kabban  
Maha J. Kaddoura  
Jean and Leila Saad Kalash  
Khalil A. Kanaan  
Salma Hamieh Kanaan  
Rima Karaki  
Hind J. Kassem  
Peter and Suad Khallouf Katul  
Ghada H. Madhoun  
Hala Y. Masri  
Ernest and Adele Haddad McCarus  
Walid and Victoria Fattouh Nasr  
Hagop Jack and Sossy Aposhian Nercessian  
Amal A. Nublat  
Allan and Reda Jabbour Riley  
Raymond and Sona Piliguian Ritchel  
Ibrahim N. Salame  
Oussama and Youmna Halabi Salameh  
Mazen O. Sinno  
Wehbi S. Shuayb  
James and Samia Khalaf Sullivan  
Souad S. Wazzan  
Leonora Yenovkian White  
Hiba Yazbeck and Chadi Wehbe  
Joseph and Wafa Aoun Yammine

GOAL \$65 Million

RAISED \$59,447,706



THE LEGACY  
& THE PROMISE  
LAU CAMPAIGN FOR EXCELLENCE

## Donor Profiles



*Nasser al Nowais, co-founder and chairman of Rotana*



*Selim el Zyr, co-founder, president and CEO of Rotana*

### Rotana Hotel Management Corporation: Success is for those who know what they want and go after it

Rotana Hotel Management Corporation has chosen to donate generously to LAU in support of students at its School of Business. Citing the words of American poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson — “do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail” — the regional hotel management giant described its ethos of success and voiced its belief in the talents and prospects of LAU’s business students.

New York University graduate Nasser Al Nowais, Rotana’s co-founder and chairman, and Selim El Zyr, a graduate of l’Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne and Cornell University and Rotana’s co-founder, president and CEO, both know the value of academic excellence and strongly believe it is essential to the region’s future development.

“LAU has provided tremendous opportunities for the region’s youth, cultivating their ambitions to build a sustainable business world,” El Zyr says.

“LAU has continually served the educational, social and economic needs of the Middle East, even through the difficult war years,” he adds. “It has provided education for women since 1835 and is evolving constantly. Today, it is one of the top universities in the region.”

Founded in 1992, Rotana has a portfolio of over 70 properties across 26 cities in the Middle East and North Africa region. It aims to have a property in every key city within that region. Maintaining consistency and excellence of service in line with international standards, Rotana also focuses on traditional Arabic culture and hospitality.

Nowais and El Zyr’s hard work, determination, drive and record of achievement set a strong example for LAU students and alumni. Their leadership and entrepreneurial acumen have won them numerous awards, including — for three consecutive years — the Annual World Travel award for the “Middle East’s Leading Hotel Brand.”

“Success is an amalgamation of know-how, personality, courage, audacity, leadership, opportunity, transparency, intelligence, hard work, talent, determination and passion,” El Zyr says. “Success is for those who know what they want and go after it — no matter how difficult the path. Go after goals others think too ambitious or farfetched.”



*Beach Rotana, Abu Dhabi*



*Cove Rotana Resort, United Arab Emirates*





# Hungry for Change

The food price crisis and revolutionary foment

By Marc Abizeid



Some three years before the “Arab Spring” sent its first green shoots and seized the world’s imagination, an unprecedented wave of riots rocked the developing world in response to the spiraling of food prices to record highs.

At least five were killed in Haiti when fighting erupted over sudden increases in the price of rice, beans and milk. Another five were killed in Somalia during similar riots.

Thousands protested in Yemen, torching police stations and setting up roadblocks. A 15-year-old in Egypt was shot in the head and killed during the upheaval there.

The sounds of clanging pots and pans rang throughout the streets and at the gates of government buildings in Manila, San Salvador and Lima, in a symbolic demand for the dignity of what might be called food sovereignty.

Though few realized it at the time, it was a sign of things to come.

### “Not just bellies to be fed”

The people of the Arab world *en masse* brought the issue to the table this spring, inspired by a Tunisian street vendor whose humiliation at the hands of police in December, 2010 proved to be the last straw.

As the cost of food again began to reach record highs in late-2010 and early 2011, fearful governments in many Arab countries facing revolts began to subsidize food—a sure way, they thought, to quell dissent and restore order. But when the measures were introduced, momentum on the streets only grew.

“The governments started stockpiling food and giving it away, but that did nothing,” says Dr. Rami Zurayk, an agronomy professor at the American University of Beirut and author of *Food, Farming, and Freedom: Sowing the Arab Spring* (2011).

Regional vulnerability to increases in food prices hardly comes as a surprise, as the Arab countries import over half its food, more than any other part of the world.

### “What if the upheavals that greeted Ben Ali, Mubarak and Qaddafi are not the end of the story, but the beginning of it?”

—Lester Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute

But food insecurity, Zurayk reminds us, was merely a symptom of a much larger ill in the Arab world, one that wouldn’t be cured with food stamps. “We are not just bellies to be fed,” he says.

More than hunger itself, according to Zurayk, the Arab people were resisting the system that kept them hungry—the same system that keeps them under the thumb of oppressive autocrats with international backing.

It was a revolutionary moment that wasn’t simply going to fade away, Zurayk says. Sketching a trajectory from the first Palestinian intifada to today’s “Arab Spring,” he notes that the entire region has become politically emboldened in its struggles against both foreign occupation and domestic despotism.

“All of this is becoming a part of the culture. Suddenly, people are doing things they previously thought impossible,” Zurayk says.



Mass demonstrations erupted in Algeria in early 2011 in response to the rising prices for food as well as unemployment  
Courtesy of Abayomi Azikiwe, Pan-African News Wire

### Weather, corruption and liberalization

The overthrow of the Tunisian and Egyptian regimes revealed not only the excesses of state corruption, but also the extent to which economic elites benefitted from radical inequality.

The agricultural industry serves as a single example of how corporations reap the benefits of price hikes in food as much of the rest of the world goes hungry.

In a May, 2011 report titled, “Growing a better future: Food justice in a resource-constrained world,” Oxfam details specific cases of agricultural companies that enjoyed soaring profits during the height of the 2007-2008 world food crisis.

“Price volatility causes havoc for women and men living in poverty, but presents big opportunities for agribusiness firms,” according to the report. “In times of price stability, trading margins are razor-thin, but instability allows the largest traders to exploit their unrivaled knowledge of reserve levels and expected movements in supply and demand.”

Environmental factors also play a significant role in price surges, as heat waves, droughts and disappearing fertile land spell catastrophe for agricultural production. Demand for food is also steadily rising, as the world population grows by about 80 million each year.

Farming suffers from low investments in the Arab world, as the lucrative oil economies that dominate markets in many countries show little interest in developing a robust agricultural sector.

Local farms that do exist in the region are facing declines as a result of governments’ growing interest in the more lucrative business of trade and land speculation. When the Mubarak regime, for example, began allowing international agribusinesses access to what were once local farms, small farmers who could no longer afford to pay “found themselves migrating, first into the suburbs of Cairo, then into Tahrir Square,” Zurayk says.

Globally, the food crisis was exacerbated by the decision of agriculturally productive countries to cap exports, presumably to feed their own populations. For the rest of the world, however, this exacerbated shortages and caused prices to soar even higher.

### Let them eat biofuel

Large importing countries including the United States were quick to criticize exporters for contributing to a global food shortage. 🌾

But as the Oxfam report points out, rich nations were also complicit, as they channeled billions of dollars into the biofuel industry and effectively converted food crops into fuel crops.

Indeed scholars observe a highly positive correlation between oil and food prices. At the peak of the 2007-2008 food crisis, the cost of oil was reaching record highs of over \$140/barrel. Then as oil prices fell, so did food prices.

Wealthy countries' investments in biofuel as an alternative to fossil fuel, in short, has come at a high cost to the countries most severely impacted by food prices.

"A politician looks good if they say, 'let's invest in renewable energies,' but once you start investing in biofuels to try to solve one problem, you create an even bigger one," says Dr. Walid Marrouch, assistant professor of economics at LAU.

Marrouch co-authored a 2011 research paper on the issue. "The Economics of Oil, Biofuel and Food Commodities" concludes that farmers have an incentive to reallocate farmland to the production of biofuel crops when energy prices are high. That, coupled with population growth, drives up food prices.

Marrouch is thus critical of calls for more research and technology to increase agricultural output as a long-term solution to food shortages, saying that any proposal that ignores biofuels sidesteps the core problem.

"I don't think those views are 100-percent wrong, but they have to take into account the issue of biofuels," he says. "Even if we increased our global output, what will guarantee those crops won't be used for fuel?"

## Ya Libnan...

Lebanon experiences its fair share of problems when it comes to food. According to Atef Idriss, the head of the syndicate of food industries, Lebanon has gone from maintaining a balance of agricultural imports and exports of about \$300 million each in the mid-1990s to a massive trade deficit today. The country now imports over \$2 billion worth of food annually, versus a mere \$275 million in exports.

**"A politician looks good if they say, 'let's invest in renewable energies,' but once you start investing in biofuels to try to solve one problem, you create an even bigger one."**

—Dr. Walid Marrouch, assistant professor of economics, LAU

"After years of liberalizing our economy, we ended up importing over six times more than we used to, mainly because we did not restructure our economy to address the competitive needs of the 21st century," Idriss says.

Lebanon's ratification of free trade agreements, such as the Euromed treaty, effectively broke down customs barriers on all imported food. "This removed the last comparative advantage for our agricultural industries," says Idriss, who is also the CEO of MEFOA, a regional firm that provides consulting and training services to help food companies establish safety and quality procedures.



*Food vs. fuel: Reallocation of farmland to biofuel crops drives global food prices even higher*

Lebanon faces another problem: it may not have all the natural resources to develop a sustainable food economy. Lebanon's 300,000 hectares of agricultural land is "very little," in view of the four million people who live here, says Dr. Isam Bachour, a soil chemist at AUB.

"The only product we produce enough of is eggs, and some vegetables and fruits," he says. "Everything else is imported."

But more land wouldn't necessarily mean more food, since there isn't enough water to irrigate it. Only one-third of those 300,000 hectares are irrigated, with the remainder relying on rain, which doesn't produce as many crops. In periods of drought, the already alarming situation escalates.

## What next?

In light of the consequences of biofuels, it may be time to reconsider the electric car.

Regarding the population, it should probably stop growing.

Regarding the environment, climate change is likely to have crossed the threshold of irreversibility before world leaders at biannual summits agree on the solution to global warming and land degradation.

In a recent Foreign Policy article titled "The New Geopolitics of Food," Lester Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute, entertained an intriguing possibility: "What if the upheavals that greeted Ben Ali, Mubarak and Qaddafi are not the end of the story, but the beginning of it?"

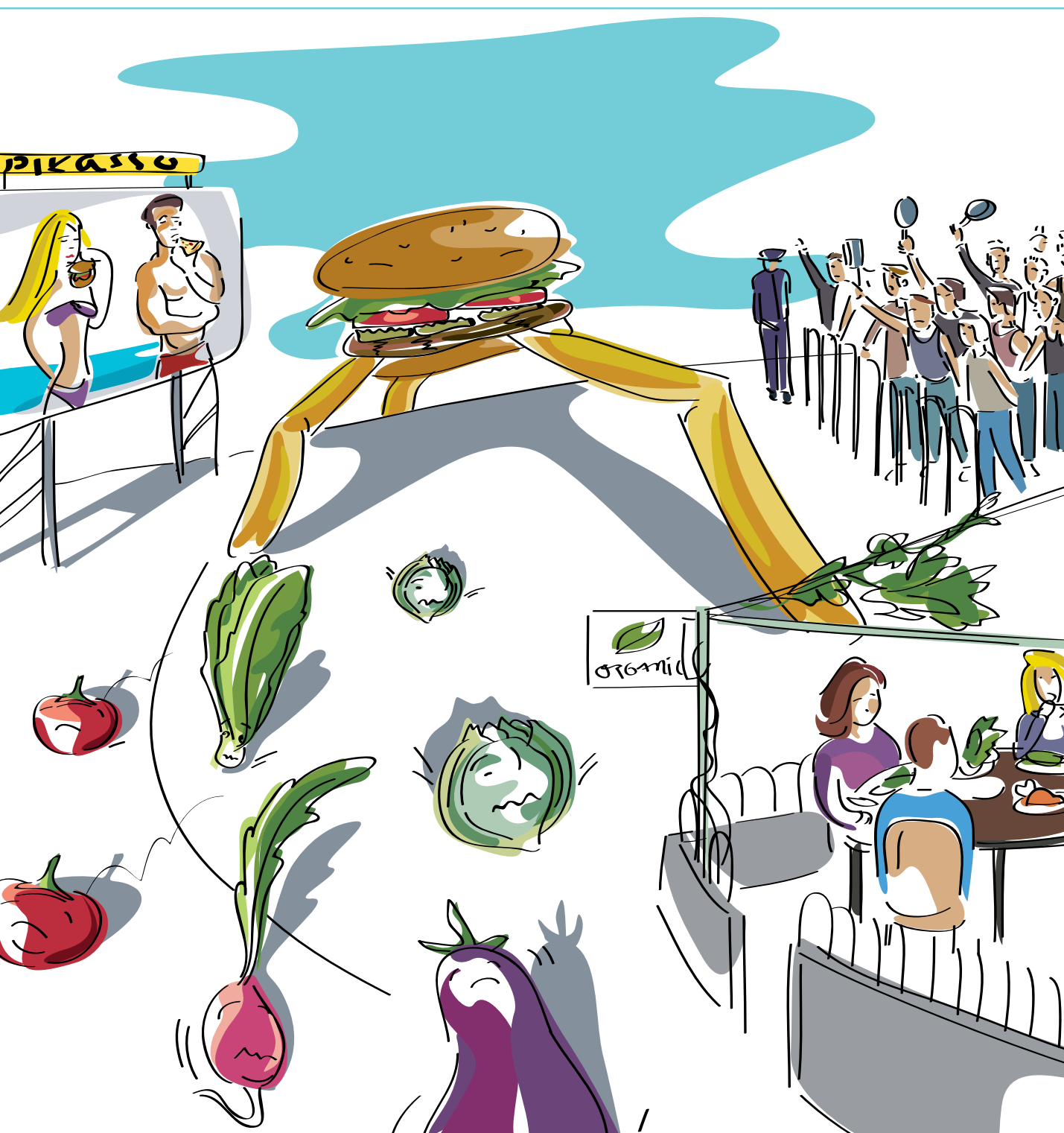
The Middle East may have set something in motion, Brown suggests. The hunger for revolution may spread next to Latin America, where the last decade has witnessed a growing resistance to and rejection of free-market ideology.

For such movements to succeed, however, they'll need new ideas and plans for building a different kind of system, one that precedence to human needs over corporate growth.

"Healthy, nutritious food is a right," says Zurayk. "When it's treated like a commodity in a market of supply and demand, a problem of access is created."

"You can do without a watch, a cellphone or car, but without food, you'll die." ☒





"Food Fights," by Georges Torbey ('09)

# Over Here, Over There

## LAU expands its horizons through exchange programs

By Emily Holman

Since its inception two years ago, LAU's Outreach and Civic Engagement unit (OCE) has aimed to encourage students to expand the horizons of their study beyond the classroom, and — increasingly — even beyond the border.

"LAU has a responsibility to expose students to the opportunity of an experience abroad," says LAU's Vice President for Student Development and Enrollment Management Dr. Elise Salem. "We want to deepen and strengthen their experience."

Deepening students' experience is carried out in a number of ways. Faculty members are encouraged to take their students abroad on trips; students are encouraged to spend a semester studying abroad; and foreign students are invited to spend a semester — or more — at LAU.

Campus diversity, Salem emphasizes, can broaden the minds of students as much as travel itself.

The last seven months have seen considerable expansion of the student outreach program. Marita Kassis, coordinator of Study Abroad & International Exchange, explains that "not all of our programs are based on student exchange. Others might entail research or faculty going abroad."

There are currently six students from Sciences-Po (Paris, France) at LAU, and six LAU students studying at Sciences-Po. Most are in their third year, majoring in international affairs or political science.

Administrators hope, however, that travel abroad will become an integral part of every major. "This will add an extra dimension to many fields of study," Salem says.

Elie Samia, the executive director of OCE, agrees. "In today's open markets, the more cosmopolitan you are, the more competitive you become. OCE creates the right environment to facilitate international exchange, leading to more exposure, richer experiences and better education."

Kassis's role is to facilitate exchange students' experiences as much as possible. "We usually go the extra mile and send links to apartment rentals, for example," she says. LAU is currently trying to allocate housing and dorms, for which international students have priority over home students.

The process of establishing links with foreign universities begins with a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two institutions. Although LAU has MOUs with universities from all over the world, not all have led to actual student exchanges.

The OCE unit intends however to pursue each in due course. "We want to animate our old relationships and begin new ones," Salem says.

Ties are established in myriad ways and usually begin informally. LAU recently signed an MOU with Italy's University of Camerino and a partnership agreement with Richmond, the American International University in London. The university also has MOUs with UMASS and Michigan State that are pending further development.

Students have also expressed interest in studying abroad

at universities with which LAU has yet to sign an agreement — for example the University of Barcelona — but now that the outreach program has begun, more and more links will become concrete. The main requirement is that universities must be accredited in order for credits to be transferred. Depending on the program, students must complete a minimum of 12 credits while abroad.

Most programs include faculty, staff and research as well. While the universities most students attend have MOUs with LAU, students can study elsewhere provided they have a petition signed and spend their last 30 credits in LAU.

OCE unit members are personally dedicated to outreach. Having completed an internship at the UN Security Council in New York City, Kassis knows how life-changing study abroad can be.

"LAU is trying hard to open the world to its students. The study-abroad experience contributes to our mission of educating the whole person," she says.

"Students who study abroad acquire independence, tact, and greater cultural and linguistic fluency. They come back changed," Kassis says.

Leila Kabalan, 20, a political science and international affairs major in her final year, recently returned from Sciences-Po. "I was attracted to Paris' cosmopolitanism, and the university is one of the best in Europe, and has a lot of international students," she says.

Kabalan's experience was overwhelmingly positive. "Of course I miss Paris," she recalls wistfully. "There so many opportunities, so much culture — and free entry at museums and other tourist sites for students, which is really helpful."

"What's beautiful about Paris is that it has modernized brilliantly but retained its cultural heritage. I feel that Beirut has lost out on some of that."

Kabalan remarks that the experience provided a real learning curve. "This was the first time I lived in a European country. I learned a great deal about European identity, and about integration and multiculturalism."

French national and Sciences-Po student Kevin Feret has been studying political sciences at LAU since the beginning of this academic year. "I like life here," he says. He came to Lebanon with the idea of gaining experience of the Middle East, and describes Beirut as "*vraiment geniale*."

"People are curious and friendly. They are inviting when you begin to talk to them." Learning the Lebanese dialect has been a challenge. "But the SINARC program has been really helpful," he points out, then after a moment's reflection: "My time here has gone too quickly. I'm attached!"



## Student Profile



### Hot Couture

#### LAU Arts student debuts in high-end dress design

By Marc Abizeid

It's another day of Beirut's blistering heat, and you're just off the Selim Salam exit, past the half-dozen or so Sukleen dumpsters. The air is hazy and humid, smog and fumes chafe your nostrils, and the honking hammers your ear drums.

A couple hundred meters down the road adjacent to the exit you'll find a small, shaded lot on the left behind some trees. It beckons, like a desert mirage.

Cross the parking lot, step through the glass door between the spotless vitrines and you've entered Midamonde, an oasis of calm with its white marble floor, mirrors all around, and its collection of lustrous dresses hung on hand-made racks.

Ibrahim Midani will greet you, offer to make some coffee, and then introduce you to his line of evening dresses designed for those special occasions.

Soon to begin his final year at LAU, the 21-year-old fine-arts student is a rare example of someone whose passion for color and creativity has quickly translated into a lucrative career.

Everything in Midamonde — from the light fixtures to the dress bags and mannequins — is designed by Ibrahim. He envisions how he wants something to look, how he wants it to feel. Then he makes it.

But don't ask him about prices. He's in it for the art.

"The dresses cost between 350 and ... or, 250 and ... oh I don't know, \$500? You'd have to ask my brother," Ibrahim says. "I'm really not into prices."

Ibrahim launched Midamonde in April with his brother, Mohamad, who graduated from LAU in 2008 with a degree in business management. Mohamad does the bookkeeping while Ibrahim scribbles on his sketchpad. He flips through a notebook full of squiggles and lines to show how concepts are born.

"You look at these pages and you see nothing," Ibrahim says. "But I can take something from these lines and develop it into a design."

Ibrahim has followed in the footsteps of his father Said, who years ago started Jany Six, which also makes high-end dresses. Beginning at the age of seven, Ibrahim would go with baba to the workshop, where little by little he became fascinated with the different fabrics and colors, the lights and sewing machines.

He began helping his father with designs a couple years ago before they became competitors in a niche market, though Ibrahim insists that there is nothing his father would like more to see than his children succeed.

Within the first two months, Ibrahim says he had designed about 50 dresses. He still comes up with a new one every day. The company has sparked interest in the dresses not only in Lebanon but throughout the Arab region.

"So far, so good," says brother Mohamad, emerging from behind a folding mirror door in the corner of the store where he runs the operation.

"Like any new business, we face some obstacles, but we are very happy with what we've achieved in such a short amount of time," he says. "We look forward to expanding."

The company has a motto: *The detail that makes the difference.*

It's not an empty tagline, Ibrahim says. He designs each dress with a peculiarity, a small and subtle flourish, to distinguish it from anything else on the market.

"I wanted to create something different, but sophisticated," he says. "Our dresses are for those looking for something new, crazy and beautiful."

*Midamonde*





> AICU Interim President Dr. Franco Pavoncello  
addresses university representatives

# American Universities Convene at LAU

## Annual meeting addresses challenges to American higher education

By Curtis Brown

LAU hosted the annual meeting of the Association of American International Colleges and Universities, April 28–May 1, in collaboration with the American University of Beirut and Haigazian University.

The meeting was attended by the presidents and chief academic officers of over 20 higher education institutions worldwide. In a plenary session at LAU Byblos, LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara was elected president of the AAICU's Executive Committee.

Founded in 1971, the AAICU helps promote the interests of — and enhance collaboration between — American universities in countries all over the world. LAU (then Beirut College for Women) was one of nine founding members.

This year's meeting focused on general issues ranging from the effects of economic turmoil on American higher education to the need to promote liberal arts curricula, as well as imminent challenges such as the need to create an identifiable brand for member institutions and the need for organized lobbying in the face of new U.S. Department of Education (ED) regulations that could adversely affect American universities abroad.

At the official opening, Dr. Jabbara underscored the importance of "the concept of intellectual liberalism," which he said needed to be championed "now more than any other time in the past, even inside the United States of America."

Jabbara stressed that member universities should strive for both academic distinction and socio-economic openness, and advance the ideals of American higher education while also serving the local and national communities in which they are embedded.

"We are here to strengthen our commitment to society. We need to be well organized and coordinated, to convince legislators in Washington and the American administration to maintain their support both for us and for higher education in

America," Jabbara said. "This will strengthen our bonds, because we are helping to spread these values from the United States to the world."

Dr. Franco Pavoncello, AAICU's interim president, addressed concerns that new ED policies could prevent U.S. students with federal loans from attending AAICU universities. Pavoncello described the ED's policy team as "responsive to the plight of institutions abroad" and eager to help.

Pavoncello, Jabbara and seven other university presidents also drafted a letter to the U.S. Congressional Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, urging it to address the matter.

In a meeting of chief academic officers held at AUB, several professors and officers stressed the need to strengthen liberal arts curricula. Dr. Marcia Grant, vice rector of Forman Christian College in Pakistan, said educators sometimes lose sight of their belief in liberal arts in "societies where liberal arts are misunderstood. Students want to make money, and this is an issue all AAICU members struggle with," she said.

Dr. Abdallah Sfeir, LAU provost, agreed that the centrality of the liberal arts needs to be reaffirmed. "Many students think of liberal arts courses as something they have to take so they can graduate," Sfeir observed.

On the final day's plenary meeting, members voted on new appointments to the executive committee. Along with Dr. Jabbara, AUB President Peter Dorman and American College of Greece-Deree President Peter Horner were elected vice president and treasurer, respectively.

This year's AAICU meeting included a joint program with the eighth annual meeting and conference of the American International Consortium of Academic Libraries, which was also hosted at LAU from April 27–30.



# Online and in the Stacks

## International conference addresses university libraries in the digital age

By Emily Morris

Most LAU students wouldn't remember the days of manually sifting through small, tightly packed card-catalogue drawers to find the shelf mark of the library book they wanted. A few generations down the line, their counterparts may find the very idea of a shelf mark quaint. With the shift towards e-content — data that is stored and transmitted electronically — typing a few keywords into a computer database now calls up a world of possibilities.

"E-content has invaded our world recently and rapidly, and as librarians we have had to meet the challenge," said Cendrella Habre, director of LAU's Riyad Nassar Library, during the opening ceremony of the eighth annual meeting and conference of the American International Consortium of Academic Libraries.

Hosted at LAU Beirut from April 27–30, the conference brought professionals from university libraries and IT departments around the world together to discuss the ever-changing internal and external demands of end users and to encourage interdepartmental cooperation.

AMICAL is an international consortium of American-model, liberal arts institutions based throughout Europe, North Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East. Their members meet annually to discuss emerging issues in the field of higher education with a library and IT focus.

The theme of this year's conference was "E-content: Collecting, Managing, Promoting, Teaching." Members and invited guests explored potentially transformative developments in how library and information services deliver scholarly content to academic communities.

"In simple terms, this means making information available electronically to end users — in our case, students, faculty and staff," Habre explained.

"There is no way to dodge this trend," Habre said. "Many print journals have been switched to e-format, as well as the majority of our print reference materials — dictionaries, encyclopedias, maps, and so on. And e-books are an increasingly important part of LAU's collection."

In his opening speech, LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra praised AMICAL for its commitment to delivering academic content innovatively.

"As presidents and provosts of universities, we are grateful to



AMICAL conference participants check out a vendor station in the Business Building. Below: conference participants on the steps of the School of Business.

you. No educational institution is worth a grain of salt without a vibrant library at its heart," Jabbra told conference participants.

Around 135 people, including LAU staff, attended the meeting, which included panel discussions, rounds of lightning talks (highly focused five-to-10-minute presentations), and roundtable discussions.

Participants also took part in a joint program with the Association of American International Colleges and Universities conference, held at LAU Beirut from April 29–May 1. The AMICAL and AAICU conferences were scheduled concurrently to allow library and IT staff to interact with university presidents and administrators.

Universities represented at the conference included Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco; American College of Greece; American University of Paris; American University in Cairo; American University of Beirut; and Haigazian University.

"This event helps LAU library staff move beyond their daily tasks within the library walls, to be involved in other responsibilities while consolidating their teamwork," Habre said. "It helps them expand their network and learn from each other."

This was the second time AMICAL met at LAU. The first was in 2005.

The conference also gathered representatives from library suppliers and publishers such as EBSCO, Oxford University Press, Thomson Reuters, and Baker & Taylor, and from IT companies including IBM Middle East and Hewlett-Packard.



# Donor Profile

## Malik Barakat: Friend, Neighbor, and Member of the LAU Family



Malik Barakat, founder and general manager of Malik's Bookshop in Lebanon and a prominent advocate of charity, donates regularly and generously to LAU for various projects and causes. His successful chain of stores specializing in university books, stationery, and office supplies — 20 branches strong and still growing — years ago planted the seeds of his steadfast support for LAU.

"With three bookshops next to LAU both campuses, we feel we are an integral part of the LAU community, interacting with LAU students, faculty and staff on a daily basis," he says.

"With over 25 years of close contact with LAU, I have seen the university evolve by expanding its majors and courses offerings, developing its campuses to accommodate the increasing number of students, and offering generous financial aid packages to needy students."

Barakat encourages LAU students and alumni to support their alma mater to ensure its continued growth. He speaks passionately of the university's mission, its pluck and its tenacious spirit.

"LAU kept growing and developing even through the tough war years after 1975. I believe strongly in giving to this university, because it's a model of how good management can get us through difficult times."

Malik Barakat is a civil engineer. He has three children with his wife, Carma Naim, an LAU alumna.



**"I believe strongly in giving to this university, because it's a model of how good management can get us through difficult times."**



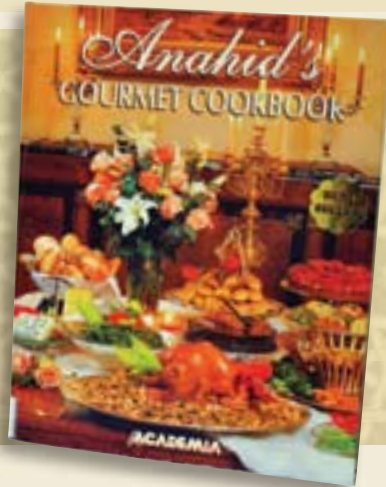
## Alumni Profiles

# Anahid Doniguan

## Pleasures of the Table

### *A culinary icon looks back over her career*

By Marc Abizeid



It was in 1950 that Anahid Doniguan's family got their first full-option, General Electric oven, sent from New York by her uncle. That's when it started. The nonstop baking. The sweet kitchen aromas.

Doniguan soon realized she wanted to follow in the footsteps of her mother, a superb cook with an avant-garde approach.

"She was my role model," Doniguan says. "I wanted to be like her."

What began as a child's imitation of kitchen craft would develop, over the decades, into a formidable career in culinary arts.

She took cooking classes at Le Bristol Hotel in Beirut. That pleasure, like so many others, was disrupted by the civil war, when her family retreated to Mount Lebanon.

"The war got worse and worse, and we could do nothing," she recalls. "We lived in the mountains for long stretches and had no bread. So I began baking our own in the family oven."

In those years Doniguan began pursuing her fine arts degree at LAU, completing it in 1976.

Her marriage to the late Paramaz Doniguan, publisher and owner of Doniguan Printing Press, stirred her desire to write cookbooks. With his encouragement, in 1980 she published *Halawiyat al Matbakh al 'Asry*, which featured 194 recipes for cookies, cakes and desserts. The book proved an immediate success, and in the years since has been translated into Armenian and English, going into multiple printings.

Later in 1980, Doniguan published what would become the best-selling Armenian cookbook of the next quarter-century. The lavishly illustrated *Yepelou Arveste* included some 900 recipes, and is known in Armenian households simply as "Anahid's book."

Doniguan soon became one of Lebanon's most renowned culinary figures. For a time, she even had her own cooking

show on Future TV. But her "golden years," as she describes them, began in 1989 with the launching of Cookin' Art, one of the only culinary schools in the Beirut area at the time.

She taught students at all levels. She would bring professional chefs working in Lebanese hotels and restaurants from countries across the world for lessons in international cuisine.

"We used to get specialists in all kinds of food — Italian, Spanish, Thai, Chinese, French," she recalls. "They used to have one day off each week from work, so I would go look for them to teach our students."

After over 12 years running the school, Doniguan finally found herself unable to keep up, and Cookin' Art shut its doors.

Doniguan now serves as a consultant for the hospitality industry, traveling throughout the region to help wealthy speculators establish high-end restaurants.

She explains how her diet has changed as a result of what she describes as an unsanitary meat industry. "I am turning into a vegetarian," she says.

"When you tell people that you don't eat meat, they think you are living on salads," she says. "But in terms of taste and nutrition, you can have everything without eating meat."

She is experimenting with vegetarian dishes, and may soon approach her publisher to propose her first vegetarian cookbook.

Every project helps Doniguan spread a single message: learn to cook.

"I think that every person should know how to cook. They don't have to know a lot, but everybody — male and female — should know a little," she says. "Can people eat hamburgers everyday? What about doing a little cooking at home to bring some love to the family?"





# Catching Up With Old Friends, Making New Ones

By Emily Morris

Nostalgia was in the air in mid-July, as hundreds of LAU alumni from all classes returned to their alma mater for the 2011 Alumni Homecoming and Reunions.

The four-day event included an alumni dinner, all-class reunion, homecoming brunch and trip to Ehden Village in the northern mountains.

According to Abdallah Al Khal, director of Alumni Relations, these annual events provide an opportunity for classmates to meet again, alumni to meet alumni, and business cards to be exchanged.

"The numbers attending have increased considerably from previous years," says Al Khal. "Alumni engagement facilitates university promotion, fundraising and new student recruitment."

The week began with an alumni dinner held at the Phoenicia InterContinental Hotel Beirut on July 13. Board members, faculty and staff gathered with alumni to enjoy live entertainment and acknowledge the work of various alumni chapters worldwide, now numbering at 32, and present two alumni with special awards (see sidebar at right).

"It gives me great pride indeed to announce that again, this year's proceeds from alumni chapters worldwide have exceeded half a million dollars," Al Khal told the audience.

"Don't forget that this institution comes from humble origins," added LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara. "Now, thanks to you and all those who believed in LAU, we have two major campuses and over 8,000 students. Tonight we celebrate the homecoming of our own — you are our pride and inspiration."

Bank of Beirut supported the week's events, as it has in

previous years. "Both our institutions educate people, strive for excellence and look with much confidence to the future of our nation, Lebanon," Georges Aouad, Head of Retail Banking at Bank of Beirut, said on behalf of Chairman and General Manager Salim Sfeir during the alumni dinner.

The bank has partnered with the university to offer a special "affinity" credit card to all LAU faculty staff and alumni since 2006. A portion of every affinity card transaction is transferred from the bank to the university as a cardholder contribution.

At all-class reunions on July 14 and 15 at Byblos and Beirut campuses, respectively, different generations of alumni mingled with former professors, LAU officials, and each other.

Saada Kronfol ('61) walked reflectively around the courtyard outside the Saffadi Fine Arts building at LAU Beirut, where yearbook-style posters of different class years hung on display. "I've been to many reunions," she says, "but this one is special because it's the 50<sup>th</sup>. It's so nice to catch up with old friends."

Tony Faddoul ('96) attended the Byblos campus reunion after hearing about it while on business in Lebanon. He lives in the New York area and normally helps set up alumni events in the United States. "This is the first time I've been to an event in Lebanon," he says. "I was in the first class of architecture students at LAU and it's our 15th year reunion, so it's nice to meet up with old friends."

Like Faddoul, Jewana Balaa ('91) came from abroad to the Beirut reunion. "I usually come back to Lebanon in the summers, but it's beautiful to return to my university after 20 years," she says. "I have nothing but fond memories, and LAU gave me quite an edge in my early career."



Former LAU President Dr. Riyad Nassar, President Jabbra, and Alumni Relations Director Abdallah Al Khal with alumnae

After words of welcome from Jabbra and Al-Khal, the Alumni Office distributed jubilee pins to the classes of '06, '01, '96, '91, '86, '81, '76, '71, '66, and '61. The crowd was then treated to a screening of the award-winning, internationally acclaimed documentary "Teta Alf Marra" (Grandmother, 1000 times), written and directed by LAU alumnus Mahmoud Kaabour.

On July 16, alumni and their families enjoyed a relaxed morning outdoors with President Jabbra at the all-class homecoming brunch at Beirut campus.

The week was capped off with some sightseeing during an all-class trip to Ehden Village by way of Batroun on July 17.

Al Khal, Jabbra, and Alumni Association Board President Leila Saleeby Dagher present the Alumni Recognition Award to Ricardo Karam (below) and the Alumni Achievement Award to Rima Daniel Hourani (right)



## Hourani and Karam receive Alumni Recognition and Achievement Awards

For the fourth year running the Alumni Relations Office asked alumni around the world to nominate fellow alumni who have excelled in their professions and made a positive impact on society.

A selection committee consisting of representatives from various LAU offices chose Rima Daniel Hourani ('70) to receive the Alumni Recognition Award for her outstanding contributions to LAU and community service, and gave the Alumni Achievement Award to Ricardo Karam ('96) for significant accomplishments in his professional life.

Hourani is well-known to the LAU community, contributing generously to the university over the years. She and her husband Amal donated a sizeable amount towards naming the Rima Hourani Exhibition Room at LAU Byblos. They have also supported the Beirut campus by naming the Amal Issa Hourani Lounge in the School of Business building.

And most recently, the Houranis gave \$200,000 to sponsor in full the education of four Palestinian students coming from refugee camps who are in the School of Nursing and the School of Pharmacy.

"I am honored by this recognition," says Hourani. "I believe strongly in education and that is why we are committed to LAU."

Famed media personality Karam has worked in television for 19 years as a talk show host, screenwriter and innovative producer. He has interviewed His Highness the Dalai Lama, Her Majesty Noor Al Hussein, Kofi Annan, Luciano Pavarotti, Celine Dion, Valentino, Andre Agassi and many more.

Today, Karam is the founder of the pioneering TAKREEM Arab Achievement Awards, which recognize outstanding and inspiring achievers in the Arab world.

"Thank you for having chosen me," Karam said of his award. "My dream was to make a difference, and I have tried to do so. I dedicate this award to the youth in the Arab world. Their dream is to change the region. I am sure they will succeed. The future is theirs."







# School Books

## Alumni book fair inaugurates annual campaign

By Marc Abizeid

The university's first ever alumni book exhibition was held at LAU Beirut in late May. In an evening ceremony held next to the Safadi building, new works by some 36 LAU graduates — including both first-time authors and established names — were featured in an outdoor display.

The event, which featured everything from comics and children's stories to cookbooks and collections of poetry, marks the first of what will be an annual event series organized by the Alumni Relations Office to promote alumni achievements.

"It was wonderful to see so many alumni basking in the splendors of being successful writers and editors," said Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara, LAU president. "We are proud of their work, and their talents are another reflection of LAU's commitment to excellence."

Passersby who visited Henry Matthews, a 1980 graduate of Fine Arts, picked up a copy of his *Encyclopedia of Lebanese Comic Books* (2010) and reminisced about their childhood days reading comics. "You brought me back 30 years," said one man.

Asked for a reaction to the nostalgia his work elicits in so many, Matthews reflected for a moment. "It's a bittersweet feeling. Our history, our culture is being destroyed, and we can't do anything about it."

Salpi Simitian, who received a B.A. in communication arts two years ago, recently published her first children's storybook, *The Little Cedar Tree*. She says it deals with history and the environment, but is neither purely a history nor an environmental book but rather a blend of the two. Simitian's goal was to encourage youths' engagement and raise their awareness of environmental issues.

"It asks children to become better citizens," she said. Confronted by a skeptic who asked if she really believed children would understand the message, she responded, "If they love the book, it will drive them to action."

Staffing the table next to Simitian was Danny Khoury, a 2002 graphic design graduate. He exhibited *At the Edge of the City: Reinhabiting Public Space Toward the Recovery of Beirut's Horsh Al-Sanawbar*, edited by Fadi Shayya. Horsh Beirut is one of the last green public spaces in the city, though it has for a long time been closed off to the public.

Khoury wrote one chapter of the book, though his principle contribution came in the form of design. His goals were not merely aesthetic but also symbolic. The cover design — sharp and geometric, with diagonal slats widening as the eye scans right — evokes Venetian blinds rotating shut. "When we would ask why Horsh Beirut is closed, they'd give us a non-answer or no answer at all," Khoury said.

In introductory remarks Abdallah Al Khal, director of the alumni office, expressed the university's pride in its published writers and urged them to think of LAU as their "second home."

"This is the first time LAU has hosted an event like this," he said. "We want LAU alumni to really feel the university's support for their professional achievements. We are honored by their success."

In a follow-up address, Ghada Majed, assistant director of the Alumni Relations Office described the event as important "not just for the participants, but also for the students here who are witnessing today that no dream is impossible."

# Alumni Events



## March

### Athens Chapter celebrates Mother's Day

In honor of Lebanese Mother's Day the Athens Alumni Chapter held a fundraising event for the LAU Scholarship fund which included a raffle. The chapter also commemorated the loss of friend Rima Farah, who had recently and suddenly passed away, and was buried on Lebanese Mother's Day on March 21.



## April

### Beirut Chapter organizes fun day for children

The Beirut Alumni Chapter organized a fun day on April 16 for their children and those of their friends, called "Kids Power." More than 400 children took part in the event, which included an egg hunt.

### Alumni Lecture on Business Etiquette

The Alumni Relations Office on April 29 organized a lecture on business etiquette led by LAU alumnus and part-time instructor at the business school Hassan Chaker. It was the fourth installment of the alumni office's "Keep Learning" lecture series. Over 160 alumni and friends attended the Beirut campus event, which was followed by a reception.



## May

### Fifth Annual Alumni Business Networking Reception

The Alumni Relations Office and the Offices of the Deans of Students hosted their Fifth Annual Business Networking Reception May 10 at Gefinor Rotana Hotel in Beirut. The event drew over 200 attendees that included graduates of the last 10 years, LAU department heads, deans and HR directors from Middle Eastern businesses.



### New Alumni Chapter established in Geneva

Alumni residing in the Geneva area assembled on May 12 at the residence of alumna Taline Avakian to elect a nine-member committee for their newly established alumni chapter.

### Riyadh Chapter Dinner

LAU's Riyadh Alumni Chapter hosted "A Night to Remember" on May 12, with entertainment by Pavo & Haneen from the Lebanese band, Le Particulier. More than 240 alumni and friends attended the event.





### London Chapter gather for Tea

Over 25 alumni on May 14 joined Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara, LAU president; William Stoltzfus, chair of LAU's Board of International Advisors; Christian Oussi, Executive Director of Relations at LAU; and Abdallah Al Khal, director of LAU's Alumni Relations Office, for an afternoon tea in London at the residence of alumna Salwa Mayyasi. They discussed the election of a new committee for the London chapter.



### Senior Student Orientation Program

The Alumni Relations Office held its ninth "Senior Students Orientation Activity" for graduating students on May 16 and 17 at the Byblos campus, and on May 19 and 20 at the Beirut campus. It was an opportunity for the students to learn about the benefits of joining the LAU Alumni Association. The events drew more than 400 seniors.



### Dubai and Northern Emirates Chapter Dinner

Over 400 alumni and friends attended an annual gala on May 20 organized by the Dubai and Northern Emirates Chapter at Al Bustan Rotana Hotel. The event featured an array of activities and performances.



### South Lebanon Chapter Family Picnic

The South Lebanon Alumni Chapter organized a family picnic on May 22 at the Wild River. It was a family-oriented event with entertainment for children.



### North American alumni gather in Washington

Dozens of LAU Alumni from North America gathered at the DuPont Hotel in Washington, D.C. for a series of events in the city that took place May 20–22.



## June

### New Alumni Chapter launched in Chicago

LAU Alumni in Chicago gathered on June 3 to launch a new alumni chapter.

### Lebanese Festival Day- London Chapter



Hundreds of Lebanese and British visitors attended the Lebanese Festival Day organized June 19 by the London Alumni Chapter, under the auspices of Her Excellency Inaam Osseiran, the Lebanese ambassador to the United Kingdom.

Members of the chapter informed the public about LAU and drew the attention of fellow alumni to the chapter's upcoming activities. The event took place in St. Barnabas Church and School in the heart of London.



# Alumni News

**Aida Awar Porteneuve (A.A.'50)** has four children and six grandchildren. She married and left for Venezuela after graduating in 1950. She has been living in California where she worked as an administrative assistant at California State University of Long Beach. She has also earned a Bachelor's degree in French and Spanish with a minor in Italian and Portuguese.

**Hayat Sbaiti (A.A.'53)** is married to Shafik AbdulWahab ElHindi. They have three boys, one girl, and eleven grandchildren. She received her master's in mathematics and has taught at various institutions including International College, Makased Khaled Bin AlWaleed, the Islamic Saudi Academy in the United States, and several public high schools in Maryland, U.S.A. After retiring, she wrote *Stories of My Life* in Arabic in 2007, which can be found at the LAU Library.



**Amal Freiji (A.A.'54)** currently lives between Beirut and her home town Zahle, and makes frequent trips to Egypt. She has been married to Musa Freiji for 51 years. The couple has four children and fourteen grandchildren. She is the author of a unique integrated Arabic educational and language program for children age 4-7. The program has produced encouraging results in schools in Lebanon and in some Arab and foreign countries, with Arabic speaking children as well as non-speakers and with children of special needs.

**Leila Salman Younes (B.A.'70)** celebrated the marriage of her daughter, Lama, to Mounir G. Corm on April 30 in Paris, France, where the couple lives and works.



**Dia Al-Azzawi Tayara (B.A.'72)** is 65 years old and has been enjoying life to the fullest. She obtained her M.A. in International Relations in 1988 from AUB and has raised three children.

**Mohamad Abdulkader Husrieh (B.S.'84)** has been a partner at Ernst & Young Middle East since 1998. He is based in Syria and completed his E.M.B.A. at AUB in 2006 and is in the dissertation stage of her D.B.A. from Durham University (UK). He has two sons and three daughters.

**Amin Younes (B.S.'91)** is the owner of Café Younes, a popular coffee shop in Hamra.

**Soheir Ahmad Nassar (B.S.'92)** is married to Mahmoud Daher and has three kids, Rahaf, Tarek and Haifa. She has been the Manager of Byblos Bank's Nabatieh branch since 2009.

**Loay Mahmoud Safa (A.A.S.'97)** currently works as an Information Architecture Specialist at Qatar-based RasGas Company Ltd., the largest Liquefied Natural Gas producer in the world. He is married to Mirna and has two daughters, Aya and Yasmin. Loay is completing his fifth Master's degree in Management and Systems from New York University.



**Adham Charanoglu (B.S.'99)** is the CEO for Aston Martin Middle East and North Africa, Turkey and India.

**Rola Zeidan Hamouda (B.S.'99)** resides in Dubai and was blessed with a baby boy, Ryan, on March 3, 2011.



**Rania Zaghir (B.A.'99)** has been working as a children's book author. She recently established her own publishing house called Al Khayyat Al Saghir.

**Marwan Abd-al-Malik (B.S.'00)** recently celebrated his son's third birthday at the Cocoricco Nursery in Doha, Qatar.



**Wissam Abdul Baki (B.S.'01)** is the IT Manager of Manazel Real Estate in Abu Dhabi, where he has worked since 2007. He and his wife, Rasha, were blessed with a baby girl, Aya, born on April 17, 2011.

**Leila Hassan Kaidbey (A.A.S.'74, B.S.'01)** retired as the librarian for Arabic materials at International College.

**Samah Wehbe Kalakesh (M.B.A.'01)** is pregnant with her second child with a due date of August 24. She married in November 2008 and gave birth to her first child, Celine, in October, 2009. She resigned from Deloitte & Touche in 2009, having worked at the company since 2003 and reached a managerial position in the field of feasibility studies for the Middle East region.

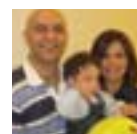
**Dania Khater Dimassi (B.S.'98, M.B.A.'02)** is a freelance consultant in finance and accounting. She married Ahmed Dimassi in August 2007. The couple is raising a baby girl.

**Nadine Moubayed (B.S.'97, M.S.'02)** lives in Riyadh, KSA with her husband and two daughters. She works at King Saud University as a laboratory instructor for medical bacteriology and general genetics, and as a laboratory supervisor for physiology of bacteria, laboratory skills, general bacteriology and environmental microbiology.



**Mahmoud Mohammad Rafic (B.S.'02)** is currently working at Nokia Siemens Networks as Account Manager for Business Development for the Middle Eastern region, mainly focusing on the Levant.

**Dana Shdeed Sayyour (B.E.'02)** welcomed the birth of her second child, Miela, with her husband and daughter, Soulina.



**Karim Turk (B.E.'02)** worked for seven years at Banque Libano Francaise as head of the quality assurance and operational risk unit. He moved recently to Ernst & Young (France) where he works as manager (advisory field). In August 2008 Turk married Grace Chamoun. The couple has a baby girl, Lea.



**Mohanad Hage Ali (B.S.'99, M.A.'03)** has served as a political editor for Al-Hayat newspaper in Beirut and London. He has also worked for CNN, NBC and Al-Jazeera news channels. In 2008, he completed his second master's degree in conflict studies at the London School of Economics, where he is currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program on nationalism. He is married to dietitian Zena Wehbe and has a son, Jad, was born in London in October, 2010. He lives in Wimbledon, South West London.

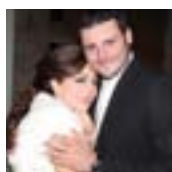


**Lina Aswad Chatila (B.A.'03)** has been married to Zaher Chatila since 2004. The couple has two children: six-year-old Hala and three-year-old Mahmoud.

**Ghassan Nehme (B.S.'04)** is the senior financial analyst at Pfizer Pharmaceuticals — Levant area. He is engaged to Hala Harb, an interior designer.



**Rabih Nehme (B.S.'01, M.B.A.'04)** received his CPA qualification and certification from New Hampshire Board of Accountancy in 2006. He has eight years of audit experience at KPMG in Beirut and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) in Beirut and Brussels. He left PWC to start a Ph.D. accounting program in 2010 at the University of Durham, UK.



**Rami Haj Ali Ahmad (B.S.'03, M.B.A.'05)** married Farah Jabak on July 8, 2011. Rami worked at Citibank as assistant manager in the Management Associate Development Program in 2006. He moved to Dubai and worked in Citibank's Credit Initiating Unit, then joined its Local Commercial Bank as a relationship manager. He was promoted to manager in 2008 and then senior manager in 2010. Ahmad was rewarded twice in 2010 as "best performer" in Citibank UAE and Bahrain. He received his certification as investment consultant in the same year.

**Alain Hasrouny (B.A.'05)** moved to Dubai in early 2011, where he works for Huron Consulting Group's global higher education practice.



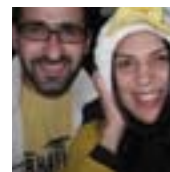
**Abdallah Izzat Kabbara (B.Arch'98, M.B.A.'05)** works at Projacs International for Project & Construction Management in Saudi Arabia as senior architect and project design manager (Photo).

**Riwa Kfoury (B.S.'04, PharmD.'05)** has been working as a senior clinical pharmacist at the Aspetar hospital since 2008. She has two children, Alexia, 2, and Jack, 1.



**Samer Zeinni (B.S.'05)** has recently been promoted to section head in the financial accounting department at Oger Emirates.

**Raed Alloud (B.S.'06)** married on July 5, 2009 and was blessed with a baby boy, Andrew, on May 4, 2010. He worked at Software Design as an implementer of Visual Dolphin Software for a year, and now resides in Aley, where he works as an IT manager at Bohsali Foods S.A.L.



**Hrag Jarkhedian (B.S.'06)** moved to the United States in 2006, married in 2007, and is now a proud parent of Liam Raffi (born March 1 2009) and Avery Skye (born September 15, 2010). After working for a software company for three years, he moved into healthcare in 2010. He was recently promoted to junior project manager in IT at Joerns Healthcare in California.

**Jamil Maktabi (B.S.'02, M.B.A.'06)** is married to Leen Ghazi and has a child, Lulwa. He is a Sales Executive at Hassan Maktabi & Sons.

**Mohamad Mouheb (B.S.'06)** since 2007 has lived and worked in Dubai 2007. He is a carrier manager and market development manager for Emitac Mobile Solutions.

**Mohamed Abboud (B.S.'07)** works for IBM. He is currently managing Central Eastern Europe and Middle and Africa supplier relationships, and is senior procurement sourcing buyer for the Gulf and Levant.

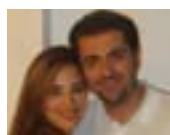


**Labib El Choufani (B.A.'07)** launched BoboLink, a digital marketing company specializing in social media and digital marketing services and produces.

**Karim Fakhoury (B.S.'04)** and his wife **Farah El Jack (B.S.'07)** have a three-year-old daughter, Hala. He runs his own business, KFF Intl, which specializes in interior design and contracting.



**Maha Halabi (B.S.'07)** works as an assistant general manager at AMACO. She is married and has three children, twin boys and a girl.



**Amina Safieddine (B.S.'07)** lives in Beirut and is married to Fadi Nesr. The couple has two boys, Mohamad, 8, and Imad, 3. She is currently working as a B.D.M. in GRE group.

**Afif Tannir (B.S.'07)** has been working at Ernst and Young Lebanon since 2007.

**Maher Beaini (B.E.'08)** is moving to the United States for his M.B.A. this fall at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business. He had previously worked for three years at Nokia Siemens Networks in Lebanon and the Middle East.

**Charles Joseph Hage (B.E.'09)** works as a consulting mechanical engineer at Omar Ismail & Partners, an electro-mechanical consulting firm in Beirut.

**Nada Halabi (M.B.A.'08)** opened Bottega Luna, a firm that plans weddings and sells evening gowns and accessories.



**Amer Harastani (B.S.'07, M.B.A.'09)** has worked as the operations and quality manager at PROSERVICES SAL, a real estate company, since July 2009. He plans to pursue his Ph.D. in operations management in the United States next year.



**Bachir Hasbani (B.E.'08)** works at Somiral Energy sarl — Lebanon in photovoltaic energy and automation.

**Alain El Howayek (B.E.'09)** finished his master's in civil engineering at Purdue University in May, 2011, and is currently pursuing his Ph.D.



**Ahmad Saad (B.Pharm.'08, Pharm.D.'09)** works as a hospital pharmacist at the recently launched "Heart Hospital" in Doha, Qatar.

**Mohamad Abdou (B.S.'10)** received the CFA scholarship and is currently working at Ernst & Young's Kuwait office as a business risk services consultant.



**Tarek P. Bassil (B.S.'06, M.B.A.'10)** has worked as an equities trader at the capital markets department at Byblos Bank for over a year and a half. He previously worked as a risk analyst in the corporate credit department.

**Ayman Beydoun (B.S.'10)** works as a marketing manager for his family business, SAB International, which makes diaries. He was recently engaged to **Nathalie Hamad (B.S.'11)**.



**Hassan A. Hamdan (B.E.'09, M.S.E.'10)** completed his master's degree and joined the electric energy advisory team for the Ministry of Energy and Water in September, 2010. Along with a team of experts, he serves as advisor to the Minister of Energy and Water. Hamdan joined the Ph.D. program in electric energy systems at AUB in the fall of 2011.



**Sahar Zeidan (B.A.'10)** has been working as a homeroom teacher for Grade 3 students and an instructor at a health club, specialized in yoga, Pilates and body balance.



**Zakaria Ghalayini (B.S.'06)** has been working in the financial accounting department at Oger in Abu Dhabi. and was recently promoted

**Khaled Mohammed Khair Abdul Ghani (B.A.'08)** works in KSA – Shaker group as sales and marketing in LG air conditioning (sole distributor). He is engaged to marry Gihan Chemali.



## Obituary

**Janet Hitti (A.A.'43)** died on March 5, 2011 in Alameda, California at the age of 86. Hitti was born in the Lebanese village of Souq el Gharb in 1924. She was known for her community activism. She is survived by her three children, Ibrahim, Samira and Gloria; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild; her brother Sa'id and her sisters Suheila and Samira.



## Remembered with love : Fouad Rifka , 1930 – 2011



Dr. Fuad Rifka, an internationally celebrated poet, translator and philosopher and an iconic figure at LAU for many decades, passed away this spring. A memorial ceremony was held in his honor at LAU Beirut on June 25.

Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara, LAU president, described Rifka as a "gentleman scholar and beguiling poet," as well as a "brilliant, unassuming human being." Dr. Abdallah Sfeir, LAU provost, recalled his "steadfastness on the side of truth, particularly in times of crisis."

Born in Kafroun, Syria in 1930, Rifka moved to Lebanon in the 1940s. He received his M.A. in philosophy from the American University of Beirut, and his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Tübingen in Germany.

As a student at Tübingen Rifka first chanced upon a volume of poetry by Rainier Maria Rilke, an encounter he would later describe as an "earthquake for his existence."

His passion for German lyric poetry awakened, Rifka committed himself to "making it accessible to the whole Arabian world." He wrote the first Arabic version of Rilke, and award-winning translations of Friedrich Hölderlin, Novalis, Hermann Hesse, Paul Celan, Bertolt Brecht and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

Similarly renowned as an original poet and philosopher, Rifka's works have been translated into multiple languages. He was twice a Fulbright scholar, an artist in residence at the Rockefeller Center in Bellagio, Italy, and a recipient of numerous international literary awards.

Rifka taught literature and philosophy at Indiana State University, AUB, and for almost 40 years at LAU.



# WHY I GIVE BACK

## *Adèle Haddad McCarus '46*



Adèle Haddad McCarus with her husband, Dr. Ernest McCarus

*“Life never goes in a straight line.”*



Adèle Haddad McCarus was a student at the American Junior College for Women (AJC) in Beirut from 1944-1946.

### **What did you study during your time at AJC?**

During my two years in AJC I took courses in English, Arabic, Math and Hygiene, then I concentrated on social science courses such as History, Sociology, Political Science and Psychology.

I concentrated in these areas during my later studies in the United States, first as an undergraduate at Goshen College and then as a graduate student at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

I also met my husband Ernest, a professor of Arabic, who needed a native speaker of Arabic as an assistant!

### **What have you been up to since your college years?**

My husband and I are both retired, and we live in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He continues his research in Arabic and Kurdish linguistics, and I volunteer my time teaching French to University of Michigan alumni. I taught French in the Ann Arbor Public Schools for 25 years.

### **Why do you give back to LAU?**

The reason I give to LAU is to enable it to continue its priceless contribution to the education of Lebanese and students from around the world. Apart from the valuable education I received there, I made friendships that have endured to this day.

### **Do you have a message that you would like to convey to fellow alumni or current students at LAU?**

My experiences have taught me two important lessons: First, it is good to have big dreams, but it is important to prepare yourself seriously so that when the opportunity presents itself, you are ready to take advantage of it. Second, you must be ready to adjust when needed. When I was finishing my Ph.D work in Political Science and looking for a job, I was told that Social Studies instructors are “a dime a dozen,” so I switched to studying French, found a great job, and am still teaching French to University of Michigan Alumni.

Life never goes in a straight line. Good luck to you all, and thank you, AJC.

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