

LAU magazine

VOLUME 13 | issue n° 4 | Winter 2012

& ALUMNI BULLETIN



Rights on Hold

Lebanon's à la carte approach to gender equality

Women of Letters

Young novelists make it new

Degrees of Equality

A retrospective of women in higher education

Minding the Minders

The emotional economy of childcare

Liberté, Égalité, Sororité



At the outset, empowering women was our purpose.

Today, it's our achievement.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Originally established as a college for women, LAU remains true to its roots of educating and supporting women in Lebanon and the Middle East. The university's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, the first in the region, invests phenomenal effort through constant programs, lectures, and events oriented toward advocacy and the encouragement of women's participation in all aspects of society. Furthermore, LAU's gender equality policy is an uncompromising objective exemplified by the achievements of its female student body and the significant number of leadership roles held by women within the institution.

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Women's rights making strides in Lebanon – albeit slowly

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Wherever You Go

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



Times Square, New York City

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

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Letters to the Editor

"I was looking at the latest LAU magazine, which is getting better and better, and I have a suggestion. Why not highlight some of our alumni with full-length interviews?"

—Elie Haddad, professor and assistant dean of architecture and design, Lebanese American University

"Congratulations on a GREAT magazine and a superb job! It is indeed such a pleasure to read and I am so proud of it."

—Abdallah El Khal, executive director of alumni relations, Lebanese American University

Corrections for LAU Magazine, Volume 13, Issue 3, Fall 2011

Under the heading "Riyadh Chapter Dinner" on page 55, the Alumni Events section mistakenly included information about the Bahrain chapter. The Riyadh 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.

The LAU alumna and restaurateur Nada Aad was misidentified as Nada Aal ("The Raw and the Cooked," page 38).

Dr. Eddie Abdalla's surname was misspelled, with a terminal h (page 36).

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LAU Magazine is published quarterly by the Marketing and Communications Department at LAU and is distributed free of charge to alumni, students, staff, faculty, friends and supporters worldwide.

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From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

LAU is a university uniquely situated to take stock of the economic, cultural, professional and political status of women today. The deepest roots of our institution reach into mid-19th century soil, when the American School for Girls became the first of its kind in the Ottoman Empire. Through our 20th-century incarnations as the American Junior College for Women (AJC) and the Beirut College for Women (BCW), we remained regional pioneers in women's education.

That legacy still shapes what we are today. Generations of AJC and BCW graduates went on to break one glass ceiling after another — in medicine, journalism, literature, politics and business. In a region not seen as exemplary for gender equality, Lebanese women have for over a century distinguished themselves, permeating the nation's public and professional life, expanding opportunities for their daughters and granddaughters while broadening the minds of their sons and grandsons. A great many of those women — perhaps a majority — passed through our hallowed halls, and their achievements form the bedrock on which LAU is built.

This is a critical time and place for the rights of women, not least in light of the significant events riveting the region. If the energy, idealism, and egalitarian fervor of this moment can be harnessed for the advancement of women, it will be an "Arab spring" indeed.

The status of women is a matter of universal human concern not only for ethical and philosophical reasons. There is also a practical and economic imperative. It is no coincidence that the world's most prosperous economies exist where the gender gap is narrowest. Even in the best of times, no ambitious nation can afford to let half its talent, industry, brainpower, and visionary potential lie fallow. In times of great economic uncertainty, it is both morally and pragmatically unconscionable.

This issue of LAU Magazine and Alumni Bulletin pays tribute to our university's heritage and the women responsible for it, while bringing deserved light to current generations of faculty and alumnae. Women at LAU continue to break new ground, in everything from literature to engineering and the physical sciences. And with the flagship academic journal of our Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World — now in its 38th year, and the first of its kind in the region — about to become refereed, the continuity between our past legacy and our future promise has never been clearer.



Joseph G. Jabbara
President





Free for All?

Women's rights making strides in Lebanon — albeit slowly

By Dalila Mahdawi



When it comes to gender equality in Lebanon, looks can be deceiving. In certain contexts, women appear as unrestricted as their counterparts in Sweden or Canada: Many are free to dress as they please and can drive, work and mingle in public with men who are not their husbands or relatives.

Capitalizing on the popular view of Lebanon as a permissive and enlightened society, a recent Ministry of Tourism advertisement pandered to male audiences with lingering shots of buxom, scantily clad women. The sexually provocative images played into the dominant narrative of Lebanese women as more liberated and Western than their other Arab sisters. But miniskirts are not yardsticks by which to assess women's rights. Beyond the bikinis and the Botox, women in Lebanon have much to lament, experts say.

"People get the impression that women in Lebanon are emancipated because we have access to modern culture through the latest fashions, the most advanced plastic surgery and so on. But actually, the legal status of women in Lebanon is quite terrible," notes LAU alumna Carol Mansour, a documentary filmmaker whose most recent film, *Kuluna Lil Watan*, addresses Lebanon's sexist nationality laws.

Lebanon granted women suffrage in 1952, following in the footsteps of Syria, which gave women voting rights three years earlier. But while this early move signaled Lebanon's potential leadership role in women's empowerment in the region, social justice campaigners have since been consistently disappointed as advances toward gender parity slowed to a glacial pace. Lebanon continues to suffer from "a dominant and rather oppressive culture of very strict normative gender roles, expectations and identities," says Zeina Zaatari, regional director of the Middle East and North Africa program at the Global Fund for Women.

"Sectarianism sets Lebanon apart from other Arab countries, where women's rights are advancing at a much greater pace."

—Dr. Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, assistant professor of communications and director of LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World

Although considerable strides have been made in improving Lebanese women's access to education, health care and employment, political appointments largely continue to elude them. The majority of women who do enter the government hail from political dynasties, and they're often simply keeping warm a seat vacated by a deceased husband, father or brother until another male relative can take over. Perhaps as a result, women have never counted for more than six of Lebanon's 128 parliamentarians or two of its 30 Cabinet ministers.

Presently, women are wholly absent from the Lebanese Cabinet, and women's political participation stands at a feeble 3.1 percent, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. This figure is noticeably lower than for some of Lebanon's seemingly more conservative neighbors, such as Syria (12.4 percent), the United Arab Emirates (22.5 percent) or Iraq (25.2 percent).

Lebanon's unique sectarian configuration "sets it apart from other Arab countries, where women's rights are advancing at a much greater pace," says Dr. Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, assistant



professor of communications at LAU and director of the university's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World.

She and other experts see confessionalism as the single most important obstacle to achieving gender equality and even parity among women in Lebanon. This sectarian-based system means that religion often trumps merit when it comes to political appointments and helps to keep women at a disadvantage.

But with 15 of Lebanon's 18 different religious groups exercising jurisdiction over the personal status laws of their constituents, confessionalism also has a much more immediate effect on women. "The existence of multiple religious courts that have a monopoly on women's personal lives through the personal status laws means that Lebanese women are not equal among themselves, because their lives are regulated by the different religious court that they belong to," Dabbous-Sensenig says. As a result, certain groups of Lebanese women experience less discrimination than others. All religious courts, nevertheless, disadvantage women on issues like inheritance, marriage, divorce and child custody.

Nadya Khalife, women's researcher for the Middle East and North Africa at Human Rights Watch, says it is high time for Lebanon to unify its laws: "Lebanon is a multi-confessional country of Christians and Muslims, and laws should be adopted for all Lebanese regardless of their religious affiliation."

In many instances discrimination against women cuts across the board. Nothing perhaps demonstrates this better than Lebanon's nationality law, which grants citizenship rights to those born to Lebanese fathers or those born in the country to unknown parents. Despite some efforts at reform, the law, formulated under French Mandate in 1925, still bars Lebanese women from conferring their nationality to their children or foreign husbands.

Lebanon maintains this discriminatory law despite having ratified the U.N.'s 1966 International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which stipulate that all human beings have a right to nationality. In 1993, Lebanon also lodged reservations against article 9(2) of the 1979 U.N. Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which calls on states to "grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children," signaling that it is uninterested in reconsidering a fairer law. 🗳️



“The Lebanese legal system effectively punishes a woman and her children if she chooses to marry a non-Lebanese.”

—Carol Mansour, documentary filmmaker

According to Mansour, this means “the Lebanese legal system effectively punishes a woman and her children if she chooses to marry a non-Lebanese.” The law is also a telling indication of how the patriarchal Lebanese state views its women, says Brian Prescott-Decie, an LAU instructor in the Department of Humanities, whose marriage to a Lebanese woman has resulted in their two children being denied Lebanese nationality. “It’s pretty medieval, frankly,” he adds. “It suggests that women are not a lot more than property.”

Recent research carried out by the Lebanese Women’s Rights and Nationality Law project with support from the United Nations Development Program found that 17,860 Lebanese women were married to foreign men. If spouses and children are counted, that means more than 80,000 people are negatively impacted by Lebanon’s current nationality law.

Like many others affected by the legislation, Prescott-Decie worries for his children’s future. “When they turn 18, they will be entitled to a residency permit under the new rules, but not a work permit,” he says. “They won’t be able to get a part-time job like other students while they are studying. Even worse, when they finish university, they will be forced to find an employer who will give them working papers or be obliged to ‘return’ to the United Kingdom.”

Another very real consequence of gender discrimination is that women remain vulnerable to domestic violence, which along with marital rape is not penalized under Lebanese law. “We live in a very unsafe country for women,” says Zeinab Nasser of the Lebanese feminist collective Nasawiya. “Our streets and houses



A poster ad asks women to “Be intelligent and vote blank” and says in Arabic “Nobody cares about your rights.”



Lebanese women have been taking to the streets to protest for equal rights for decades

are not safe and our government doesn't provide any kind of protection from abuse."

There have been some small improvements in recent years, however, such as the decision to remove honor killings as crimes that can benefit from reduced sentences, as well as the granting of free renewable residency permits for the children of Lebanese women married to foreigners.

Still, Nasser, like many other experts, sees these as token gestures intended to make those demanding greater equality "shut up." Khalife agrees: "I am struck by why it would take a country decades to finally remove reduced sentences for honor crimes from its penal laws," she says. "This is something that should've been done a very long time ago."

According to Dabbous-Sensenig, many of the recent breakthroughs came about not out of a genuine concern for gender equality but more because the reform of those laws did not threaten the political and religious status quo. New measures like granting mothers the right to open bank accounts for their children (introduced in December 2009) are "exclusively changes in 'civil' law and procedures, and not in religious laws or personal status codes," she says, adding, "I believe it is easier to change discriminatory laws and practices in civil laws, and almost impossible to do with respect to the religious personal status laws." Until it moves to radically change its confessional approach to personal status, Dabbous-Sensenig says, "Lebanon will lag behind other Arab countries in terms of achieving women's rights."

While the country's sectarian nature will not change overnight, greater solidarity between the various organizations campaigning for gender equality would do much to strengthen the Lebanese women's lobby, says Ghida Anani, founder and director of ABAAD

— Resource Center for Gender Equality. "We need to join hands; otherwise we will lose any gains for women in Lebanon. If you are divided, you are already starting off in a weak position."

Zaatari also points to the myopic and insular views held by many women's rights organizations in Lebanon. Such organizations, she says, "often contribute to the compartmentalization of issues and refuse to include, for example, oppression that their Palestinian and Sri Lankan sisters face." This lack of solidarity among the women's rights groups, she adds, "also often means that we are not able to learn from some of the many amazing feminist and women's rights movements in sub-Saharan Africa, south and southeastern Asia, and Latin America that have made amazing strides in transforming the agenda of women's rights in their own countries and globally."

Perhaps most crucially, Anani notes, activists must begin to include men as partners in the fight for gender equality. For instance, her organization runs a rehabilitation program for male perpetrators of violence.

"We need to start working with male legislators, as they are the ones holding power," she adds. "We strongly advocate for the need to start working with men and being against discrimination and violence, and not men as such." ☐





Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World Pioneering the field since 1973

By Emily Morris

For the better part of four decades, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World has served as a link to LAU's past while paving the way forward for women in Lebanon and beyond.

Up until the 1960s, the university had been known as *the* place in the region for many Middle Eastern families to send their daughters to pursue higher education, according to Dr. Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, IWSAW's director. Not coincidentally, the institute was created in 1973 — at a time when men were beginning to enroll at LAU (then BUC) — as a way to honor the university's long legacy of empowering women.

"When the university went co-ed, it didn't lose its commitment to supporting women, and it is obvious in the fact that two out of the university's past five presidents are women. You wouldn't find that in any other institution in the region," says Dabbous-Sensenig.

"We really do operate in a unique space," she continues. "IWSAW is able to navigate through the complex landscapes of culture and politics and taboos because we're part of this region; we're natives. But through LAU, we also have an outlook on Western thought and critical thinking, and hence we

are able to talk the languages of Western academia, which are very developed in terms of human and gender rights."

As the first institute of its kind in the Arab world, and one of the earliest established worldwide, IWSAW has, ever since its inception, been shaping the discourse on women and gender issues through academic research, and later, through its education and development programs. Over the years it evolved from an academic center focused mainly on research and publications, to an institute engaged in community outreach during the tumultuous civil war years.

"Development projects started factoring into the institute's picture in 1985 after two very rough years of the war," says Anita Nassar, assistant director of the institute. "Lebanon was really struggling with lots of displaced women, and even the university opened its doors to receive them and their families."

Nassar recalls that IWSAW's director at the time, Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr, decided to start a program called Basic Living Skills for semi-literate and illiterate women. With the help of local NGOs, the program created an income-generating initiative that allowed displaced women to make clothing products to sell, and proved very successful over the

next decade. It cemented IWSAW's role as an ally for vulnerable and marginalized women in Lebanon.

Since the 1990s, IWSAW has further evolved to incorporate more human rights work, focusing extensively on such issues as domestic violence, female prisons and foreign domestic workers.

According to Dr. Mona Khalaf, IWSAW director from 1997 to 2005, the institute has also worked a great deal on trying to reconstruct the collective memory of Lebanon's women. "Women in Lebanon have, in fact, a long history of fighting for their rights and playing a role in the public space," she explains. "Although people often think of the stereotypical homemaker, this country is also home to women who, for instance, migrated to the West during the Mount Lebanon famine in the early part of the 20th Century to send money back to their families, or women who had a hand in ending the French mandate and securing Lebanese independence, etc."

She says that when the civil war broke out, the status of women took a backseat, but IWSAW has been doing its part to bring women's causes back into the national, and indeed regional, discussion.

"We speak Arabic and English, so we



can play a very important bridging role between the Arab world and other parts of the world," says Dabbous-Sensenig. "At the same time, because we're part of a liberal arts institution, we have the ability and academic freedom to discuss women's problems and issues from a variety of perspectives, without losing our sense of cultural specificity."

She adds, "We can discuss a taboo subject and not worry about censorship. Grab an issue of *Al-Raida* (IWSAW's academic journal) — it's going to give you something that no one else does."

As a result of this candidness, IWSAW enjoys an outstanding reputation with its partners. "NGOs, the U.N., foreign embassies, etc. always like to work with us because they know that we deliver with excellence, no matter what, whether we partner on regional conferences, small talks, activities on LAU's campus like the White Ribbon Campaign against domestic violence, or development projects," says Nassar.

In September 2011, the Ministry of Social Affairs sent a letter to the institute praising its "unique and pioneering work in the region in terms of building women's capacities, in addition to its role as a platform for regular dialogue, debate and research that is crucial for human rights activists in general and women's rights activists in particular."

After the institute published a series of booklets in 2011, in four languages common to Lebanon's foreign domestic workers, Sri Lanka's ambassador thanked IWSAW for raising awareness among the Sri Lankan domestic worker community "who are employed in Lebanon and suffer due to their lack of knowledge of the procedures and their rights."

Next up for IWSAW: Reaching the international stage

The institute held the first-ever meeting of its own Board of International Advisors in July 2011. "In the coming year, we'll have a couple more meetings where the board members, who are all very accomplished in their fields, will be able to bring in some fresh ideas and possibilities for putting the institute on the international map," says Dabbous-Sensenig.

IWSAW is also in the process of establishing a master's degree program in gender/women's studies at LAU. Expected to start in 2012, this program will be the first of its kind in Lebanon, and will aim to generate a group of young and qualified researchers in the field.

At a time when centers for women's studies are being closed around the world because of budget cuts or a diminishing belief in their importance, the opposite is happening here at LAU.

Dabbous-Sensenig cannot say enough about the institutional support IWSAW has received to work toward its goals. "I cannot think of IWSAW in isolation of what the university does. This is the best grounds we can grow on as an institute for women," she says.

Dabbous-Sensenig adds that now, with LAU's accreditation and a new strategic plan that is sensitive to issues of diversity and gender equality, IWSAW is able to do the kind of work that very few can match if they are operating in the Arab world.

"This university is a place where you can actually act on things and not keep them on paper," she says. "In the coming few years, I am very confident that we will easily be the best institute to operate in this part of the world, and will make our mark internationally as well."



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A Whole School Graduates

With ABET accreditation, School of Engineering takes a bold leap forward

By Curtis Brown



"Ad augusta, per angusta," said LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara with radiant pride this September, on hearing the eagerly awaited fall news that all undergraduate degree programs in the School of Engineering (SOE) had been formally accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).

Perhaps not everyone recognized the Latin tag — "to high places by narrow roads," i.e. through difficulties to honors — but in expressing warm praise for the SOE, and evident pleasure in the university's latest milestone, Jabbara spoke for the entire LAU community.

"We got it!" exclaimed an equally ecstatic Dr. Abdallah Sfeir, provost of LAU and founder of the SOE.

Dr. George Nasr, the school's dean and a professor of electrical engineering, officially informed the LAU community of the news, saluting the school for "transforming visions into plans and actions."

"With this achievement, the School of Engineering is entering a new phase in its history," Nasr said.

Nasr pointed out that LAU now has the first and only ABET-accredited industrial engineering program in all of Lebanon.

The recognition culminates years of work for the School of Engineering, which set out in 2009 to conduct rigorous self-studies for each program in preparation for ABET's review.

ABET is the world's most prominent accreditation agency for higher-education programs in applied science, computing, engineering, and technology.

When the agency's evaluation team visited in November of last year, its draft statement made minor recommendations but commended the school for the thoroughness of its preparation and self-assessment.

Remarking on the energy, ambition, and relative youth of the school's faculty, Nasr praises its members for being "unafraid of change" both in the academic discipline of engineering and in the profession at large, arguing that this ethos is passed on to students of the school.

"We want our graduating engineers to contribute in setting the course of the profession, to be avant-garde in the way they perceive it," Nasr says.

Jabbara describes the accreditation as a "signal achievement" for LAU.

"We've known for some time that we have excellent programs in engineering, but we needed ABET to say that," he says. "The sign of academic excellence must come from one's peers."

Jabbara points out that LAU's comprehensive, university-wide

accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) in 2009 paved the way for individual school and program accreditations like SOE's.

"This is one of the reasons we aimed for regional accreditation. It's often a prerequisite for professional accreditation," he explains. "You go from the general to the particular."

Sfeir agrees, adding that while comprehensive institutional accreditation affirms that all programs follow proper standards and are taught by qualified faculty, only professional accreditation addresses the specificity of each program.

LAU's institutional accreditation by NEASC and professional accreditations of its programs are "goals set by the university in its Strategic Plan 2005–10 and in the present Strategic Plan," says Sfeir. "But accreditation is not simply an objective to reach; it's a commitment to a never-ending process of improvement."

"It can be very easy to be complacent — but if you're not moving, you're receding," he adds.

Sfeir singles out Dean Nasr — who was recently elected to serve on the Executive Committee of the Global Engineering Deans Council — for special praise, citing his "able leadership of the school, and his commitment and dedication that led to this success."





Current students played an important role in the accreditation process, and several of them welcomed the news with evident pride.

Marie-Michel Mehanna, a computer engineering major, said the key contributing element to the school's success was the "passion of students, faculty, and administration." Oriane Chamoun, a civil engineering student, concurred, praising faculty for their "willingness to take students' opinions into consideration."

"Like LAU itself, the School of Engineering is student-centered," Chamoun says. It caters to their needs, and involves them in the decision-making process."

Anibal Sanjab, an electrical engineering student, predicted that accreditation would open up a world of possibilities post-graduation.

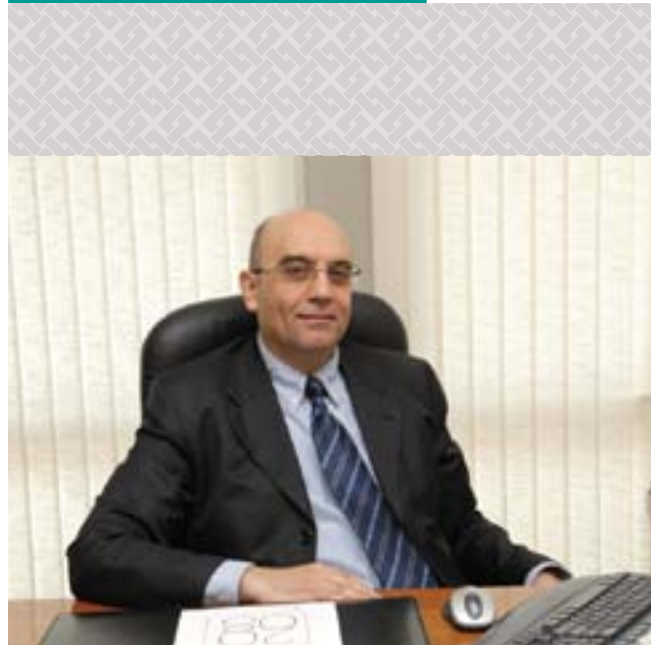
"This is a 'master key' for graduates, opening the gates of the most prestigious international universities, and the doors of the world's top engineering firms," says Sanjab.

Nasr concurs.

"While our graduates have been doing very well with jobs and graduate school placement, this recognition will no doubt offer them increased opportunities on both fronts," he says.



Civil engineering students survey construction at LAU Byblos



Dean Nasr Elected to GDEC Executive Committee

It was a gratifying autumn for Dr. George Nasr, dean of LAU's School of Engineering (SOE). Not only was the full slate of his school's undergraduate degree programs formally accredited, but Nasr himself was elected to serve on the executive committee of the Global Engineering Deans Council (GEDC), from 2011-2012.

LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra describes the election as "a clear recognition of the role and position of our School of Engineering and its leadership" both in Lebanon and abroad.

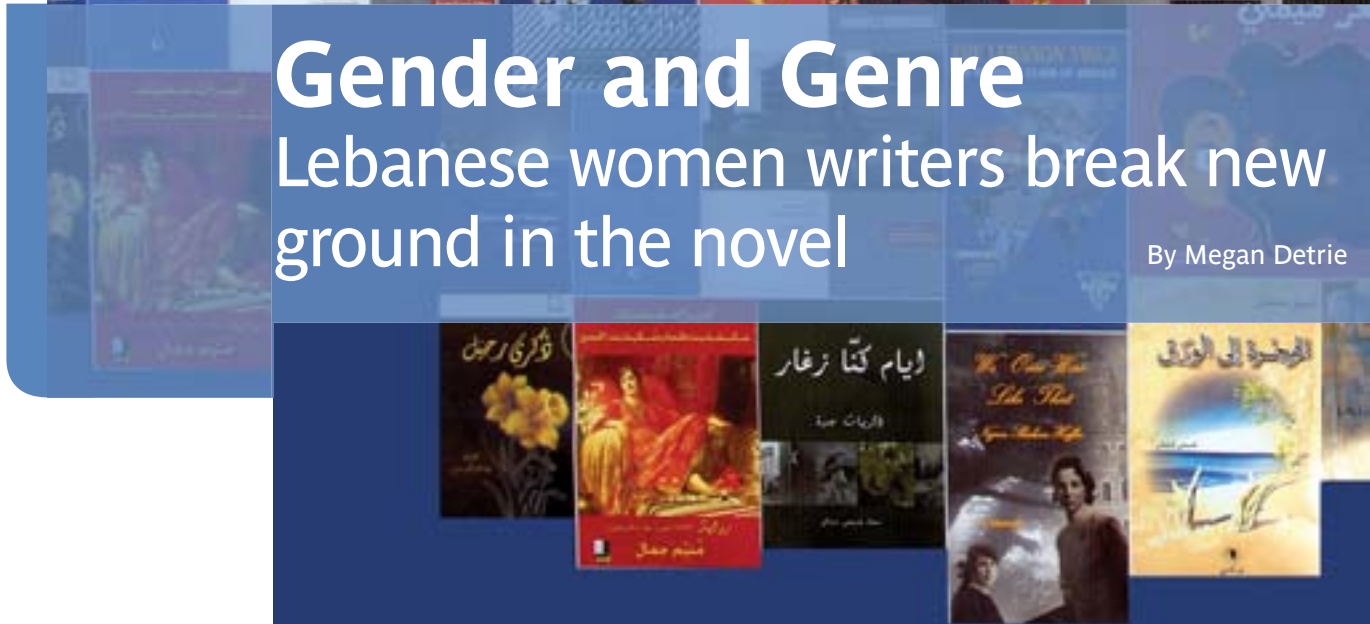
LAU Provost Dr. Abdallah Sfeir similarly praised Nasr, saying his election indicated "the level of excellence the school has reached through the hard work of its faculty and the able and wise leadership of its dean."

The GEDC was founded in 2008, as an affiliate of the International Federation of Engineering Education Societies. Its mission is to leverage the collective strengths of a global network of deans to advance engineering education, research and service to the world community.

The council now includes more than 110 deans from over 25 countries and all regions of the world.

Dr. Jean Chatila, chair of the SOE's Department of Civil Engineering, characterizes Nasr as a "person of vision," a tireless leader who "invariably understands exactly what needs to be done and how to get it done quickly and effectively."

Nasr modestly turns attention from himself to the institution. "I consider this election to be an important recognition for the school as well as the university in its pursuit of educational excellence," he says.



Lebanese women writers break new ground in the novel



Work by Lebanon's rising generation of women writers is thematically diverse, and tends to be mirthful, biting and witty.

When Alexandra Chreiteh enrolled in a creative writing course in Arabic at LAU, she wasn't sure what to expect. For one thing, she'd never before considered writing in her native language. Like many Lebanese, Chreiteh, whose mother is Russian and father Lebanese, has an identity that derives both from her own country and from a somewhat nebulous place in the Western world.

"It was a creative writing course in Arabic, and I'd never thought about writing in Arabic before in my life," she says, joking. "I don't even think I know Arabic."

She also didn't dream that a work she created as a result of the class would be heralded as an important contribution to the roster of modern literature by young Lebanese women. Born from the course was Chreiteh's debut novel, *Dayman Coca-Cola* (*Always Coca-Cola*), a story about the lives of three young women in Beirut, which earned critical acclaim for shedding new light on controversial social issues.

Abir, the narrator of the novel, comes from a conservative family and is obsessed with her exotic Romanian friend Yana, who works as an advertising model. Yana becomes romantically involved with the director of a Coca-Cola factory after starring in one of the company's ads. After becoming pregnant, Yana is forced by her lover to choose between having an abortion and ending the relationship. Sexual identity is further explored through Yasmin, a half-Lebanese, half-German boxer who is close friends with Abir. As rumors circulate that Yasmin may be a lesbian, Abir begins to distance herself from her friend, fearing that others may begin to question her sexual orientation as well. The novel leaves all of its characters with tough choices about themselves and their bodies.

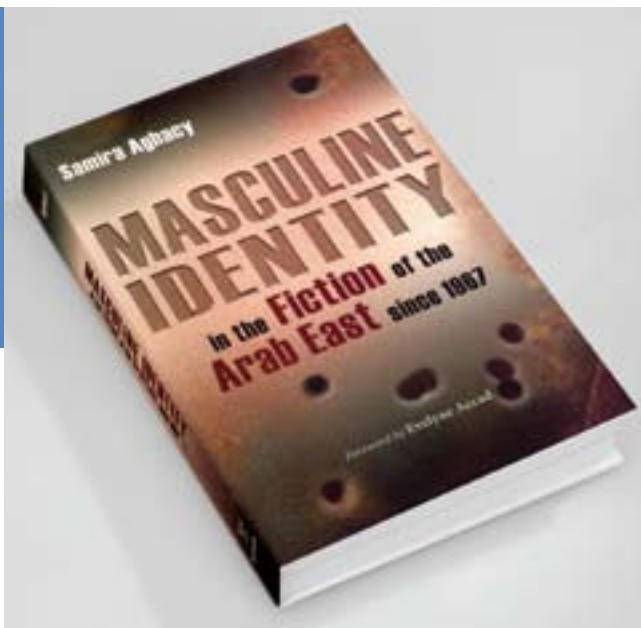
"In the novel, a lot of things change for the characters and a lot of things stay the same, and the fact that they stay the same is important because it's sad," says Chreiteh, adding that the main character goes through an awakening, but tries to hide that it's an awakening. "She goes on as if nothing happens," Chreiteh says.

A review in *Al-Jarida* likened reading the novel to being subjected to an "electric shock." Critics heralded the book as a warning that Lebanon cannot afford to turn a blind eye to the social struggles of young women. Chreiteh is more light-hearted in her assessment of the novel, saying that while writing it she wasn't always aware of the greater social impact.

Young Lebanese novelists like Chreiteh are finding a new voice, according to Dr. Samira Aghacy, professor of English and comparative literature at LAU and the former dean of Arts & Sciences. Like the previous generation of female authors, young writers are often still exploring themes of identity, modernity, war and emigration, but they are putting a new, personal perspective on old ideas.

Dania El Kadi is another author who is making an impact on contemporary Lebanese literature. The London-based writer's debut novel *Summer Blast* is chick-lit set during the 2006 war. The book, which El Kadi warns "does not take itself too seriously," is about a group of young Lebanese women who refuse to allow the summer war to get in the way of their plans, whether those include a wedding, a divorce or a concert in Paris.

"I really felt there are stories there to be told in a different perspective regarding the Middle East and wars, and I'd like to read more women's literature in the region," El Kadi says. She 🐞



adds, “I’d like to read something fun from Lebanon. We make fun of ourselves all the time, and I’d like to see it in literature.”

Although works by these young authors tend toward the mirthful, biting and witty, the themes tackled by women’s literature from Lebanon can be extremely diverse. Some young writers still go back to the war years, and others, including Chreiteh and El Kadi, emphasize the present and the problems faced by the young generation in Lebanon. Some of the writings of Lebanese women explore a strong desire to use and control their own bodies and to understand female sexuality. And many of the themes that gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s — such as education for women, work, identity and modernity — continue to be prevalent.

“These texts dismantle imposed cultural constructions: father, family, state, tradition, etc. The use of irony in many of these texts is ample proof of women’s sense of assurance, awareness, confidence and belief in the justice of their cause,” says Aghacy.

While many writers from the 1950s through the 1970s expressed anger about what they saw as the erasure of women from the public as well as private spheres, Aghacy adds, “women writers today appear to be more relaxed after gaining more access to the public sphere.”

“Women writers today appear to be more relaxed, after gaining more access to the public sphere.”

—Dr. Samira Aghacy, professor of English and comparative literature at LAU

Still, she notes, many women authors remain conscious of the need to confront moral, social and religious taboos imposed on them. In doing so, they are continuing a long tradition of daring works by women writers, which have had a huge impact on Arab societies since at least the early 20th Century. In the

1920s, the Egyptian author Nabawiyya Musa wrote a manifesto on feminism, while her fellow Egyptian writer Nawal Saadawi’s works on sex and womanhood forever changed the attitudes and taboos concerning women’s sexual status in conservative societies. Other writers like Latifa al Zayat, also from Egypt, and the Algerian author Assia Djebar challenged patriarchal attitudes.

In contesting moral, social, and religious taboos, the current generation is continuing a long 20th-century tradition of daring women’s writing in the Arab world.

“More recently Khaliji women authors, too many to mention, who expose the medieval forms of conservatism they have to live with have definitely impacted their societies,” says Dr. Mona Mikhail, a professor emerita of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies at New York University.

“No doubt the Arab Spring would not have bloomed without many of these authors coming to the forefront, shedding light on their malfunctioning societies,” she adds.

Portrayals of women in Arabic literature often serve to gauge the status of women in society, but it’s women authors whose work helps create change in society. Since the 1950s, Lebanese women’s literary contributions have been substantial. According to Aghacy, the outburst of novels and stories by Lebanese women sometimes exceeded and overshadowed works written by men during the civil war.

Many of the most influential writers in the civil war years were women. These writers drew attention to their role in the war, and challenged the male story that sidelined and marginalized them, Aghacy explains.



Alumni display their own original works at an LAU Beirut book fair

Dr. Miriam Cooke, a professor of modern Arabic literature and culture at Duke University, has dubbed these writers the Beirut Decentrists, because, as she puts it, they were twice “decentered”: First, by being “scattered all over a self-destructing city,” and second, by being mostly excluded from the literary canon and social discourse.

The writer Emily Nasrallah, a prolific voice in modern Lebanese literature, was one of the first women novelists of recent decades to reach a wider audience. Born in Kfeir village in South Lebanon, she published her first novel, *Touyour Ayloul (Birds of September)*, in 1962, and has since released multiple novels and short-story volumes. She has written extensively about the war in Lebanon and the struggle of women for independence, as well as about family roots and Lebanese village life. Like many of her peers, she often focuses on the fight for women’s financial and social emancipation.

“Most of the women authors, whether consciously or unconsciously, write from a feminist perspective,” says Mikhail. “Whether they write in an autobiographical mode or pure fiction, they raise feminist issues close to their experiences.”

But while Nasrallah has always eschewed the “feminist” label, she agrees it would be difficult not to write about the lives of women without exposing the inherent limitations.

“Fiction writing is the food of experience,” she says. “If I wrote about women, it was out of this experience, and out of how I felt women’s voices are not heard in society or in the family.”

Her novel *Birds of September* describes the saga of a small village as it witnesses many of its men depart for faraway and more promising lands. At the same time, the novel portrays the condition of women in that village society through the eyes of a young student named Mona.

A later novel, *Al Rahina (The Bondaged)*, tells the story of a young woman named Marwa who was promised at birth into marriage with a wealthy and much older village godfather. After



the wedding, she is sent by her betrothed to Beirut to study, since he wants an educated wife. At university Marwa falls in love with another student, who invites her to a weekend away at his aunt’s home in the mountains. She accepts, but she changes her mind once she reaches the mountain home. She ends up walking out in the middle of the night.

“There is a saying: ‘If you teach her, you will lose her,’” says Nasrallah, who scandalized her own village in her youth by moving to Beirut to work as a journalist and study at LAU (then BCW). But she adds that sometimes, “If you are limited and put since childhood in limited cages ... even education can’t free you.”

Although marriages arranged at birth are no longer common practice, the story she tells in *The Bondaged* remains a testament to the destiny of women who are subjugated by external forces — whether by family pressures or unwritten social rules — despite their own wishes.

But Nasrallah sees signs of change. She relates an anecdote about a recent talk she gave at a Druze association event in a small mountain village. Before her speech, a young girl took the stage to sing Asmahan songs.

Nasrallah recalls: “In my childhood, this was not allowed. She would not even be allowed to hear these songs. So I stood up and told them that just by watching this, I had received my due. And they started clapping.” 📖





LAU
School of Arts and Sciences

Credit Where it's Due

LAU's computer science program receives ABET accreditation, a national first

By Curtis Brown



After the latest in a string of accreditation successes, LAU now has a computer science program that stands alone in all of Lebanon.

In early September, the Bachelor of Science degree program in computer science was formally accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). It is the first and only ABET-accredited computer science program in the country.

ABET is the U.S.-based agency widely recognized as setting the "industry standard" for higher-education programs in applied science, computing, engineering and technology.

The Department of Computer Science and Mathematics had received high praise from ABET's visiting evaluation team in late 2010, and a positive decision had long been expected.

Nevertheless, following as it did closely on the heels of ABET's accreditation of all undergraduate degree programs in the School of Engineering, the announcement triggered a wave of elation in the LAU community.

LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra greeted the "thrilling news," describing the university as "on an unstoppable roll." Jabbra thanked and congratulated especially the faculty and staff of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, Byblos departmental chair Dr. Haidar Harmanani, LAU Provost Dr. Abdallah Sfeir, and the School of Arts & Sciences' outgoing deans Dr. Samira Aghacy and Dr. Fouad Hashwa.

Sfeir seconded Jabbra's remarks in an announcement to the community, describing ABET accreditation as a "landmark achievement" for LAU. Sfeir also drew attention to LAU's institutional culture of rigorous assessment and review, a legacy of its recently completed five-year strategic plan.

"LAU got better today, and it gets better every time we demonstrate our commitment to the virtuous circle of assessment,

evaluation and improvement," Sfeir wrote. "ABET accreditation of the computer sciences program is an exceptional accomplishment on this route."

Formal ABET approval capped years of preparation by the department. A joint message from Dr. Harmanani, who was the principal coordinator for the accreditation push, and Dr. Samer Habre, chair of the department at LAU Beirut, cited the "hard work and dedication of all entities" of the departments on both campuses throughout 2010, including administrative assistants and computer center staff. The chairs noted that "faculty members in particular worked endless hours revising the curriculum, assessing outcomes, and making the necessary recommendations for improvement."

ABET's visiting team evaluated the program in November of last year, subsequently submitting an overwhelmingly positive report. According to Dr. Harmanani, the team was especially impressed with students' technical knowledge, alumni successes and devotion to LAU, faculty commitment and scholarly records, and university facilities for the program.

Other positive signs soon emerged. Months before ABET's decision was announced, an ABET official contacted Harmanani to inform him that an exhibit of thorough and well-written institutional self-studies displayed at the April 2011 ABET Symposium had selected LAU's for inclusion.

Describing LAU as a regional "pioneer" in computer science, Habre says ABET's imprimatur will increase enrollments and "improve scholarly output of faculty, strengthening further our position in Lebanon and the region."

Several computer science students were especially active in the accreditation initiative, and describe themselves as thrilled by the result. Gioia Wehbe and Omar Omran, chairs of LAU's chapter of the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM), both say the program's new status will boost students' prospects for admission into competitive graduate schools. ACM vice chairs Gabriel Salameh and Nour Mohtadi suggest that top companies will be more likely to aggressively recruit from the program's undergraduates.

"What ABET does is set a quality stamp," affirms Harmanani. "It says, 'there are all these universities, and then there is LAU.'"

Stressing that accreditation must be renewed after six years, however, Harmanani counsels against complacency. "The challenge for us is to insure that we maintain this quality level," he says, pointing out that a new ABET coordinator will be tasked with managing the ongoing assessment necessary for reaccreditation down the line.



The Legacy and the Promise Fulfilled

LAU's first comprehensive fundraising campaign completed a year ahead of schedule

By Greg Houle

In the half-decade since the Campaign for Excellence — the Legacy and the Promise was launched, LAU has taken enormous strides and built a vast network of donors. With the generous support of these individuals, companies and government agencies — who believe in the university's mission and want to help it continue to flourish — the campaign has surpassed its goal of raising \$65 million a full year earlier than expected.

As the university's first comprehensive campaign, the Legacy and the Promise set out to build and consolidate the financial foundation to improve infrastructure on both campuses, provide crucial support to our students through scholarships and financial aid, and continue building and improving LAU's academic programs, as part of LAU's tireless drive to become a world-class research institution.

Thanks to private donors, the Legacy and the Promise has allowed LAU to build the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine as well as the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing, marking the university's bold foray into the field of medical education. Dozens of new students are now studying nursing and medicine at LAU, and many more will in the years to come.

The Frem Civic Center — an impressive new building on the Byblos campus, made possible by valuable support to the campaign — now houses many of the university's institutes, and will soon serve as a major forum of civic responsibility and student leadership. It will be used to host workshops, seminars and lectures on transparency, ethics and sound governance practices, with the aim of strengthening Lebanon's democratic institutions. It both symbolizes and strengthens LAU's commitment to responsible civic partnership in its community.

Thanks to continued and increasing support from the United States Department of State through the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and from USAID through a new program, the University Scholarship Assistance Program (USAP) — not to mention support from private donors, corporations and other organizations — LAU has been able to significantly increase its financial aid budget in recent years. Last year the university provided over \$15 million in aid.

Major fundraising organizations such as the Ford Foundation and George Soros' Open Society Institute have also contributed to The Legacy and the Promise, helping to strengthen and expand LAU's academic programs and offerings.

This impressive collective enthusiasm for LAU's mission helped the campaign to surpass even the most optimistic expectations of the university. Its successful completion marks a milestone in LAU's history, and will have positive repercussions for generations to come.

THE CLOSING FIGURE
AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2011, IS

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THE LEGACY
& THE PROMISE
LAU CAMPAIGN FOR EXCELLENCE

Al-Raida: IWSAW's Flagship Publication Holds a Mirror to Society

By Emily Morris

"We've exposed a lot of daring subjects," says Myriam Sfeir, managing editor of Al-Raida, a journal published by LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW).

What started off as the institute's events newsletter in 1976 has turned into an internationally circulated, scholarly journal that is essential reading for anyone involved in women's issues in the Arab world.

"It's not trying to sugar-coat anything or shy away from anything," says IWSAW Director Dima Dabbous-Sensenig. "It's really just trying to reflect where we as women come from and what we do."

According to Dabbous-Sensenig, one cannot discuss the feminist movement in the Arab world and not think about Al-Raida. "From a social perspective, it is a unique historical document. In the 1970s no one talked about women's issues in Arab world — we are pioneers in this respect."

Today, each issue of Al-Raida features a file with scholarly and nonacademic articles relating to a particular theme, in addition to articles outside the theme, including conference reports, interviews, book reviews and art news.

Over the years Al-Raida has not only provided an outlet for the institute's



academic research; it has also changed the discourse on subjects typically considered taboo in the region.

"For instance when we worked on the 'Battered women in Lebanon' issue back in 1994, we were really one of the first organizations to give a voice to the problem of gender-based violence," says Sfeir, who has been managing editor since 2006.

Sfeir receives frequent notes from academics worldwide praising Al-Raida. Turkish scholar Ela Enil, writing in reference to the "Sexuality" volume, said, "the whole issue is absolutely wonderful" and announced that she planned to use it in a human-rights workshop.

Anita Nassar, assistant director of IWSAW and a regular contributor to Al-Raida, says that the institute is often asked to participate in advocacy on the ground, but politely declines. "We trigger advocacy through Al-Raida, through our articles," she notes. "When subjects are mentioned here in Al-Raida, it helps give NGOs and other researchers the idea or base to move forward."

No topic is ever off the discussion table when planning an issue, and Sfeir and Nassar say there has never been a backlash from material published in Al-Raida.

Rather, the journal's main problem is the cost of translating pieces from Arabic to English.

But Dabbous-Sensenig says that despite the language barrier, she is proud that Al-Raida counts so many submissions from

scholars in the Arab world, who are able to be "much more open about discussing certain problems."

"Western scholars are actually rather polite," she explains. "If there's a problem, Western scholars are too shy to say it exists because they are so aware of past misconceptions, or of not being sensitive enough to the culture. Because we live here, Arab scholars are very much aware of the Western discourse and the Arab realities, and we're not apologetic toward anybody."

Rather than settle into its position in the Middle East as a top gender and women's studies publication, IWSAW hopes to cement its place internationally. The institute has recently established an international advisory board, featuring some prominent names, according to Dabbous-Sensenig.

And soon the journal hopes to fulfill its goal of becoming refereed, which means that articles slotted to go into the file will be reviewed by an external body.

Sfeir, Nassar and Dabbous-Sensenig all agree that turning Al-Raida into a refereed journal of international repute will be a crowning achievement for the effort spent shaping Al-Raida into the social catalyst it is today.

"You can rarely see anything written about women in the Arab world without seeing Al-Raida being quoted somewhere," says Dabbous-Sensenig, "which means we must be doing something right."





Blueprint for the Future

LAU's new five-year plan focuses on academic excellence

By Curtis Brown

LAU has embarked on an ambitious, comprehensive five-year strategic plan aimed at raising the university, in the words of its president, Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara, “to the next level of academic excellence.”

The objectives of the plan — which was approved in spring — include integrating liberal arts education with career-oriented programs in the sciences and professions, recruiting and retaining both a competitive and diverse student body and distinguished full-time faculty, strengthening outreach programs beyond the walls of the campus and the borders of the country, targeting LAU's strengths to national and regional needs, and expanding LAU's graduate studies, library resources and research capacity.

University officials say the time is ripe for a bold leap forward.

For one thing, LAU's regional accreditation in 2009 — along with the subsequent string of individual program accreditations including, most recently, the reaccreditation of the Pharm.D. program in the School of Pharmacy, all five Bachelor of Engineering programs in the School of Engineering, and the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Mathematics — strengthened the university's momentum, drawing growing recognition from the international academic community.

Preparation for accreditation, moreover, helped to instill a culture of rigorous, ongoing review and assessment at LAU — a culture, officials say, that is now poised to advance LAU to the next level.

“The focus here is this academic excellence we've all been striving for,” says Jabbara. “The new strategic plan provides the means to reach it.”

LAU Provost Dr. Abdallah Sfeir emphasizes that the plan was developed internally by faculty and staff, and set out to integrate all levels of university planning in pursuit of a common goal.

“We wanted to ensure that all units within the university are

at the service of its academic mission,” he says. “So our first step was to review that mission.”

LAU's mission statement was revised to highlight the university's commitment to “academic excellence, student-centeredness, civic engagement, the advancement of scholarship, the education of the whole person, and the formation of leaders in a diverse world.”

The resulting plan consists of six “pillars” — education, students, faculty, outreach, focus areas, and graduate studies and research. Each pillar is subdivided into goals, “action plans” and “enablers,” and each has a faculty point person in charge.

The plan is incredibly detailed; with all action steps involved in its implementation, it runs to 187 pages, providing concrete timelines on everything from revising tenure criteria to factor in civic engagement to establishing pilot projects for online learning.

LAU officials say the recently completed Strategic Plan 2006-2011 — the first comprehensive five-year plan in the university's history — laid the groundwork for the current one.

“The first strategic plan provided the university with a sense of direction,” Jabbara says. “It included several academic components, relating to the faculty and our academic programs, but there was an emphasis on major capital projects — many of them ongoing — that have expanded and consolidated our basic infrastructure.”

The 2006-2011 plan set a new tone, he says, establishing that LAU “is not a reactive institution, but rather a proactive one.”

“The ground was set for a new way of governing the institution,” he summarizes, noting a colleague on the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education's remark that “planning has become an integral part of doing business at LAU.”



Nanny State

Lebanon's culture of childcare

By Emily Morris



Dozens of children are running around the Rolex clock tower in Nejme Square with bubble wands in hand. A handful of others are riding brightly colored toy cars and scooters. It's a lovely, chaotic Saturday afternoon scene in downtown Beirut, but noticeably absent from this picture are the children's parents. Occasionally a child will wander to one of the surrounding outdoor cafes and a stylish-looking woman, presumably his mother, will smile and encourage him to go back and play. She'll then turn back to her table of friends.

In most cases, the adults who are actually watching the kids are their nannies. This scenario plays out all day, all over the city: Whether in ABC Mall in Achrafieh or along the Corniche, it's hard to miss the entourage of nannies who accompany wealthy and middle-class Lebanese families on public outings.

Even though most Lebanese parents didn't grow up in families with live-in childcare, more moms and dads are hiring full-time nannies now than ever before.

"It's a trend that is on the rise faster here in the Middle East than in, say, the U.S.," says Dr. Norma Moussally, psychologist at LAU Beirut, "and that's mainly due to finances. Very few people can afford a nanny in the U.S. when she's paid \$17 per hour. Here, they come cheap. Many nannies here are foreign domestic workers who aren't trained professionals in child-rearing."

Dr. Ketty Sarouphim, associate professor of psychology and education at LAU's Department of Social Sciences, says that, given the widespread availability of nannies in Lebanon, she can't always fault parents for opting to hire one. "Here in Lebanon you can afford live-in help, and children are a 24-hour job. When someone is there to take over and release you from some of your responsibilities, it's hard to say no. But what worries me as a psychologist is when that person takes over the parenting role. If the nanny takes care of basic needs, fine, but parenting should be done by the parents."

Up until about a decade ago, the standard Lebanese family, large and close-knit, meant it was easy to find a relative to watch the kids when the parents were busy. But with ever-changing lifestyles, there aren't always readily available babysitters around.

"When someone is there to take over and release you from some of your responsibilities, it's hard to say no. What worries me as a psychologist is when that person takes over the parenting role."

—Dr. Ketty Sarouphim, associate professor of psychology and education at LAU

"I never had a nanny growing up," says Carole, 33, who asked that her last name not be printed. "But look, my mom also didn't really work. I do, so my husband Karim and I decided to hire someone, a Filipino woman, who can help out around the house and watch our two boys when we're not available." She adds, "My mom and sister live about an hour away. So this is really the best option for us."

Dr. Raed Mohsen, dean of students at LAU Beirut and a family counselor since 1996, says that even though Lebanon had always enjoyed strong family support from grandparents, aunts or cousins, some families are now faced with choices they would not



Children with their nannies in the Beirut Souks

have had to make before. "With the increase in the number of working women," he notes, "although we have child care centers and nurseries, there are still a significant number of hours where the child is home without a parent."

Given that the average Lebanese woman now has a career and can't necessarily rely on family support, it would make sense that nannies are helping to fill the gap. But critics point to working women in Western countries who raise their children without help from a nanny or housekeeper.

"If the average American or Canadian woman can work 40 hours per week, cook dinner, clean the house and bring the kids to sports practice, why can't we?" asks Sarouphim.

Amy Youssef Karame, an instructor of English in LAU's Department of Humanities, used to have a nanny for her two young girls but realized that she missed having the house to herself, without any live-in help around. Now, she works part-time and cares for her children without a housekeeper or nanny. "I'm lucky because my time is flexible. At 3:30 p.m., I can leave the university, go to pick up my younger daughter at a nursery nearby, and then drive to pick up my older one. By the time we get home the kids need to eat, so I prepare meals a night in advance. Then we check homework, the oldest showers, and I read books with her," she says.

Widad Abou Diab, a web developer at LAU, also raises her 1-year-old son without help from a nanny. From Monday to Friday she commutes from the mountains to Beirut, and by the time her day is done, sometimes she's been gone from home for 12



A father bonds with his son during reading time

hours. “It’s not an ideal situation to be away from him like that, but luckily someone in my family is always able to watch him,” says Abou Diab. When asked if she’s considered hiring a nanny, she shakes her head. “I don’t think there are multiple choices for this; there is one choice: accepting things as they are. I must take care of my child, the home and work at the same time.”

Having a nanny in Lebanon is often not just a question of necessity or convenience, however. For many families, it’s also a status symbol. In some social circles, it would be unimaginable not to have a nanny, even if the mother doesn’t work.

“One unfortunate reason why people have nannies is because of appearances. It looks good to have one, so that you give the impression to your friends that, ‘Oh, look! I have money and can afford a nanny and am one of you guys,’” says Sarouphim.

“We are a copy-and-paste society,” adds Dr. Nada Frangieh, director of the Family Research division of the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development. “Your neighbor has this new sports car, so you should have it; your cousin has the newest winter boots, so you should have them. This is what is happening with nannies, but these are our children’s lives at stake.

Instead of mimicking each other’s decisions, she notes, “We should focus on making good parenting the fashion.”

Whatever is behind the rise of the nanny in certain strata of Lebanese society, experts are concerned with the possible implications for children. They stress that there are cases where the live-in household help or the nanny becomes a part of the family and is given a clear mandate, as the primary caregiver, to hand out discipline. But there are those parents who are not willing to hand over that authority, creating blurry lines which can confuse the child and lead to behavioral problems.

“Say the nanny is disciplining the child because she doesn’t want him to do something harmful, like stick his hand in a socket,”

says Moussally. “You’ll often find the Lebanese mom or dad yelling at the nanny for yelling at the child. Over time that sort of makes it OK for the child to say ‘this person has no authority over me, I can do whatever I want when my parents aren’t here.’”

“The nanny is obligated to love you but can’t punish you, and that gives leeway to the child to start screaming, pulling tantrums, and basically forming a very unhealthy attachment to this person,” she explains. “Meanwhile, there is no strong attachment to the mom because she’s not there, and the Lebanese dad is very often not there emotionally,” says Moussally.

So what might families with a nanny or helper do differently to maintain a wholesome family dynamic, to ensure their children are brought up with a healthy respect for authority? It all boils down to spending quality time with the kids, say the experts, and working out a household discipline plan that everyone — nanny, parent and child — adheres to.

“If you’re relying on a nanny to give your child a system of morality, you have to make sure that your values and those of the nanny aren’t contradictory,” stresses Sarouphim.

As for Mohsen, he hopes more fathers take an active role in childrearing. “Most Lebanese men are not used to fathers who played a major part in raising them. The new generation — fathers today have working wives — simply cannot assume that same traditional and passive paternal role their own dads played.” ☐



First class of USAP scholarship students makes its mark at LAU

By Emily Morris

Getting involved both inside and outside LAU's gates is a requirement of the University Student Assistance Program (USAP), a new USAID-funded initiative that provides full scholarships to public school graduates with high financial need from around Lebanon. And so far, the 52 young scholars enrolled in USAP's inaugural class have risen to the occasion.

After settling into the residence halls and attending their first classes, the students have hit the ground running, joining a total of 33 various professional associations and student clubs on both campuses.

"The conditions of your grant call for you to become the future leaders of Lebanon," Elie Samia, director of USAP and executive director of LAU's Outreach and Civic Engagement unit, told grant recipients during a fall orientation at LAU Beirut. "We want you to be creative and discover your voice."

USAP was launched after the university won a \$6.9-million USAID grant last fall. LAU admissions officers visited 238 public high schools to spread the word about the program before the application deadline on January 31, 2011.

"I remember stunned reactions," said Abdo Ghié, LAU assistant vice president for Enrollment Management, during the orientation's opening ceremony. "Many of you — and your school directors — couldn't believe what the American government and people through USAID and LAU were offering. Full tuition? A monthly stipend? Housing? A book allowance? 'What is the catch,' you asked. Well, there is no catch — you deserve to be helped and we're here to help."

The initial pool of 386 applicants was whittled down after assessing high school grades and scores on the English Entrance Exam and Sophomore Exam. The final 52 were chosen in June after individual interviews with the selection committee and the LAU Financial Aid and Scholarships Office, and after receiving applicants' Lebanese Baccalaureate scores.

"Sometimes I feel like this can't be happening, it can't be real," says Majdoleen



USAP's inaugural class during a special LAU orientation

Al-Chmouri, 18, from the Al Marj area in the Bekaa, who studies communication arts with a journalism emphasis at LAU Beirut.

"I hope to work in a top hospital some day," says Mohamad Ibrahim, 17, a nursing major from the Marjayoun district in south Lebanon. "This is going to change my life."

Dr. Elise Salem, LAU vice president for Student Development and Enrollment Management, praised the students for their intelligence and ambition. "When we met you for the interviews, we were so impressed with your desire to get a top education, your leadership, communication skills, and your desire to do good for yourselves, your families, communities and Lebanon."

LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara commended Salem and the Student Enrollment and Admissions teams, and expressed the university's "gratitude to USAID and the American people for their generosity and friendship."

Timothy Alexander, director of the USAID's Lebanon program office, highlighted the long, fruitful relationship between the American and Lebanese peoples since USAID's establishment 50 years ago.

"This is the first time USAID is funding full undergraduate scholarships plus

additional educational costs for public school students in Lebanon," he said.

In the hopes that grant winners would eventually contribute to Lebanon's future development, they were required to enroll in one of 13 majors deemed important to the country, including education, nursing, engineering, business, social work, and communication arts.

This year's USAP cohort will not be the last. LAU was recently awarded more than \$7.4 million from USAID for USAP II, which will fully support another 53 academically qualified and financially needy students from Lebanon's public secondary schools. Successful applicants for USAP II will matriculate in fall 2012.



Donor Profiles



Dr. Najib El-Khatib

Carrying on his father's commitment to education and innovation

Dr. Najib El-Khatib, the son of the late Dr. Mounir El-Khatib, has established an engineering scholarship fund and lecture series to honor his father's legacy as a lifelong advocate of education and one of the region's most prominent engineers.

"My father was first and foremost a scholar. Education was very important to him and remained central in his heart and mind," says El-Khatib, a member of LAU's Board of International Advisors.

In July 2011, he met with LAU officials to inaugurate the Mounir El-Khatib Endowed Engineering Scholarship Fund and the Mounir El-Khatib Endowed Engineering Lecture Series. The fund will support the education of underprivileged but academically promising students wishing to enroll in an engineering program at LAU. The university will also establish a series of professional lectures and seminars for students, faculty, alumni and other interested parties, addressing the latest topics and trends in engineering, science and technology that are not typically covered in structured lecture courses.

"The lecture series promotes continuing education, staying at the cutting edge in Lebanon and in the region, and exposes the young students to new ideas. It will make them think a little bit about what exists beyond the borders here," says El-Khatib.

El-Khatib's father, an engineering graduate of the University of Michigan, was elected in 1991 as Head of the Order of Engineers and Architects in Beirut. The late El-Khatib, who passed away in 2010, taught for more than 17 years at AUB's School of Engineering, and was the founder and partner of one of the Middle East's leading multidisciplinary engineering and architectural consulting firms, Khatib and Alami – Consolidated Engineering Company, of which his son is currently a partner.

Thanks to his son's commitment to carrying on his legacy, a whole new generation of engineers will remember Mounir El-Khatib and become inspired by his life's work.



Daad Ghossoub

A generous, dedicated proponent of education

"Ideally, I would like to see all the children of the world have the opportunity to receive an education," says Daad Ghossoub, who has recently established the Daad Ghossoub Designated Scholarship Grant at LAU.

Thanks to her generous gift, the tuition fees of a number of students will be covered from this academic year up through their graduation.

An active equal-rights advocate, Ghossoub deeply believes that education is a fundamental component of a person's well-being. She says that through her support of LAU, she wants to offer students the opportunity to attend an excellent academic institution. At the same time, she expressed the honorable wish to set an example for her three children, two of whom are LAU graduates, to someday contribute the same way she did toward this noble cause.

And it would be no surprise if they did: The Ghossoub children come from a family of strong education advocates. Their father Joseph Ghossoub is a long-time friend and supporter of LAU. The Joseph Ghossoub Annual Scholarship Grant has already offered several students the opportunity to pursue postgraduate degrees at the university.

Daad Ghossoub credits her husband for greatly influencing her decision to donate toward an educational cause. "I owe that to him," she says.

Ghossoub is always on the lookout for good causes to defend and charitable organizations to assist. "I'm a person who is always out to help. Any way that I can serve society, I will do it to the best of my ability," she says.

Ghossoub hopes that one day, the students receiving her scholarship will, in turn, offer other needy students the chance to receive a first-rate university education.



Medical students and LAU officials after the annual white coat ceremony

Rotations and Advances

Medical students begin their clinical years

By John Geha

During their first two years of university, medical school students do much like their peers: attend classes with demanding lectures and assignments that keep them up studying into the wee hours of the night. But for medical students, that routine suddenly changes at the start of the third year. An often emotional "White Coat Ceremony" officially concludes the years of preparatory academics, and students must face the new challenge of interacting with patients while working alongside seasoned doctors and nurses at the hospital.

At LAU Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine (SOM), however, that experience is less daunting than it is exciting. Faculty and students alike are discovering that LAU's new medical school is not only unique in its educational mission, but that it is rapidly delivering on its promise of becoming a world-class university medical center. Faculty are impressed by the curriculum and by the way in which students are displaying their skills and insight at an early stage.

Dr. Sola Bahous, SOM assistant dean for clinical affairs, explains that LAU medical students are progressing rapidly, thanks to a solid foundation in the instructional basics combined with an innovative curriculum that provides hands-on experience prior to the clinical years.

"The teaching program is going to put the students at a stage where they can practice," says Bahous. "Upon graduation, the students will be ready to start clinical work," she adds, explaining that LAU's strategy of placing real-world cases and issues in front of students early in their course of study will arm them with more experience than traditional residents.

Students appear to be handling the challenges well, albeit with a new appreciation for what it takes to be an effective doctor. "From

simulator to patient, it's a much bigger responsibility," says Michele Chemali, an LAU medical student and the class representative. "It makes a difference. A patient holds on to every word you say. You have to choose your words carefully."

The medical school has already produced a batch of confident "Med III" students, but this achievement is just the beginning. In store for the soon-to-be-doctors is a rigorous program that balances what they learn in the hospital with communal, regional and global health issues that physicians are required to understand in an increasingly globalized world.

At the center of this innovative policy is Dr. Mona Haidar, an assistant professor of social medicine. Social medicine seeks to define health beyond the hospital, and takes into account social and economic factors affecting a community. Medicine is "just not about healthcare, but it's also about healthy living," says Haidar. She leads a social medicine rotation in which students work out of a clinic in the Chatila refugee camp. "Students get to appreciate health in real surroundings," she explains.

The social medicine rotation is not the only remarkable product of an innovative curriculum. The school is also planning a "Continuity Experience Clerkship," a program in which third- and fourth-year medical students will be assigned to follow patients or families with chronic diseases over the long term. This will give students experience in dealing with patients beyond the hospital bed visits, and help create more informed patient-doctor relationships.

"What distinguishes this school is its vision," says Haidar. Judging from the enthusiasm of faculty, staff and students, LAU's groundbreaking medical school can look forward to a bright, distinguished future.

Contemporary Art Exhibition at Biel Showcases Works by Eight LAU Artists

By Rosalynn Ghobril

After a full year of preparations, the Beirut Exhibition Center at Biel unveiled a new show on June 16, highlighting the works of 49 Lebanese contemporary artists, including six LAU faculty members and two LAU alumni.

Entitled “Rebirth,” the exposition featured works with themes that encompass the cycles of life, including survival, revival and death. Organized by Solidere and General Secretary of French Museums Daniel Guiraudy, the exhibition displayed the work of artists selected by an international jury. All participants were given a year to prepare for the show, and the event curator, Janine Maamari, took part in directing each artist’s work in progress.

Rached Bohsali, chairperson of fine arts and foundation studies at LAU’s School of Architecture and Design, interpreted the concept of rebirth by way of past movements and civilizations. Although he used paint to create his piece, Bohsali’s composition closely resembled a photograph. “People are much more impressed with the technique to realize the purpose behind the style,” says Bohsali. “I just wanted to show the message in a very realistic way.”

Using acrylic on handmade paper, Bohsali illustrated the hyperrealist image of a wooden dummy leaning on a stack of eleven books. The dummy is in the form of a woman embracing a large egg, and is meant to trigger the philosophical question, “What came first, the chicken or the egg?” Books in the background include *Islamic Art*, *Impressionism* and a *Dreamer’s Dictionary* — references to the past evolution of ideas and knowledge — while a pencil hangs suspended from the top of the painting to suggest the potential effect of its traces.



Bassam Geitani, fine arts instructor at LAU, selected an icon of Lebanon’s history, the olive tree, as the main element of his display. “I chose the olive tree simply because it holds a strong symbol for our country and the region,” says Geitani. By using the coal derived from olive pips, Geitani traced a distorted image of an olive tree on the ground, while opposite, a deliberately placed cylindrical mirror reflected the tree’s true shape. In his display, Geitani used the principle of deforming an image so that it only appears in its original form when observed from a certain point of view. “The fragments of coal on the ground are reborn into a perfectly shaped olive tree in the mirror,” explains Geitani.



From his series titled “The Eighth Rebirth of the Phoenix,” **Chaouki Chamoun**, LAU fine arts professor, contributed a piece of art he completed in 2009, sparked by Lebanon’s war with Israel in 2006. Chamoun created the series in the privacy of his own space. “As an artist you work without the concerns of exhibiting all the time. It is more of a need,” says Chamoun. It was only at the “Rebirth” exhibition that a part of Chamoun’s series was revealed to the public. “When the right time arrives for it to be exhibited, it is exhibited,” he notes. In his work, made with acrylic on canvas, Chamoun compares Beirut with the phoenix, a mythical bird gifted with the power to resurrect itself from its own ashes.

Ghassan Ghazal, a foundation course instructor at LAU, found inspiration in the accumulation of his memories. “As our body gets old, so does our memory,” says Ghazal. With the use of wood, plaster, fabric and resin, Ghazal created two objects that resemble luggage and are intended to represent the psychological weight of memory; each piece of luggage marks a different stage, the before and the after. A long human arm acts as an arch linking the two pieces of luggage while illustrating the transition of time.

A piece made with acrylic and fire on canvas, meant to express rebirth as a meditation space, represented the work of **Hannibal Srouji**, LAU assistant professor of fine art.



Artist and LAU alumna **Dima Hajjar** told a fictional narrative with her multi-media installation of acrylic on canvas, photomontage and sound, inspired by the famous painting “The Lace Maker of Vermeer.” In the piece, Hajjar recounts the story of a lace maker who is sliced in half as she is weaving “nothingness.” Soon after, a cut-out of the map of Lebanon falls from the lace maker’s hands into a sewage pipe.

Other participants included the LAU filmmaking instructor **Roy Samaha**, with his “Missing Originals” mixed-media installation, and alumna **Randa Ali Ahmad**’s “Peaceful Shield” installation of colorful jute bags filled with red sand.

“This is a very impressive show of contemporary Lebanese artists,” says Bahi Ghubril, a visitor to the exhibition. “I liked the use of the outside space, especially the neon light above the main entrance.”



Achievements of LAU Women Graduates throughout its History

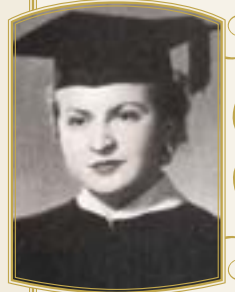
NAJLA ABU IZZEDINE

Najla Abu Izzeddine, a prominent author and historian, was among the first women in the Middle East to obtain a PhD. A prolific scholar for many decades, Abu Izzeddine in 1983 published *The Druzes, a New Study of their History, Faith and Society*, widely regarded as a definitive book on the subject. She graduated from AJCW in 1927.



INTISSAR TABSH ABU KHADRA

Intissar Tabsh Abu Khadra, a 1953 graduate of BCW, started one of Lebanon's first translation firms as early as 1961. In 1966, she was the first woman to receive the title "Authorized and Official Translator" in Arabic, English and French from the Lebanese Government. She is an active member of the Dar al-Ajaza al-Islamiyah hospital Women's Committee.



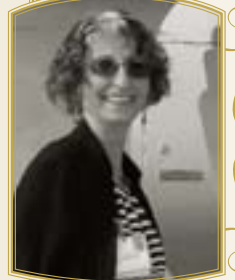
WIJDAN ALI

A pioneer woman diplomat in Jordan, Princess Wijdan Ali entered the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1962, a year after obtaining her bachelor's degree in history from BCW. At the beginning of her diplomatic career she represented Jordan at United Nations meetings. She is now the Jordanian ambassador to Italy. An accomplished artist, Ali founded the Royal Society of Fine Arts and the University of Jordan's Department of Arts and Design, which she currently chairs.



SONIA KONIALIAN ALLER

Sonia Konialian Aller has devoted her life to helping others. A prominent humanitarian, Aller has dedicated at least half her time to charity and non-profit activities, mainly involving children. Her commitment to social work stems from a course she took in child development at BCW, where she graduated in 1966. She is a board member of Los Angeles' LAU alumni chapter.



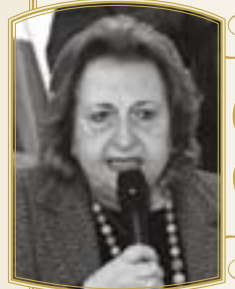
AMINY AUDI

Aminy Audi (A.A. 1961) is the chief executive officer and president of L & J.G. Stickley, a major manufacturer and marketer of premium solid wood furniture in New York. A longtime activist, Audi has served as a non-governmental delegate to the United Nations World Conference of Women in Beijing, and is a founding member of the Women's Fund of the Central New York Community.



AMAN KABBARA CHAARANI

Aman Kabbara Chaarani is the president of the Council of Women. She graduated from BCW in 1954 and pursued graduate studies in education. She now heads two major women's rights associations, the National Committee for the Follow-up on Women's Issues and the Association for Educational Development. She is the author of several publications on women's issues and education.



Achievements of LAU Women Graduates throughout its History

SALOUA RAOUDA CHOUCAIR

Avant-garde painter and sculptor Saloua Raouda Choucair graduated from AJCW in 1936 in biology. She painted in several renowned Beirut studios, studied philosophy, and traveled to Paris and the United States to study sculpture and other fine arts. Choucair has worked with prominent international artists and held several exhibitions, mainly in Paris and Beirut. Her works are exhibited in museums around the world.



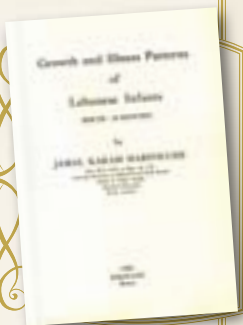
ROSE GHORAYEB

Often cited as "the first woman critic in Arabic literature," Rose Ghorayeb has divided her prolific career between teaching, writing and defending the Arabic language. A 1932 graduate of AJCW, Ghorayeb eventually became head of BCW Arabic Department. As a women's rights activist she regularly contributed to *Sawt al-Mar'a* (*The Woman's Voice*), a monthly publication. From 1983 to 1993, she was editor of *Al-Raida*, the quarterly journal of LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World.



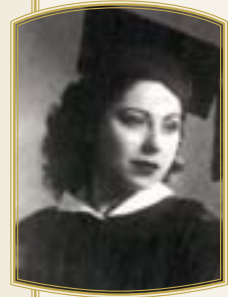
JAMAL KARAM HARFOUCHE

Jamal Karam Harfouche, a 1935 AJCW graduate, was the only female student in her class when she entered medical school at AUB. She went on to receive her PhD from Harvard University in 1965. Harfouche practiced privately in pediatrics for several years and taught public health at AUB. She has published a large number of articles and several books. A strong public health advocate, she has established community health centers in disadvantaged neighborhoods throughout Lebanon.



ZAHIYA KADDOURA KAFFAFI

When Zahiya Kaddoura Kaffafi graduated from AJCW in 1939, she didn't even dream she'd come to be head of the history department at Lebanese University (1961), or five years later, Dean of the Literature and Human Sciences Faculty. One of few female activists to oppose the French Mandate in Lebanon, Kaffafi published numerous works and studies, several of which have been translated into multiple languages.



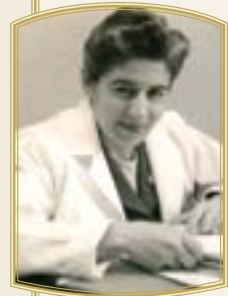
NEEMAT KANAAN

Neemat Kanaan has more than 40 years of experience in the field of social development in Lebanon, including as director general of the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs from 1993 to 2005. She was the first woman in the nation's history to hold that position in any public institution. Kanaan has also been a consultant for a number of UN agencies, and was appointed special advisor to the executive secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). She graduated from BCW in 1958 with a B.A. in education and psychology, and continued her studies in graduate school.



SHAFICA KARAGULLA

A prominent psychiatrist, Shafica Karagulla graduated from AJCW in 1934. Her career led her to Scotland, Canada and the United States, where she joined the faculty of the State University of New York's Department of Psychiatry, and founded and presided over the Higher Sense Perception Research Foundation in California. Karagulla has many publications to her credit, and her 1967 *Breakthrough and Creativity: Your Higher Sense Perception* is still a classic.



Achievements of LAU Women Graduates throughout its History

ANGELA JURDAK KHOURY

Often referred to as the “first Lebanese woman diplomat,” Angela Jurdak Khoury graduated from AJCW in 1935. She pursued studies in sociology and completed a Ph.D. in international relations from the American University in Washington before enrolling in the Geneva School of International Studies in Switzerland. After Lebanon’s independence in 1943, Khoury joined the diplomatic corps in Washington D.C. and served as Consul of Lebanon in New York.



WADAD BAROUDI LAHOUD

Wadad Baroudi Lahoud graduated from AJCW in 1946. One of the first graduates of the Social Work Program initiated at BCW, she is generally considered a pioneering woman in this field. She was principal of the Lebanese School for the Blind & Deaf for years, and played an active role in the social and familial integration of the disabled.



EVA BADRE MALIK

Eva Badre Malik graduated from AJCW in 1934 and pursued higher studies in Arabic History and Literature. Three years later she joined the college as an instructor of Arabic and Near East History. She played a distinguished role in lobbying for Lebanon’s independence from the French Mandate, and shortly after in the establishment of the League of Lebanese Women. She was BCW Alumnae Association president for three consecutive terms.



SANIYEH HABBBOUB NACCASH

Saniyeh Habboub Naccash graduated from AJCW in 1926, and went on to earn her MD in gynecology and obstetrics from the Women’s Medical College in Pennsylvania. In 1932, she opened a private clinic in obstetrics and general medicine in Beirut, paving the way for other female doctors to follow suite. Naccash co-founded the Lebanese Red Cross.



SALWA NASSAR

Salwa Nassar graduated from AJCW in 1933, and went on to receive her Ph.D. in physics, becoming one of the first female nuclear physicists in the Middle East. She headed the Science Department at BCW in 1945, and became the university’s first Lebanese president in 1966. Nassar enjoyed an international reputation as a scientist, and was a member of numerous professional associations.



MARY HANANIA REGIER

Mary Hanania Regier graduated from AJCW in 1944. She went on to become the first student to receive an M.A. in Mathematics from AUB, and the first woman to receive a Ph.D. in statistics in the Middle East. Regier taught at both BCW and AUB, was a distinguished member of the American Statistical Association, and president of the BCW Alumnae Association between 1948 and 1952.



Achievements of LAU Women Graduates throughout its History

ZAHYIAH MAKSAD SALMAN

Zahiyah Maksad Salman is a well-known humanitarian and child welfare advocate in Lebanon. A 1930 graduate of AJCW, Salman took the initiative leading to the establishment of day care centers across Lebanon as early as 1937. She was the founding president of the National Committee for Child's Day, and participated in the establishment of several renowned national welfare associations.



EDVICK JUREIDINI SHAYBOUB

Edvick Jureidini Shayboub graduated from AJCW in 1934, and after an initial stint as a teacher — teaching for seven years in Iraq — went on to build a pioneering career in print and radio journalism in the Middle East. Shayboub traveled the world as an advocate for women's rights, and became the editor-in-chief of both the monthly journal *Sawt al-Mar'a* (Woman's Voice) and *Dunya al-Mara'*, a women's magazine.



MOUNIRA SOLH

1933 AJCW graduate Mounira Solh was a relentless advocate for the equal rights of women and people with disabilities. Among the first women to run for Parliament, she was one of the most prominent female leaders of the demonstrations that led to Lebanon's independence in 1943. She established Al Amal Institute for the Disabled, a pathbreaking institution in the region, and was vice president of the Lebanese Council of Women and the International Council of Women.



THURAYYA MALHAS SULEIMAN

After receiving her A.A. from AJCW in 1945, Thurayya Malhas Suleiman went on to major in Arabic and education at AUB. A year after completing her M.A. in 1951, she began teaching at BCW, where she became chair of the Arabic Department. A highly regarded poet, Suleiman holds a Ph.D. in Arabic Philosophy and has several publications to her credit.



PERGROUHI NAJARIAN SVAJIAN

Pergrouhi Najarian Svajian graduated from AJCW in 1942, and went on to complete her Ph.D. in child development and family relations in 1952. She came back to what had since become BCW to join the faculty of the Home Economics Department, which she later chaired. After joining AUB's Department of Education for a time, she returned to BCW to become the first female dean of faculty in the university's history. Svajian has also played a leadership role in her Armenian community.



DIANA TAKY DEEN

Diana Taky Deen is an internationally renowned concert pianist who grew up between Lebanon and the Philippines, and graduated from BCW in 1951. She has studied in Paris, Rome, Siena, Salzburg and New York, and given concerts in Europe, the Middle East, West Africa and South America.



Community Outreach and Civic Engagement



Outreach and Civic Engagement unit (OCE) trains future leaders

LAU's Outreach and Civic Engagement office (OCE) equipped students with leadership and project management skills during a four-day residential training in June. Held in Ramliyah at the Mediterranean Forest Development and Conservation Center of Lebanon (MFDCL), the training included the Model United Nations Program, Leadership and U magazine, and various volunteer activities. The programs were both reflective and experiential, and gave participants the chance to tackle a series of simulation "crises" that needed to be overcome.

It's electric! Energy-efficient motorcycles at LAU Beirut

On July 8 students learned about modern alternative modes of transportation from Mohamed Chehab, CEO and general manager of TechTrax, during a lecture at LAU Beirut. The lecture exposed students to local initiatives taking place in the environmental science field. Chehab stressed the use of electric vehicles as both economically and environmentally beneficial, especially in improving air quality in the urban areas of Lebanon. Electric bikes were also displayed on campus.



Improving ties between civil society organizations and international donors

Academics from various universities and civil society representatives from around the region participated at LAU's workshop "Empowering Citizens: Elections, Civil Society and Peacebuilding," on July 21-22 to develop recommendations for improving the efficacy of aid donations. Co-directed by LAU associate professor of Political Science Dr. Bassel Salloukh, and Dr. Marie-Joelle Zahar from the Université de Montréal, activists from post-conflict societies such as Lebanon, Iraq, the Palestinian territories, and Sudan were brought together to study differences in localized case studies in an effort to understand civil society organizations and donor dynamics.

LAU goes global at Model UN conference in South Korea

Six LAU students traveled to Incheon, South Korea to take part in the third annual Global Model United Nations conference on sustainable development, held August 10-14. Recent LAU graduate Michael Abi Semaan served as a secretary, representing Lebanon and the Middle East. The conference, entitled "Sustainable Development: Advancing Human Progress in Harmony with Nature," was organized by the UN Department of Public Information and attended by prominent UN figures, including Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, as well as 600 of the best university students from MUN programs around the world.



LAU students volunteer at UN convention on cluster munitions

LAU students volunteered at the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, organized by UNDP in coordination with the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, and held at the InterContinental Phoenicia Hotel in Beirut from September 12-16. The 178 student volunteers — of which 108 were from LAU — were involved in conference setup and support, assisting participants at the airport and hotels, and helping pressroom staff and the audio and IT support teams.

Arts, Culture and Language



Aspiring filmmakers weave short stories inspired by regional revolutions

A group of 15 aspiring scriptwriters and filmmakers learned the art of creating a fictional story and turning it into a one-minute movie, at the “Harrer, Harrer” workshop put on by the Doha Film Institute in Qatar and hosted in Lebanon by LAU’s Department of Communication Arts. Held on the Beirut campus from June 14–20, the participants learned storytelling, scriptwriting, filming and editing while working with professional camera people and editors. Niam Etany, a part-time instructor of screenwriting at LAU Beirut, and Ritesh Batra, manager at DFI’s Education Department, supervised the theoretical and practical aspects of the workshop.

James Madison University students embrace Arabic language, culture

Sixteen students from James Madison University, Virginia, attended LAU’s Summer Institute for Intensive Arabic Language and Culture from June 25 to July 13, offering them a first in-depth view into the Middle East. The joint venture brought together instructors from JMU and SINARC, one of the leading language institutes in the Middle East. This is JMU’s first study abroad program in Lebanon. Language classes were held separately from the usual SINARC program, but this program also relied on LAU professors to teach courses in Lebanese dialect and allowed students from the two programs to come together to attend weekly lectures on current affairs and visit popular tourist sites around Lebanon.



Education



LAU summer camp continues to grow

LAU’s Continuing Education Program hosted 350 children, aged 5 to 12, on the Beirut campus as part of the university’s six-week summer camp, held from July 4–August 12. Filled with activities and programs such as cooking, music, tennis, swimming, dance and storytelling, the summer camp was designed to enhance self-confidence and social skills. Enrollment this year more than tripled since 2010 and two new courses, leadership and engineering, were added in response to participant demand.

Career Guidance and Financial Aid

New Facebook page answers students’ enrollment questions

A new LAU Students Facebook page was launched in June by the Enrollment Management Office, aimed at answering students’ questions about admission, financial aid and scholarships, and registration within 24–48 hours. It falls in line with LAU’s mission to develop students through the offering of student-centered services, program development and co-curricular activities. The Facebook page has already proved a success, logging in more than 2,500 monthly users.



Architecture and Design

Faculty member designs new stamp series showcasing cultural icons

The Ministry of Communications has selected 12 limited-edition print stamps designed by LAU faculty member Hiba Mikdashi, who specializes in philatelic stamp design. Her latest set of commemorative Liban Post stamps highlights renowned Lebanese artistic and cultural figures, such as singer Fayrouz, poet Said Akl, and singer Sabah. The designs are part of an ongoing initiative by the Ministry of Communications to raise the profile of Lebanon's historical and cultural importance.



Imaginative yet functional furniture designs win contest

LAU student Ramzi Naja and recent graduate Mirna Sabbah, both from the School of Architecture and Design, on June 3 won the first and second-place prizes for their innovative furniture models in the Farra Design Center-sponsored "Divine Details" competition, created to encourage youth participation in design. Sabbah designed an oriental-style lamp that doubles as a mop and bucket while Naja created a series of cubes that have multiple functions, including a coffee table, TV stand, book shelves, and desk.

Graphic design students relay messages creatively

LAU graphic design students presented their senior projects during the end-of-year exhibition, titled "FLUX 2011," held from June 8–16 at Sheikh Zayed Hall at LAU Beirut. Organized by LAU's School of Architecture and Design, the exhibited projects covered a wide range of topics, including environmental and social issues.



Science and Medicine



Pharm.D. candidates receive their ceremonial doctoral hoods

This year's graduates of the Pharm.D. and B.S. in Pharmacy programs gathered at LAU Byblos on June 28 to participate in the annual pre-graduation hooding ceremony, a special tradition for graduating doctoral students that is usually practiced at U.S. universities. Dr. Pierre Zalloua, interim dean of LAU's School of Pharmacy, highlighted in his speech the changes that have swept through the pharmacy profession since the 1960s, and told the graduates they would help usher in the era of clinical pharmacy to Lebanon.

Computer Science Summer Institute gives high schoolers a taste of college life

A group of 33 high school students learned a range of IT skills, from using HTML to developing Facebook applications, during the Computer Science Summer Institute at LAU Byblos from June 27–July 1. Organized by the Department of Computer Science and Mathematics, the purpose of the institute was to promote the major as a creative and innovative field among high school-aged youths, given the country's shortage of computer science majors.





High school students take part in chemistry and computer science training programs at LAU

In July over 60 high schoolers from across Lebanon took part in the first annual summer training programs on chemistry and computer science, organized by the School of Arts and Sciences at LAU Beirut and supported by the Admissions Office. At the end of the programs, six talented participants were chosen to receive partial scholarships, should they choose to attend either of LAU's programs. The chemistry and computer science fields were chosen as pilots for the summer camp to raise awareness about each department.

School of Medicine welcomes new students

On September 5 LAU welcomed 39 new students to the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine. The first-year students joined 35 second-year and 34 third-year students. They were greeted at an informal function by faculty and were given the chance to introduce themselves. They were also introduced to the school's innovative teaching approaches, clinical exposure and community-based projects they would soon be a part of.



Sports

LAU athletes add titles to the university's trophy wall

LAU's basketball, handball and futsal (indoor football) teams won their first championships after competing in a series of qualifying games during the annual University Sports Conference (USC), which began in mid-November and ended in summer. The LAU Captains (the Byblos-campus basketball varsity team) won the Men's Basketball University Sports Conference (MBUSC) championship on June 4. This triumph came after a series of almost-wins, finishing second place in 2006, 2009 and 2010.



LAU athletes return from Germany with honorable results

Accompanied by their coaches, a 46-member delegation of LAU athletes competed in men's and women's basketball, women's volleyball and 5x5 football, and mixed tennis at the Eurokonstantia Sports Tournament at the University of Konstanz, Germany, from June 9-13. LAU's mixed tennis team won first place, while the men's and women's basketball and women's volleyball teams all took second place. The women's futsal team placed third.

Library

LAU hosts library enthusiasts from Iraq, France

The Beirut campus's Riyad Nassar Library played host to delegations from Iraq and France in September, introducing them to various aspects of the library's operations, from e-content management to the use of public spaces. The 17-member delegation from Iraq's Ministry of Higher Education, various universities and publishing companies were hoping to replicate LAU Beirut's library in their home country by taking tips on design, new technology and day-to-day operations. Later in the month, 16 French librarians visited RNL as part of an annual trip designed to exchange ideas and information with counterparts in different countries.



Dubai Internships

Engineering students develop global network

By Megan Detrie

Six LAU engineering students and six students from New York's Syracuse University participated in a six-week internship in the United Arab Emirates with the Dubai Contracting Company (DCC), giving them a chance to get hands-on with some of the world's biggest construction projects.



LAU engineering students get the scoop on Dubai's biggest construction projects

"I was born in Dubai and love the construction there, and the DCC construction is unique and advanced for construction companies in the Middle East," says Anthony el Khoury an LAU engineering student who participated in the internship.

DCC has multiple construction sites in the region, including ones in Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The internship, which ran from May 8 until June 17, gave participants a chance to watch as construction projects shifted from one phase to the next.

Days were split between lectures and site visits, which the participants said allowed them to put the theories they were learning into immediate practice.

"We were able to experience and sense real-life problems and risks involved in the construction industry, and this practical part of the experience is rarely tangible or shown in other internships," says Sarah Hijazi, an LAU engineering student.

Hijazi added that because of the diversity of the site visits, she was able to learn about a wide variety of equipment, techniques and safety measures.

"There are a lot of high-rise towers that simply don't exist in Lebanon" says LAU intern Pierre Karam, adding, "It was amazing to see these projects."

All engineering students are required to participate in some form of professional practice during the summer before graduation. The DCC internship is unusual in that it offers students a chance to work

not only with their American counterparts, but also with employees from around the world.

According to Dr. George E. Nasr, LAU professor and dean of the School of Engineering, who helped bring the internship program to LAU, the international aspect of the internship is a special draw.

"As an engineer in the global economy, you will be asked to go abroad and team up with people from very different cultures, to make a project and implement a time plan," says Nasr. He adds that in the DCC internship, students "are exposed socially to other cultures."

In addition to their educational, social and hands-on experiences, the interns also kept a daily blog (<http://dsipprogram.blogspot.com/>).

This is the third year LAU has participated in the internship. The program launched in 2008 with participants from Syracuse University and the American University in Dubai. But with the help of Abdallah Yabroudi, CEO of DCC and a graduate of LAU, the internship was opened to LAU university students instead.

"Our experience with Yabroudi helped make the internship what it was," says Chris Hasbany, one of the participants. "From the first day, he knew our names, even before seeing us, and came every day to our offices to check on every one of us."

Hasbany adds, "We came to Dubai as six LAU classmates, but now we are leaving as 12 brothers and sisters."



Faculty Profile

Breaking into the Boys' Club

Pierrette Zouein shatters engineering's glass ceiling

By Curtis Brown



"Young women are raised to think this profession would not suit them, but those who pursue it anyway are performing brilliantly."

—Dr. Pierrette Zouein

"If you do not look nerdy enough in this field, people will judge you. You have to overcome first impressions."

Dr. Pierrette Zouein, associate professor and chair of the Department of Industrial & Mechanical Engineering, most emphatically does not look like a nerd. She is bright-eyed, witty and animated, and speaks about her field with passion and persuasiveness.

Indeed whatever image or stereotype one has of engineers, Zouein pretty much defies it. As an undergraduate at AUB in the 1980s, she was the only woman among a hundred-plus fellow majors — "professors used to begin class by saying 'Good morning, lady and gentlemen,'" she dryly recalls— and later became the first and only woman faculty member in LAU's School of Engineering (today she is one of several).

The preconception she most starkly defies, however, may be that of engineers as earthbound pragmatic types drawn to the field for its job prospects rather than lured there by the muses. For Zouein, engineering was less a career choice than a calling.

As with artists, that calling began to sound in her early youth.

"As a child I had always admired tall, imposing buildings," she remembers. "I wanted to know how they came about."

Mathematics became a lifelong muse, one that, in her words, "changed the way I think." Indeed, after receiving her bachelor's degree in civil engineering, she found herself not intellectually challenged enough. As she set her sights on graduate school, she switched to industrial engineering, a field that relies more heavily on applied mathematics.

Her father was having none of it. For a daughter to head for America to become an engineer made about as much sense as a son heading to Paris to become a poet: it was romantic nonsense, the folly of youth.

"He was working abroad at the time, and used to call every day asking 'why engineering?!' He pictured me on construction sites in a hard hat. He tried every incentive to dissuade me. But I was determined." She went on to receive her Ph.D. in construction engineering and management and her MS in industrial engineering from the University of Michigan.

Zouein swiftly made her mark in the field, both in academia and the industry. She worked as a consultant for Ford and other major manufacturers, and was soon recruited for a tenure-track assistant professorship at the University of Maryland.

Less than a year into that job, Zouein saw an announcement for a position at LAU.

"You always dream of going back home," she remembers. "When I knew that LAU was recruiting faculty members, I applied."

Zouein joined LAU in 1996 as an assistant professor, became associate professor with limited tenure in 2002, and department chair in 2006. She has professionally excelled in her time at LAU, researching, publishing, and developing a specialization in matters related to the airline industry.

Regarding the predominance of males in her field, Zouein says the problem is not bias within the profession so much as unconscious discouragement in a student's early years.

"They are told or raised to think this profession would not suit them," she says, but those who decide to pursue it anyway "mingle well with their classmates and perform brilliantly." She suggests, moreover, that while young men are often steered into engineering, many young women are joining of their own volition — out of a love for it.

"The field is changing because of them," Zouein says, "and the perception of engineering as a male bastion is steadily fading away."

Taxing at the Top

There are both practical and ethical reasons to raise taxes on the wealthy, says Dr. Rima Turk Ariss



Would you believe the wealthiest people in the world are asking for an increase in their taxes?

American multimillionaire Warren Buffet recently complained about the U.S. government's decision to extend tax breaks, and pointed out that he pays a lower average tax rate than his secretary. Similarly, the president of the association of private enterprises in France and other wealthy individuals, volunteered to assist their government in reducing the rising public debt, after President Sarkozy set a ceiling for tax payments. In Germany, 21 of the country's richest people asked for a tax increase on their assets in the pursuit of social justice; Chancellor Merkel, however, did not respond to their request.

Meanwhile, Western governments' responses to the sovereign debt crises have varied. In Italy and France, recent austerity plans raised a 3 percent tax surcharge on individuals earning more than €500,000 and €300,000, respectively. In the U.S., the Obama administration's debt restructuring plan has effectively called for tax hikes for the wealthy and corporations, while in Britain, the Labour Party has maintained a 50 percent top tax rate on incomes exceeding £150,000.

Attempts by high-income individuals to help restore the soundness of their nations' fiscal policies and economies are in keeping with a fundamental concept in environmental economics: the "Polluter Pays Principle" (PPP). Indeed, one of the rationales for higher taxes on the wealthy is that this segment of society—the "polluters"—benefited most from the increased globalization and financial liberalization of the past decade. Another reason is the finance industry's role in the global financial crisis.

However, the PPP has hardly governed many recent policy decisions. The U.S. Federal Reserve contradicted this principle in its response to the financial meltdown when it did not penalize the "too big to fail" financial conglomerates (the main polluters) for engaging in overly risky practices to raise profits. Fears of systemic risk and the meltdown of the financial system have, in

effect, rewarded polluters for excessive risk-taking with an explicit government guarantee that they will not be allowed to fail.

In the end, it was taxpayers who absorbed the losses: Citigroup received \$2.5 trillion in taxpayers' money; Morgan Stanley got \$2 trillion; Merrill Lynch, which was acquired by Bank of America, received \$1.9 trillion, while the latter landed a \$1.3 trillion bailout. U.S. monetary authorities further violated the PPP by extending taxpayers' funds to non-U.S. institutions, including Britain's Barclays and Royal Bank of Scotland, Germany's Deutsche Bank and Dresdner Bank, Switzerland's Credit Suisse and UBS, France's Société Générale and BNP Paribas, and Belgium's Dexia. This took place without any monitoring or supervision by domestic authorities.

The global crisis has raised questions about the role of financial intermediaries, and about the viability of their business models. It has also led to serious concerns about soaring leverage at the individual, business, and national levels. Since the establishment of the U.S. Federal Reserve in 1913, the concept of money has evolved to become synonymous with debt, which is created by a simple accounting entry with no material counterpart. By creating money (or debt) out of thin air, the value of the U.S. dollar has dramatically depreciated over the past century, hurting fixed-income earners, especially retirees. Nonetheless, the government benefited the most from the implicit inflation tax that resulted from these new debt entries, and which effectively represents a pillar of the U.S. monetary system.

The question remains: Will we witness a day when the wealthiest people in our country ask the government to increase their taxes, not only to trim our escalating public debt and restore confidence in fiscal policies, but also to reduce mounting social inequalities?

Ariss is an associate professor of finance at the LAU school of business.

Faculty Profile

The Greening of the Field

Salpie Djoundourian expands the discipline of environmental economics

By Curtis Brown



“People are finally identifying environmental problems as a central economic issue to tackle in the region.”

—Dr. Salpie Djoundourian

If you ask Dr. Salpie Djoundourian — associate professor and assistant dean at the School of Business, and a widely published economist — about the role gender plays on the career track of a male-dominated field like hers, she responds first with a flash of impatience, then in the hard-headed, unsentimental terms of her chosen discipline.

“Male, female — there’s no difference. The difference lies in choices made. Let’s say a faculty member gets married, has kids and takes care of the kids. These are choices she makes. There’s an opportunity cost and she knows it. She may not be able to publish as much in the same time period as a male counterpart, but she’ll be able to catch up given enough time. It’s a time-value question and a productivity question. When judging performance, one evaluates productivity, not gender. At least this has been my experience at LAU.”

Djoundourian is an economist down to her very bones. Both charming and tough-minded, she thinks and speaks — whether the topic at hand is her economics courses, the reconstruction efforts in South Lebanon, or her cultural impressions on a return visit to her ancestral homeland of Armenia — with continual reference to the quantifiable and empirical.

This doesn’t for a moment mean that her work is only technical and statistical, or eschews ethical or big-picture issues. On the contrary, Djoundourian has made her most lasting mark in the biggest-picture issue of all: the environment.

Djoundourian’s doctoral dissertation — researched and written in the early 1990s — focused on the geographical distribution and environmental control behavior of polluting firms in Louisiana, revealing that both were systematically related to the socioeconomic and racial characteristics of communities. Her research — which demonstrated unequivocally that the state’s poor people and minorities were subjected to disproportionate levels of environmental risk — has since been used in courts as evidence of the state’s lack of siting equity.

A native of Lebanon, Djoundourian received her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Louisiana State University. After receiving her PhD in 1993, she returned to Lebanon and joined LAU as one of the founding faculty of the economics program in the School of Business in Byblos.

“If environmental economics was still a new discipline internationally in those years, in Lebanon it was virtually unheard of,” she recalls.

What a difference 20 years makes. With the country facing myriad and grave environmental and economic challenges, economists with Djoundourian’s expertise are more in demand than ever before.

She has published widely over the last decade, on topics ranging from environmental degradation and its impact on health to the evolution of the environmental movement in Lebanon. She recently published a comparative analysis of environmental policy and performance across the Middle East and North Africa.

“It’s interesting that people are finally identifying environmental problems as a central economic issue to tackle in the region,” she says.

Djoundourian is indeed finding herself busier than ever. She has been working as a consultant for both the private and public sectors. Her most recent work on the Beneficiary Assessment Project, funded by the World Bank for the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities, focuses on the impact of post-2006 reconstruction efforts on local communities.

She recently received an invitation to participate in a workshop on environmental challenges in MENA, as part of an initiative aiming to enhance the quality of economic research and reform efforts in the region.

“My hands are full, and I have no complaints,” she says crisply.



Homemakers to Moneymakers

Arab women's long struggle for education and influence

By Muriel Kahwagi





Now that more women are graduating from universities with bachelor's or advanced degrees and achieving influential positions in society, feminists and human rights activists may find it easier to sleep soundly at night, if only slightly. But these gains can make it easy to forget that the battle for equal access to schools and educational opportunities in the Arab world has been long, difficult — and ongoing.

Until women in the region started entering the school system just over a century and a half ago, they learned the basic skills of reading and writing at home, if at all. When, in some instances, women's education took place outside the home, it was typically at a religious institution, most commonly a mosque. Young women of varying religious beliefs would gather at mosques to study the Quran, considered not only a religious guide but also an ideal text for practicing reading, comprehension, reciting and penmanship, and for the more advanced study of literary and philosophical meaning.

Beyond reading and writing, however, young women were primarily exposed to one skill: housewifery. From an early age, they learned how to cook, clean, sew and care for the sick, as well as for their future children and husbands. Very little was expected of women apart from succeeding as wives and mothers and performing the typical housewifely duties.

When the American missionaries arrived on the scene in the 1830s, converting local populations to Christianity was not the only goal on their colonial agenda. According to Dr. Nadya Sbaiti, assistant professor of history at Smith and Mt. Holyoke colleges in Massachusetts, the missionaries planned on instructing young Arab women in home economics.

But as it turned out, the missionaries were not really teaching anything new; these young women were already adept at cooking, cleaning and sewing. The ultimate importance of the missionary education, however, lay in the eventual introduction of the school as an institution, which created new opportunities for girls to receive an education outside their homes.

Without the establishment of schools, far fewer girls would have had the chance to leave their homes for the sole purpose of learning. The creation of these new spaces played a key role, more crucial than the specific lessons learned, notes Sbaiti.

19th-century missionaries convinced families to let their daughters study away from home by tailoring schools to local communities, and emphasizing single-sex education

While the attempt to make young women's education as culturally relevant as possible meant that the missionary schools mainly reinforced the teaching of housewifery skills, inflicting more social transformation at the time would not necessarily have generated beneficial effects, adds Sbaiti. The introduction of schools had already represented a sweeping societal change, one that took time to absorb.

Convincing young women and their families of the value of leaving home to study at a school was no easy feat. One way the missionaries succeeded was by emphasizing that the new educational institutions would be girls-only spaces. Another tactic

was to adapt the schools to the communities. Thus, virtually all education took place in Arabic. This helped to establish trust between the missionaries and the local populations.

Even though, as part of their colonial program, the missionaries also taught these young women English, when they first approached the communities, they did so in the native language, a move that yielded results and that missionaries elsewhere often overlooked.

Other changes in the educational system were slow to manifest. For instance, it wasn't until after World War II that co-ed schools began to flourish around the world.

"Sometimes the reasons for historical changes can be very simple," Sbaiti points out, citing economic difficulties as one of the grounds for eventually merging girls-only and boys-only schools.

According to Sbaiti, these shifts didn't take effect in Lebanon and the region until decades after World War II, starting in the 1960s. Beirut College for Women (BCW), a former incarnation of LAU, is also guilty of going co-ed later, in 1973. But the university had an unusual trajectory: Up until the 1960s, BCW was known as the foremost institution of higher education for young women in the Middle East.

"Many daughters of princes and kings attended BCW because it was considered to be a better environment for young women of conservative families to pursue higher education, especially when compared with North America," says Dr. Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, director of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) at LAU Beirut.

The rise in technological innovation has reinforced the idea that the sciences are more relevant than the humanities.

In spite of its co-ed student population, LAU nowadays remains faithful to the mission of its predecessor, and to the longstanding commitment to empowering women. This aim is reflected not just in the classroom but also at the administrative level: Two out of the past five university presidents have been women.

Though LAU is no longer a single-sex institution, it has a long history of being sensitive to women's issues," Dabbous-Sensenig says. "This makes LAU unique.

Even though women's education in Lebanon and the region has expanded and diversified significantly since the missionary days, some outdated perceptions remain. For instance, the humanities are still more closely associated with women than with men, perhaps a remnant of the early 19th Century, when girls who enrolled in primary Quranic studies were trained to examine the literary and philosophical components of the religious text. The opposite phenomenon prevails with the sciences: The field is usually associated with men.

Both stereotypes are somewhat ironic: More men than women have found fame in the humanities in recent centuries, with influential thinkers such as Freud, Kant and Shakespeare rising to prominence in psychology, philosophy and literature, respectively. The focus on these prominent male figures is arguably due to the fact that most high-profile historians have been men, but nonetheless the irony remains. In the meantime, more women are pursuing higher education and careers in the sciences instead of the humanities.

This shift has, for better or worse, been deemed positive, even though many of the reasons for the movement toward the sciences have to do with economics.

Post-World War II, the growth of capitalism, in addition to rising class inequalities and an increased enlightenment on social issues, contributed to the increase in professionalization, as well as to job creation and segmentation, notes Sbaiti.





Income expectations came to play a key role in the social valuation of certain professions over others. The rise in technological innovations seemed to reinforce the idea that the sciences were more relevant than the humanities. Since certain related fields such as business, economics, law and medicine also led to greater income and social status, they were also considered “valuable,” Sbaiti adds.

As the humanities became less associated with affluence, students choosing to pursue those fields have had to face the question: “How are you going to make a living out of it?”

Once dominated by men, the humanities increasingly became a taboo subject of study for men. Humanities fields were deemed “unnecessary” if they did not lead to generous remunerations.

But, says Sbaiti, “if there was more funding to the humanities, this would not be the case.”

Certain other career paths have also been categorized by gender, consciously or not. Most people think of butchers or taxi drivers, for instance, as primarily men, and as secretaries or domestic workers as generally women — associations that have more to do with historical patterns than with an innate sexism, according to Sbaiti.

But nowadays, certain prestigious career paths —pursued by both genders — are associated with skills typically relegated to the domestic sphere and to women. Many of the world’s most renowned chefs and fashion designers, for instance, are men, even while the precursors to these professions are cooking and sewing.

Meanwhile, women are rising to greater prominence in the scientific fields, especially in the health-care system. Nursing and dietetics, for example, are mostly female-dominated domains, the professionalized versions of the traditional housewifely tasks of caretaking and feeding. These positions don’t just hold greater social status than their corresponding domestic skills; they’re also considered crucial in the health-care field.

Progress in defeating gender stereotypes comes down to the question of choice, notes Sbaiti. Any housework task performed by women — or men — loses its stigma as long as it is pursued by choice, which often means outside the home and under the umbrella of a certain profession.

As career opportunities continue to expand and lose their outdated gender associations, women are entering an unprecedented number of fields, and occupying significantly more high-end positions today than they did even just two decades ago. These changes have, inevitably, faced a certain amount of resistance. In recent years, some hiring committees have been criticized for relying on gender quotas to appoint women to certain high-level positions. But these attempts to rectify historical sexism in the workplace do not negate the fact that educated and ambitious women are as qualified as their male competitors for influential positions, even if in some cases their rivals have a longer C.V.

Appearances can be deceiving, and can serve to reinforce gender disparities: “Let’s not forget,” says Sbaiti, “that men could potentially have had more opportunities, thus leading them to be more experienced and qualified.” 🧩





LAU Now Smoke-Free

Smoking is strictly prohibited on both campuses

As LAU's returning and freshly matriculated students started their classes on September 26, the university had more to celebrate than the inauguration of the new school year: the implementation of a smoke-free policy on both campuses.

LAU announced its Smoke-Free Campus Initiative on July 25, becoming "one university with two non-smoking campuses."

LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra urged faculty members, staff and students to work together in order to make sure the new motto is implemented.

"I extend my gratitude to all those who worked very hard to bring to reality our long-standing aspiration to convert both campuses into non-smoking campuses," Jabbra said.

With the exception of a small designated area at LAU Beirut, smoking is now prohibited on both campuses. Students who fail to abide the regulation will receive a disciplinary warning.

According to Dr. Raed Mohsen, dean of students at LAU Beirut, students who get caught smoking on campus twice will lose their financial aid. If caught three times, they will be suspended.

The university had prohibited smoking inside buildings a few years ago. But until the summer of 2011, smoking was allowed in open spaces on campus.

Earlier this year, the Smoke-Free Campus initiative was re-addressed, and on April 21, the Student-Staff-Faculty Forum (SSFF) held a panel on "The Need for a Smoke-Free Campus."

The panel included four students and four faculty or staff members on both sides of the issue. Eventually the smoke-free argument won.

Throughout the summer semester, there were a few designated areas on campus where smoking was allowed.

From the beginning of the fall semester through early November, the smoking ban was total. Due to concerns about

growing congestion near upper gate, however, university officials designated a small smoking area between the main Beirut campus and the library.

LAU Byblos joined LAU Beirut in instituting the smoking ban, even though the Byblos campus is larger.

In the first week of the semester, says Dr. Mars Semaan, dean of students at LAU Byblos, "students were not used to abiding by such 'severe' guidelines." But, he adds, "by the end of the second week, we were at almost 98 percent compliance."

"With the School of Medicine and the School of Nursing prospering, we are communicating a healthy message to the LAU community," adds Mohsen, noting that secondhand smoking is as harmful as smoking.

"It's about conveying a message of civilization, which means that we have to respect other people's right not to smoke," he says.

Students had varying reactions. Issam Souki, a business marketing student at LAU Beirut and a smoker, says, "The newly implemented smoke-free policy is very advantageous to students who don't smoke." But when the weather worsens, he notes, "it won't be convenient at all to smoke outside under the rain."

Non-smoking signs on the campuses emphasize the new initiative. Those who wish to smoke may now do so in the designated area or off-campus.

Asked how he was holding up under the new regulation, Brian Prescott-Decie, an instructor of English and cultural studies and a regular smoker, says he "didn't mind it at all."

"If it gets me to walk a few extra paces each day, and perhaps even smoke a little less, that can't hurt," he explains. "And if it does the same for the younger generation, even better. I support it."

Leading by Example

Grant program attracts the region's star students to LAU

By Muriel Kahwagi



For the third year in a row, outstanding pupils from the Middle East and North Africa have won four-year grants to pursue full degree programs at LAU.

The scholarships are available thanks to the Tomorrow's Leaders program of LAU-MEPI (Middle East Partnership Initiative), aimed at students who show strong leadership skills but who may otherwise miss out on the chance to study in an American-style educational system.

Since September 2008, 55 students from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen have received grants from the program.

Program Director Walid Touma explains that the scholarship initiative continues to grow, and the "team is making the program better every year, topping the achievements of the previous year."

The grant recipients can choose from a wide array of fields to study, from journalism, architecture, education and psychology to biology, engineering, pharmacy, nutrition, interior design and business.

"This program prepares us to face the world with leading spirits and improve our own communities," says Sabri Bezzazi, a Tunisian grant recipient.

Since LAU has a historical commitment to providing a strong education for women and advancing their position in the region, two-thirds of those receiving grants are female.

Rana Qudairi, a Palestinian student who received one of the grants and enrolled at LAU, lauds the program's celebration of women.

"What's so unique about this program is that it's not just a merit scholarship that is based on academic status," she notes. "It's also designed to develop us as leaders in our society in whatever career we choose, with no limits, specifically as women in the Middle East."

Besides offering a high-quality education to participants, the program aims to empower youth, increase political participation, and create civic-minded achievers who will become the community, business and national leaders of the future.

"I particularly enjoyed the civic engagement we engaged in throughout the program," says Joud Zaumot, who joined the program from Jordan. "We had the chance to interact with people from different backgrounds, and we learned so much from it. It was a very enriching experience."

Funded jointly by the U.S. Department of State and LAU, the program helps selected students take on the challenges facing their countries upon their return.

"MEPI Tomorrow's Leaders program resonates so well with LAU's mission to provide young and qualified people from the region with higher education that is second to none, and make the world a better place for future generations," says LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara.

Attending classes and passing exams are not all students are expected to do. Tomorrow's Leaders participants are also encouraged to undertake an intensive program of internships and leadership seminars. They also have the opportunity to study abroad in the U.S. for one semester.

"The ultimate goal of the program is to bring out the leader in every student," explains Program Academic Coordinator Loulwa Kaloyeros. "The task is not easy, as each student comes from a different culture and family and has a different set of expectations and beliefs."

Managing the program is a continuous exercise in adaptation, Touma adds, and everyone involved is constantly learning how to overcome challenges and enrich the participants' experiences.

Vice President of Student Development and Enrollment Management Elise Salem expressed her pride in the dedication and courage of the grant recipients. "The MEPI students at LAU," she says, "are transforming before our very eyes into capable young men and women who will be positive leaders in the region."



Board of Trustees

Sky's the limit for LAU Board of Trustees chairman



Dr. Charles Elachi, chairman of LAU's Board of Trustees and director of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, was inducted into the French Legion of Honor on September 6. The ceremony took place at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), where he is vice president and professor of electrical engineering and planetary science.

Elachi received the award from François Delattre, Ambassador of France to the United States, in the presence of Caltech President Jean-Lou Chameau.

The French Legion traditionally awards this honor to natives of France, but occasionally bestows it upon foreign nationals who have served France or its ideals.

"Throughout my career, I collaborated closely with various French scientists, as well as the French Space Agency," says

Elachi, adding that he greatly admires the French language and culture.

Dedicating the honor to his parents, Elachi explained that, "even though they did not even benefit from high school education, they put a lot of emphasis on educating their children and encouraged us to reach for the stars."

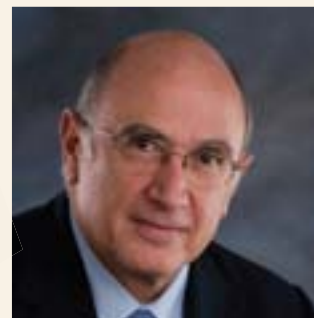
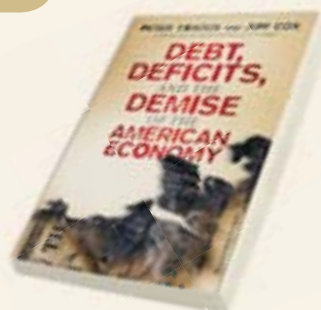
Though he never actually reached the stars himself, Elachi has helped others do so as director of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which serves as a NASA field center to launch many of America's satellites and conduct numerous space-exploration missions.

Elachi is currently the vice president of Caltech, where he also earned a doctorate in electrical sciences in 1971. He has been the chairman of LAU's Board of Trustees since 2009.

How to Survive the Economic Crisis

Advice from finance expert and LAU trustee's new book

By Greg Houle



"Not very cheerful" is how Peter Tanous described the global economic outlook when he sat down to talk about his new book *Debt, Deficits, and the Demise of the American Economy* (published by Wiley), co-authored with financial journalist Jeff Cox.

Tanous, president of Lepercq Lynx Investment Advisory and a resident of Washington, D.C., and New York City, has spent his four-decade career in finance and money management and authored numerous critically acclaimed books.

"With this book we wanted to take a look at the financial troubles taking place in Europe, and examine how they would reverberate in the United States and throughout the world," says Tanous, who is of Lebanese heritage and has served on LAU's Board of Trustees for many years.

In the book Tanous and Cox predict that Greece will, in fact, default, and that this development, along with other global financial burdens, will continue to drag down the world's economy. They expect stocks to fall sharply in the near term and interest rates and inflation to rise — a rough prognosis.

"In the United States we've been stuck with very high unemployment, coupled with very slow growth and extremely high deficits," Tanous says, adding that this "has us mired in a quagmire."

So what can we do to get out of this mess? "Two-thirds of the American economy is fueled by consumer spending," Tanous says. "So we need to figure out how to get the consumer to spend."

The Obama administration's stimulus package was an important step, Tanous explains, but it hasn't done enough to increase consumer confidence and spending. He suggests that the U.S. shift the source of its tax revenue from incomes to consumption by instituting a value added tax (VAT). While a VAT is a more regressive tax than the U.S. income tax — and Tanous concedes that provisions would have to be made to protect the poor from being overburdened — it would give consumers more money to spend.

Tanous also has advice for individual investors. With most mature economies stagnating, he believes the real growth will come from the two most populous nations, China and India, whose emerging economies will fuel massive growth in oil, timber, gold and other commodities. Tanous advises individuals to add these commodities to their portfolios.

"Portfolios really can't look like they did 10 years ago," he warns. "Stocks are riskier than most people thought they were in the recent past."

Atalanta's Avatars

Women Athletes Hit their Stride at LAU

By Muriel Kahwagi



In the fall of 1994, the women's basketball team at LAU comprised no more than six players, the minimum number needed for a basketball team to compete. Throughout that year, the team played a total of seven games, making its debut a rather humble one.

Today, at any given time, the women's basketball team has double the number of players it did 18 years ago.

It is no secret, however, that the team faced fairly low expectations back then. Basketball, tennis, table tennis, swimming and volleyball were the only sports available at the time, so women did not have as many chances to succeed in athletics.

But to say that the women's sports teams have evolved since then would be a grave understatement.

"We had a shortage of female players back in 1994, but the main problem was to get them all together and actually play," says Sami Garabedian, director of athletics at LAU Beirut.

The Byblos campus, in spite of its relative novelty, also had a rocky start when it came to women's athletics, but the program has been blossoming rapidly since then.

"Four years ago, we only had a women's basketball team. Now, we have a women's

futsal team and a women's volleyball team, in addition to basketball," says Joe Moujaes, director of athletics at LAU Byblos.

Although the women's sports teams at LAU have been around for at least 30 years, they started thriving in the mid-1990s — slowly, but surely.

The numbers now speak for themselves.

Out of the 187 athletes on LAU's varsity teams, 60 are women — roughly a third of the total varsity athletes at the university. And in addition to the sports women could participate in 18 years ago, they can now also partake in the football/futsal, taekwondo, kickboxing, and track and field teams.

All athletes at LAU, especially the women, are very hard-working, and we put a lot of focus on their academic performance as well," says Garabedian, adding that all players must maintain a GPA of 2.0 to remain qualified to play sports.

In order to attract incoming students with athletic talent to the university and the sports teams, LAU has offered athletic scholarships since the fall of 2010. The awards cover 15 percent of the tuition.

Last year, 10 students received athletic scholarships, and the number was evenly split between men and women. Two

additional athletic scholarships are reserved for students named Athlete of the Year.

"I believe that all universities have to give equal opportunities to men and women, especially in sports," says Garabedian. "LAU has this mindset, and we've been applying it when it comes to the athletic scholarships as well."

In the past year, the women's sports teams at LAU did not go unnoticed.

The futsal team participated in the women's futsal league and won the championship, while the women's basketball team came in second place in the international tournament in Germany.

Reine Alameh and Anastasya Kuvalina, two students who represented the LAU tennis team at the Federation Sportive Universitaire du Liban (FSUL), also won first and second place, respectively, at the tournament.

"We are continuously encouraging our female athletes to go to practices, enjoy their time on campus and participate in international tournaments," says Moujaes. He adds that the athletic department intends to recruit female athletes for its teams when LAU hosts its annual high school tournament.



On the Move

Good to the Bone

Dr. Rima Nasser, orthopedic surgeon, joins SOM and UMC – RH

Dr. Rima Nasser recently joined the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine as an assistant professor, as well as University Medical Center — Rizk Hospital as an orthopedic surgeon.

Nasser comes to LAU with a wealth of clinical experience, in particular with minimally invasive orthopedic procedures.

Raised in Lebanon during the war, Nasser left in 1989 to pursue her studies in the United States. She matriculated at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, and subsequently received her M.D. from Duke University Medical School in Durham.

After her residency, Nasser received certification from the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery and joined Northwestern University as a clinical instructor. She participated in medical missions in China and Ecuador with

Operation Walk (which treats debilitating bone and joint conditions in developing countries), as well as other volunteer work.

But even as Nasser's American career was peaking (she is listed on the "honor roll" of several U.S. assessment agencies) she longed to return to Lebanon, where she felt she could make a difference. "I was uneasy about not doing much for my country," she recalls.

Nasser says her career goals steered her to LAU.

"I wanted to be part of a new institution breaking the mold," she explains. "The energy of the dean and staff convinced me that this is a place where one could seek excellence and thrive," she added.

Nasser looks forward to setting an example for young female medical students, demonstrating that orthopedic surgery is a viable option.



"I think many might be interested in a surgical specialty, but have shied away because of the social implications," she says.

Nasser's expertise could make a difference anywhere. "But I choose to be here in Lebanon, at LAU," she states.

Moving On

News editor Nanor Karageozian leaves LAU to pursue Oxford D.Phil

Nanor Karageozian, a veteran of the Marketing and Communications Department's news team, left her position as senior web editor in September to pursue a doctorate in development studies at Oxford University.

Her master's degree thesis, completed in 2007, dealt with Armenia's diaspora policies, and she carried out much of the research there.

Stemming from that work, her dissertation proposal at Oxford focuses on the voluntary repatriation movement in Armenia since its independence in the post-Soviet period.

Karageozian graduated from Haigazian University in 2003 with the highest grades in the university's history. She went on to receive her master's in public administration from AUB in 2007.

She joined LAU at the end of 2007, when MarCom was still a fledgling department. She wrote, edited, reviewed and updated content for LAU websites, and over time took charge of the then-nascent online news section.

Karageozian is very highly regarded by her former colleagues for her editorial finesse, perfectionism, and mastery of the university's history.

"Nanor was both the public face of — and the brain behind — the news section on the web," says Peggy Hanna, assistant vice president of MarCom. "Those of us who have worked with Nanor regret her departure, but are thrilled to see her seize this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

Karageozian was beloved at MarCom not only for her professionalism but for her wit, modesty and intelligence. "She



has this amazing command of detail, and will make a superb scholar," says Curtis Brown, the department's managing editor.

Hanna concurs. "Our loss is Oxford's gain," she sighs.

Staff Profile

Anita Nassar

A career spent championing women's rights and education

By Emily Morris



If anyone embodies LAU's legacy as an institution committed to the education and empowerment of women, it is Anita Nassar.

Nassar has been connected to the university for almost 50 years, as a student, alumna and staff member. Since she first stepped through Lower Gate in 1965 as an undergraduate at what was then BCW, Nassar jokes that she has spent more collective hours at LAU than she ever did with her parents, and later, her own family.

Of course this isn't really the case — anyone who knows Nassar knows she is a dedicated mother and grandmother — but even as she gets ready for retirement, LAU's resident dynamo shows no signs of slowing down.

Most people know her best through her work as assistant director of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), with which she has been involved since its inception in 1973, and formally since 1985.

"Had it not been for Anita, IWSAW would not be what it is today," says Dr. Mona Khalaf, the institute's director from 1997 to 2005. "Her dedication, faithfulness and zeal have been very instrumental in ensuring the sustainable development of the institute."

Adds LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara: "Anita has contributed to the development and success of IWSAW by choosing noble women's causes and finding the means to support said causes; promoting knowledge about and defending fiercely women's rights; and by giving so generously of her time so that the institute may continuously thrive."

Myriam Sfeir, managing editor of IWSAW's journal *Al-Raida*, agrees. "When you say IWSAW, you immediately think of Anita Farah Nassar. Her contributions to the institute are endless."

Nassar has impacted the lives of countless women— from training semi-literate and illiterate women in living skills,

to working on income-generating activities with vulnerable women displaced during the civil war, to advocating for humane conditions in women's prisons, to calling attention to the plight of foreign domestic workers.

"Sometimes I get so emotional when I think about all the women I've met along the way," says Nassar. "I remember one who said, 'I took vocational skills with you a while back. Guess what? I was able to buy a house of my own, and my children are with me.' Or I think of the women in prisons. When I first meet them, they are devastated and alone, but we provide them with psychological help, legal representation, give them a link with their children, etc. It's a totally new situation for them. They once had no hope, but now, well," she trails off, smiling.

As if the institute doesn't keep her busy enough, Nassar is also a part-time instructor of children's literature at LAU. But she's not complaining — teaching is her first love. She received her B.A. and M.A. in education from the university, in 1969 and 2004, respectively.

Those who have worked with Anita praise her humility, humor and commitment to excellence.

"I have to admit it is challenging to work with Anita, because she pays great attention to details in all aspects, but in return one expects a most remarkable and first-class outcome," says Asma Kurdahi of UNFPA Lebanon, who has worked on numerous projects with Nassar.

"It is very hard to believe that Anita, one of the founders of IWSAW, will leave LAU," adds Nada Badran, director of admissions at LAU Beirut, emphasizing Nassar's "professional knowledge, sincerity, dedication and her passion."

With her track record, however, there's no doubt Nassar will stay connected in some way long after her retirement.

Donor Profiles



Adonis El Fakih

Bringing education within reach of the underprivileged

"What you do with your knowledge is much more important than your knowledge itself," says Adonis El Fakih, a supporter and friend of LAU, who credits the university with playing a key role in providing academic excellence in the region.

"LAU is a pioneer in education in Lebanon and the Arab world, as it offers solid academic support to its students, while preparing them for their future careers to later become key figures in Lebanon and abroad," he adds.

El Fakih himself is a pioneer in his field. Holding an M.B.A. as well as a B.S. in aerospace engineering, he is the CEO of AYNA Corporation, the first Arabic search engine serving Arabic-speaking people of the Middle East and North Africa region. The company has introduced Agility Concept, based on Scrum Practices, to Lebanon and the Arab world, with the specific aim of addressing complexity in the software industry.

Over the past few years, thanks to El Fakih's generous donations to various LAU grants and programs, financially needy students have been given the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education. El Fakih established the AYNA Corporation Designated Scholarship grant in 2008 and sponsored the Lebanese Collegiate Programming Contests (LCPC), which allow bright students from different universities across Lebanon to compete and prove their programming skills. LAU hosted the event in 2009 and 2010.

El Fakih advises students that entrepreneurship and assertiveness are vital to success in today's world, and reminds graduates to always carry around the thirst for knowledge and the spirit of fair play they learned during their years of study at LAU.



Nadia Moukaddem

A loyal BCW graduate gives back

Nadia Moukaddem ('50) remembers her days at BCW as "the best."

In the years since she graduated from the college, a former incarnation of LAU, she has become a loyal supporter. In 2008, she donated to LAU's general fund for student financial aid support, and in 2009 she named a seat at Irwin Hall on the Beirut campus. In the near future, she and her grandchildren — LAU students and graduates who share Moukaddem's belief in the university's mission — also plan to name an entity at the university after her late husband Mohammad, a well-known businessman in the north of Lebanon.

According to Moukaddem's daughter Nouha, her father accomplished so much in his professional and personal life thanks to her mother. "She is my greatest gift, he would always say," recalls Nouha. "I am honored to have such parents and hope to accomplish as much as they have."

"BCW, which I consider home, has given me wonderful opportunities and helped me chart the course of my future," says Moukaddem, who now lives in Tripoli with her family. "The overall educational experience, in addition to the excellent professors who taught us back then, played a major role in the development of my personality."

She adds, "I can say that giving back to my alma mater is one of the greatest achievements of my life."

"My mom has always told me to make the most of education and lead the way with it, because to be educated is the path to enlightenment," says Nouha Moukaddem.

Op-Ed: Arab Spring Migration

Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss traces the impact of political upheaval on population movements

Beginning with the protests in Tunisia last December, followed by the revolution in Cairo, the violent conflict in Libya and Yemen, and the small but steady protests in Syria, the Arab world has entered a period of significant flux. Whether we will see a significant, enduring political and economic shift away from stagnant, authoritarian regimes is still unknown, but there is no doubt that dynamics once thought nearly immutable have changed. Amid the euphoria, anxiety, and speculation elicited by the so-called Arab Spring, one such dynamic — migration in the Arab world — has received relatively scant attention.

A shared language and culture has meant that permanent and temporary migration has long been characteristic of the region. There have been ebbs and flows, however, depending on political, economic, environmental, religious and other factors. The Arab Spring has already affected long-established migration dynamics, and may come to represent a major regional turning point.

Governments across the Arab world have long incentivized emigration, not only welcoming the economic boost from remittances but also counting on a safety-valve effect, a lessening of political demands from the population. That this compact has never worked well is not news, but the increasing insistence on the part of youths and others for both economic growth and greater political participation has contributed significantly to the Arab Spring's momentum. Research demonstrates that migration is both economically and politically motivated. If changes for the better are not enacted in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Algeria, and others, migration may increase well beyond what it is today — and what it is today is no small thing: according to recent data gathered by the Migration Study Centre at the European University Institute, 20 million nationals from Arab states currently live outside their countries of origin.

In light of ongoing regional economic challenges, continued fighting in Libya, Syria and Yemen, dramatic (though largely peaceful) changes in Tunisia and Egypt, and external factors such as the renewed financial downturn worldwide, it is likely that migration will continue unabated or even increase. But it won't just be the migration that we have become accustomed to. Decades-old migration patterns — such as those of circular migration of Lebanese skilled labor (engineers, for example) to the Gulf — have already changed due to financial problems that began in 2008. We have already begun to witness more out-migration from Libya, Egypt and Tunisia due to uncertain political climates and poor economies.

Of particular concern to Lebanon, with violence continuing in Syria but the future still highly fluid, we will probably see more out-migration from the country, especially at the lower skilled worker level, and we may see entire families migrating. In addition to the vast sums of money that have already been transferred out of Syria by the wealthy, we may yet see the actual migration of the Syrian elite, depending on how internal politics in the country shake out.

This list could clearly go on—what about Iraq, for example? But this is precisely the point: the Arab World is in flux. While the physical migration of people will not match the almost effortless border crossings of social media and television, which brought the events of Tahrir Square and the bloodshed in Sana'a into our homes, individuals are on the move in the Arab world, and the region's elites — political, economic, cultural and religious — need first to understand why, and then more seriously to address the concerns of the region's 400+ million inhabitants.

Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss, is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at LAU.



Egyptians making history during the Arab Spring

Remembered with Love



Nicolas G. Chammas, 1926 – 2011

Nicolas G. Chammas, co-owner of the Chammas Group of Companies (including Medco s.a.l. and Phoenicia Oil Company s.a.l.) and an active member of LAU's Board of International Advisors since 2007, passed away this summer.

Previously a member of LAU's Board of Overseers, and serving as a member of the University Medical Center-Rizk Hospital Advisory Council since March 2011, Chammas contributed indelibly to the LAU community.

Chammas got his first taste of the petroleum industry at the age of 16, when he went to work for his father, Georges N. Chammas, whose firm developed Gasoil distribution to bakeries in Greater Beirut. He later graduated from the Sacred-Heart French College with a degree in business administration.

For the next 60 years, Chammas and his brother and partner Raymond worked to expand their father's business, elevating the Chammas Group of Companies to its current position of national preeminence.

For his sharp wit, prodigious memory and avid love of details, Chammas was nicknamed "Dr. Google" by his colleagues. He provided the senior directors of the company with steadfast support, giving them advice when they needed it, and guiding them through difficult times.

Nicolas is survived by his wife, Abba, and their four children: Georges, Leslie, Carla and Maroun.



John H. Kelly, 1939 – 2011

In September, LAU marked the passing of one of its greatest friends and supporters, former American ambassador John Kelly. All those on the Board and in the university community wish to recall his years of service to LAU, his country and the Middle East through his championing of diplomacy.

Ambassador Kelly was a career diplomat, representing his country in Lebanon from 1986 to 1988, a difficult time to conduct diplomacy in the midst of the long-running civil war. He nevertheless proved capable enough in his service to rise through the ranks of the State Department, becoming an assistant secretary of state in 1989 (a rank he would hold four times during his long career) and the ambassador to Finland from 1991 to 1994.

Ambassador Kelly was a firm supporter of education as well as diplomacy. He was elected to LAU's Board of Trustees in 1996, where he served until 1999, then again from 2004 to 2007. At the end of his diplomatic career, Kelly served as professor at Georgia Tech's Sam Nunn School of International Affairs. In addition to his educational commitments, John remained active in global affairs as a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Middle East Institute and several other prominent international organizations. Kelly resigned from Board in 2010, when he was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia.

John is survived by his wife, Maritza, and their two children.

Student Profile



The masterminds behind the solar car

Lean Mean Solar Machine

By Muriel Kahwagi

Six students. Two months. One solar car.

Two months are often too little time for most people to learn how to drive. For 21-year-old LAU mechanical engineering student Karim Mrad, however, two months are enough to build a fully functional solar car. But it wasn't easy.

It all started around Christmas of 2010. Mrad and five of his colleagues (Fred Hatem, Mohamad Kamareddine, Guy Kosseify, Mario El Alam and Gebran Dabbak) conceptualized sketches of an eco-friendly automobile that could also serve as a common project for their engineering courses.

What started out as a rookie university project panned out — not just at LAU.

"The idea of building a fully functional solar car came from the belief and hope that one day, Lebanese people will understand the importance of having the sunlight some 300 days a year," says Mrad.

"We wanted to prove that we, as students, are able to develop a Lebanese-built car that solves several local issues, like high fuel prices and increasing pollution," he adds. "And the fact that we did it reveals that, when determined, we can do big things."

Although the brainstorming for the project had started in December, the actual design and assembly process didn't begin until March.

Throughout the first two weeks, the party of six, led by Mrad, teamed up for six hours every day after their classes, and devised the automobile plans on paper, determining how the car would function and designing its chassis and engine.

But the technical, on-paper stage was child's play compared to what would come next, according to Mrad.

For the next month and a half, the group worked 19 hours a day, building the solar car practically from scratch.

"Some of us skipped a lot of classes, but I stopped going to university altogether to focus on the car completely," says Mrad. "I dropped one course and failed another. I hardly passed the rest of my classes."

"It was a very exhausting time for all of us. We couldn't have done it if we weren't in this together," he adds, emphasizing the importance of group work. "I lost 10 kilograms by the time the car was complete!"

Mrad and his colleagues remained piously devoted to the project and refused to waste any time. They were determined to finish building the car in May, so they would have the chance to exhibit it at the Student Professional Development Conference taking place at the American University of Beirut.

Only three weeks prior to the conference, the group tested the car out for the very first time. Back then, it merely consisted of an aluminum chassis, an engine and wheels.

The final product was a much more evolved version of the prototype. Thanks to the solar panels installed within, the solar car functions as long as it is exposed to the sun. It also works in the absence of solar energy, and can run for up to five hours into the night.

The project won Mrad and the group third place among 28 Final Year Projects at the exhibition at AUB—a triumphant result of their forward-thinking vision and their tireless work.

But this is not the first time Mrad participates in an award-winning "green project."

Last year, he led a team that designed an autonomous waste sorter, which could sort 12 bottles made of glass, aluminum, plastic and metal in less than three minutes.

The waste sorter landed in first place in the Middle East as part of the annual student design competition of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME).

As of May 2011, Mrad is the chair of District J (representing the Middle East and Africa) of the Student District Operating Board.

On October 15 and 16, he will participate in a "Leadership Meeting" in Abu Dhabi, hosted by Khalifa University and organized by ASME, where he will train other student section chairs in how to run their own student sections.

Alumni Profile



Designing a dream

LAU alumna translates architectural education into TV fame and thriving business

By Emily Morris



Whether she's presenting a television show in major cities around the world, or designing her own contemporary furniture line, Roula Bahnam ('98) lives by the mantra that as long as you do something you enjoy, you will be successful.

While she was a student at LAU Byblos' School of Architecture and Design, Bahnam also made the time to host a music program on Future TV.

"I did that in parallel to taking classes," she recalls. "I'd present the program on Tuesday nights and then be discussing my final-year design project with a panel of professors on Wednesday. It was hectic, but I was having fun with this dual life."

After graduation, Bahnam ended up staying at Future TV for eight years before she was eventually approached by Abu Dhabi Al Oula TV to host a program called "DZN." From 2009 to 2011, the show would take her to different cities to interview famous architects, in an effort to bring architecture culture to a general Arab audience. She traveled to Berlin, Paris, Tokyo, Copenhagen, London, New York and other cities to meet with Christian de Portzamparc, Daniel Libeskind, Massimiliano Fuksas, Kathryn Findlay and Richard Rogers, among many other well-known names in the field.

"I felt like a little kid around those architects. It's kind of a dream come true to study these big names and their projects in university and then meet them in person," Bahnam says.

Dr. Elie Haddad, associate professor and assistant dean of the School of Architecture and Design at LAU Byblos, remembers Bahnam well, calling her someone who distinguished herself by always striving for excellence. "As an architecture student, she graduated at the top of her class. Later, she carried on this drive in the various jobs she undertook, which eventually led her to show business. But her passion for architecture did not

disappear, as she translated it into her TV series on famous architects," Haddad says.

Although she already had the architecture background, Bahnam credits professors like Haddad as well as a few of the elective courses she took at LAU (theater, for example) for strengthening her personality and giving her the push to be able to speak on live television in front of millions of viewers.

It's clear that Bahnam is one of those people who has always been comfortable enough in her own skin to try just about anything. She recently launched her own architecture and interior design company, called Mia Skamla, which features modern, sleek designs.

"Through the architecture show, I got to tour a lot of trendy hotels and restaurants, and it gave me a push to start something from my own perspective. I'm trying to design something that I currently don't see around me. I don't like to repeat; I like to invent," she says.

When asked what it's like to be a woman in a male-dominated field like architecture, Bahnam says that it has never been about "labels" for her.

"It was about doing something that I was passionate about, something I cared about and that ultimately ingrained a deep satisfaction within me," Bahnam explains. "It's not about labels (male versus female), but about transcending labels and doing the work."

She strongly urges young female graduates not to be intimidated by men in the field or to view gender as an obstacle.

"If anything," Bahnam says, "being a woman is not a limitation. It's an asset. Nowadays one doesn't have to sacrifice beauty for brains — women can be everything."

A Long Look Back

A pioneering abstractionist's 70-year career retrospective

By Linda Dahdah

The Beirut Exhibition Center hosted a retrospective of the long career of Saloua Raouda Choucair, the celebrated 95-year-old painter, sculptor and LAU alumna generally credited with introducing modern abstractionism to Middle Eastern art.

"Saloua Raouda Choucair: the Retrospective" featured some 380 of the artist's works, spanning seven decades. The show was curated by her daughter Hala Choucair Gharzeddine, in collaboration with the Agial Art Gallery, and ran from late September through mid-November.

From early paintings to more recent sculptures, the exhibition presented work from every phase of Choucair's career. It included sketches, photographs, rugs and other daily-use art pieces like jewelry and furniture.

The show was divided chronologically, with each section revealing a new wrinkle in the artist's evolving story, a new dimension of her vision. Throughout, Choucair's modernity and avant-gardism made decades-old pieces look timely, even timeless.

Work from every phase of Choucair's career shows an enduring fascination with science, philosophy, Islamic art and poetry.

"My mother was very creative, and highly optimistic about the modernity of Arab culture," says Gharzeddine. "She believed in progress and was very curious about science. She wanted her work to be a synthesis of all these elements".

According to Gharzeddine, Choucair defines her art as pure abstraction, but an abstraction inspired by Islamic art. "She was moved less by the visual aesthetics of Islamic art than by its desire to express the infinite and the indescribable, by its circles and lines and its use of mathematics," she says.

Choucair has used a large range of materials for her sculptures over the years, from wood to plexiglas, brass, ceramics and nylon threads. These she fashions rigorously into polished circles, spirals, waves and other geometrical shapes, sometimes fitted over each other in "duals" or "poems," visual traces of her meditation on — and fusion of — science and Arabic poetry.



Born in Beirut in 1916, Choucair graduated from American Junior College for Women (as LAU was then known) in 1936 with a degree in biology. She began her painting career in the studios of prominent Lebanese artist Mustafa Farroukh while still a student.

In an autobiographic article written in the early 1990s, Choucair described her college years with enthusiasm, recalling the publication of her caricatures — of classmates teachers, and other campus figures — in the annual *Trireme* publication and on the college's posters, which she designed.

"She loved her years at AJCW," says Gharzeddine. "She found an audience there who appreciated her style, who would laugh at her depictions."

Choucair went on to graduate school at the American University of Beirut, graduating with degrees in philosophy and Arabic sciences.

Her career led her thence to Paris, where she graduated from the *École des Beaux Arts* and worked with some of the most prominent artists of the time.

Choucair's last major exhibition was in 1974, when the Lebanese Ministry of Tourism displayed some 100 pieces in its glass exhibition hall in the Hamra area. The event marked the first time that gallery — the ministry's most prestigious — had showcased the work of a Lebanese artist.

"In her early career she was badly treated and at best ignored. She was bitter," Gharzeddine recalls, adding however that "later she was rewarded in many ways and she felt much better. She now lives blissfully."

Choucair has received several distinctions from the Ministry of National Education, and was awarded the highest national honor, the Cedar Decoration (Knight and Officer Grades).

In 1975 LAU (at that time BCW) honored Choucair by acquiring one of her sculptures and displaying it in the university gardens.

Alumni Events

August

Amman Chapter hosts annual Ramadan Night

LAU and AUB Alumni Chapters in Amman organized their annual Ramadan Night at the Amman West Hotel's Centro Ramadani on August 19, 2011. Alumni reconnected over card and board games, generous prizes, food and live entertainment.



Ghabqa Night brings Bahrain and Eastern Province chapters together

On August 11, 2011, alumni from the Bahrain and Eastern Province Chapters enjoyed musicians and games during Ghabqa Night, held at the Gulf Hotel Ramadan Tent in Manama, Bahrain.

First annual Souhour held in Saida

More than 200 alumni — plus their family and friends — from the Beirut Chapter gathered on August 27, 2011 at Saida's Rest House for the first annual Souhour.



School of Pharmacy Chapter meets for yearly Iftar dinner

Members of the School of Pharmacy Chapter came together on August 25, 2011 for an annual Iftar dinner at Leila Restaurant in Dbayeh. More than 70 alumni and friends attended the feast.



September

Over 100 alumni picnic in Toronto park

The Toronto LAU Alumni Chapter held a picnic on September 11, 2011 in Etobicoke Centennial Park. Around 110 people enjoyed delicious barbeque and traditional Lebanese food and the day featured fun activities for both adults and kids, including soccer games, a piñata, watermelon-eating contest, a raffle for prizes, and Oud music. LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra and Ed Shiner, director of Alumni and Special Projects in North America, were the guests of honor. Jabbra gave an update on recent LAU achievements and future development plans.



Montreal Chapter members toast to LAU at cocktail party

Over 65 alumni and friends attended a cocktail reception on September 9, 2011 organized by the Montreal Chapter at Bistro VU in Vieux Port. The event was held in part to honor Dr. Jabbra's visit to Montreal, Canada. Ed Shiner, director of Alumni and Special Projects in North America, was also in attendance.



Alumni office participates in the 2011 New Student Orientation Program

The Alumni Relations Office participated for the third year in a row in the New Students Orientation Program on September 13 and 16 in Beirut and 15 and 16 in Byblos. The office presented a souvenir to the new students with a brochure introducing the Alumni Association and explaining how it will benefit them after graduation.



Ottawa Chapter welcomes LAU's president

Members of the Ottawa Chapter organized a welcome dinner on September 10, 2011 at Kallisto Restaurant, Ottawa in honor of Dr. Jabbra's visit to Ottawa. Ed Shiner, director of Alumni and Special Projects in North America, also attended.

Seattle alumni celebrate first gathering

LAU alumni residing in Seattle, Washington organized their first dinner on September 17, 2011, alongside Ed Shiner, director of Alumni and Special Projects in North America, to establish a new alumni chapter in the city.



Alumni Association's new logo reflects pride and independence

After more than a year of careful study, the LAU Alumni Association recently debuted its new logo, which was designed to stand on its own and reflect the image and strength of the association while also complementing the LAU logo.

Director of LAU's Alumni Relations Office Abdallah Al Khal explained that the main challenge in producing a unique logo was to create an image that would differentiate but not dissociate the association from LAU.

"We thought that a logo as an identity for this particular group is essential," says Al Khal.

The Alumni Relations Office conducted an extensive survey of various alumni groups last year, and chose the logo with the broadest appeal. The consensus was that the logo reflected a seriousness and sense of belonging — qualities alumni found of particular importance in their alma mater.

The design incorporates the Phoenician ship used in LAU's logo, in green and grey colors that reflect seriousness, professionalism, integrity and growth, explains Al Khal.

Alumna Zeinab Nassar describes the logo as "professional, uniquely designed and very attractive."

More than half a dozen designers with different perspectives and approaches created numerous designs that were studied and amended by a focus group composed of alumni and alumni chapter officials. The logo was then presented to members of LAU's administration, who offered revisions before giving the design their final approval.

Alumna Elissar Hajj Zarwi says the logo "attracts and unifies more and more alumni everywhere in the world."

The Alumni Association logo will be used as a complement to the official LAU logo and has also been designed to accommodate individual alumni chapter names. In this way the logo is both a personalized symbol for each alumni chapter and a ubiquitous indication of LAU's growing global alumni network.

"The logo integrates LAU's culture and adds value to the alumni community," says alumna Carla Khalil.



**LAU ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION**

Alumni News



Wafa Ghawi Richeh (B.A.'61) has retired after a long career in the radio and television industry. She worked as an editor-in-chief of News at Radio Damascus and then as chairperson of the English Language Department at Syrian Radio and Television. She received a postgraduate diploma from Syracuse University in Radio and Television.

Her husband, Hosni Richeh, is a judge and vice chairman of the Court of Cassation in Syria. She currently spends her time between Damascus, Syria, and Boston, U.S., where her daughter Alma Richeh lives with her husband.



Aghar A. Kanafani (B.S.'82) assumed the position of country manager of the Bahrain branch of Credit Libanais in February 2011, after spending three years in Dubai as a senior director and team leader for the Levant with Standard Chartered Private bank.

Rima A. Mneimneh (B.A.'83) currently works as a writer and has a weekly column in a Kuwaiti newspaper. She previously worked in the Kuwaiti banking sector in a managerial capacity for two decades and received a M.A. in Library and Information Science from Kuwait University in 2001.



Philippe Georgiou (M.B.A.'84) worked at the Coca-Cola Company for many years in various capacities before being appointed Chief Officer for Corporate Affairs at Oman Air.

Dr. Bushra Kaddoura ('88) currently serves as chairperson of the Applied Teaching Diploma program at AUL (Arts, Sciences and Technology University in Lebanon) as well as the regional consultant to Arab Resource Collective (ARC), UNESCO (ECCE development office) and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt International Publishers. She has authored numerous articles and reports on early childhood education and parenting. She currently resides in Beirut.

Abdul Salam Knio (B.S.'90) is the managing partner for Information and Communication Technology W.L.L., a subsidiary of the Midis Group, a leading IT systems integrator in Qatar. He married Rouwaida Flayfel in 1993 and has three children — two daughters and a son.

Rania Zbib Daher (B.A.'95) has published numerous stories as a children's author with Asala and Kalimat publishers and is also writing stories for a children's program produced by BBC Children. For many years she worked as a director, producer and host at Future TV, and then at Dubai TV until 2006. She is married to Mazen Daher and has three kids, two daughters and a son. The family recently moved back to Lebanon after living in Dubai for eight years. She has a website that shows her work as a writer and also painter for children rooms, www.writingcolors.com.

Nada Messaikeh (B.S.'91, M.B.A.'95) is pursuing her D.B.A. (Doctor of Business Administration) at the University of Manchester, UK. She also currently holds the position of Finance and Administration director at Paris Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi. She has three lovely daughters.

Natalie Kouyoumdjian (B.A.'96) works for Starwood Hotels and Resorts in Dubai as the Complex Director of Revenue. She and her husband Lazare Haddad have two sons, Leeroy and Leandro.

Zeina Saghir (B.S.'98) works as an assistant librarian at LAU, which she calls her second home. She and her husband Ali Hijazi live in Beirut with their three-year-old daughter, Alaa.



Naeem Elsolh (B.S.'99) is an A/R Accountant at Delmonte Saudi Arabia Co. Ltd. in Jeddah.

Ghida Hneineh (B.S.'94, M.B.A.'99) owns and runs Al Wassim Recruitment since 2005, a company that has recruited hundreds of Lebanese job-seekers and located them in companies in Lebanon and the Arab world. She also organized the first annual Saida Career Days 2010 under the high patronage of former prime minister and current Saida MP Fouad Siniora.

Michel Abboud (B.S.'00) works as a senior business development manager with Aon Middle East in Dubai. He and his wife Donna welcomed the birth of their second daughter, Chloe, on September 1, 2011. She joins two-year-old sister Claudette, who also happens to share the same birthday.



Faysal Mikati (B.S.'00) works with Enterprise Qatar to promote and nurture the spirit of entrepreneurship in Qatar. After many years in the IT field, he started his own management company in 2008 and completed his Master's degree in Entrepreneurship from a London university in 2010.



Dr. Mohamad Awad (B.S.'88, M.S.'01) was a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at the Krasnow Institute for Advanced Studies at George Mason University in 2010. His research was based on a multi-disciplinary topic that combines evolutionary algorithms and remote sensing image processing. Awad received a Ph.D. from the University of Rennes 1, France, in Telecommunication and Signal processing in 2008.

Abboud George Ghanem (B.S.'02) received an M.B.A. degree from Cranfield School of Management in the UK in June 2011. He then joined Oracle as a senior sales executive for the UK financial services market, focusing on London's capital markets.



Ahmad Alliek (B.S.'03) joined Fransabank SAL in April 2011 as the assistant to the Secretary General responsible for Fransabank in Syria.



Georgina Ibrahim (M.B.A.'03) started her own business, called Best (Business Etiquette and Soft Skills Training), in 2009. In July 2011, she launched an audio CD titled "Heik sa7 Heik Ghalat Heik Bet2oul el Etiquette," the first of its kind in Lebanon and the Middle East region that targets a mass audience and offers guidelines for proper behavior and preferred social and business manners.

Nisreen Wehbe (B.S.'00, M.B.A.'03) currently lives in Jeddah with her husband Mohamad Jaber and three-year-old son Ali. She worked in Bank Audi, Lebanon, for seven years before moving to the Gulf. She is a member of the Oman Chapter.

Mehdi Chehimi (B.S.'04) joined the Kuwait branch of the Nestle company as a key accounts specialist.



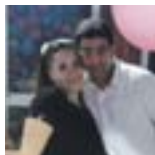
Fadi Hammoud (M.B.A.'04) is the country operations manager of Azadea group in Bahrain. He and his wife Farah welcomed a baby boy, Marcel, into the world on October 21, 2010.



Dr. Karim Boustany (B.E.'05) earned his Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering from Purdue University in May 2011. He completed his doctoral project at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Spring 2010. Boustany currently works as healthcare research engineer for Purdue University's Weldon School of Biomedical Engineering, a position that works in collaboration with Indiana University Health Arnett, where he acts as Executive Director of Healthcare Engineering.

Jules Chahine (B.Pharm.'05) is the proud owner of Pharmacie Chahine, which opened in 2007. She got married in 2008 and had a baby girl named Jamie in 2009.

Amani Khudr El Hage (B.A.'05) got married in June 2008 to Fouad El Shahal. She and her husband recently moved from Muscat, Oman to Tripoli. She is pregnant with twins.



Zaid Abu Hamdan (B.A.'05) has been very busy in the film industry in both the U.S. and the Middle East. He recently completed two short films, one of which received accolades at the Dubai International Film Festival in December 2010 and won the Oscar Qualifying "Best of the Fest" award in its North American premiere at the Palm Springs International Shortfest in June 2011. He received an M.F.A. in Filmmaking from the New York Film Academy in Hollywood, California in 2010.

Mona Kazzaz (M.A.'05) is an English teacher at Lycee Verdun and Lebanese University. She has three sons and hopes that LAU will have a Ph.D. program in Literature in the near future.

Sylvia Moujabber (B.A.'05) recently moved to Montreal, Canada, and got married to Omar El Masri on July 30, 2011.

Hala Saba (B.Pharm.'05) got married in 2008 and is the happy mother of a girl and a boy.

Marie Sahyoun Semaan (M.S.'05) and her husband Wissam Semaan welcomed the birth of a baby girl named Stephanie on June 20, 2011. The family currently lives in Dubai.



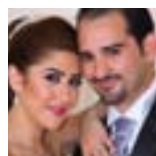
Tamara Stepanyan (B.A.'05) is currently working on the editing of a documentary that she shot last year, called 'May 9'. In 2009, she made a video/photo/audio installation called 'My Beirut' as part of Badguer I, an outdoor exhibit and film festival. She has participated in film workshops in Armenia, South Korea and Denmark.

Mohamad Kheir Toulani (B.Pharm.'05) opened his own pharmacy in Corniche El Mazraa, Beirut, in 2006.



Zakaria Ghalayini (B.S.'06) has recently been promoted to section head in the Financial Accounting department at Oger Emirates, one of the UAE's leading construction companies.

Mutayyam Jamal (B.A.'07) is the author of the novel Forgotten Princesses (Amirat Manseyyat).

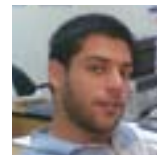


Rawan Ghalayini (B.A.'08) recently married her university sweetheart **Nabil Al-Awartani (B.S.'09)**.



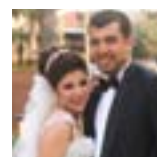
Khaled Abdel Ghani (B.S.'08) got married to Gihan Chemali in July 2011.

Bachir Hasbani (B.E.'08) is a member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and the IEO.



Tania Kallab (B.S.'08) is pursuing a Ph.D. in economics at ESSEC Business School in Paris. She is also engaged to LAU alumnus **Anthony Sfeir (B.E.'04)**.

Ayman Nabih Karanouh (B.S.'08) works at Gulf Medical Co. in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He recently married **Rasha Turk (B.S.'08)**.



Karim Muhtar (B.S.'09) is currently working as a freelance graphic and web designer. He launched his website www.karimmuhtar.com last summer.

WHY I GIVE BACK

Samira Baroudy BCW (A.A.'52, B.A.'54)



What did you study during your time at BCW?

I majored in Political History of the Middle East. I wrote a thesis on the creation of Israel and the repercussions of that event.

What have you been up to since your college years?

Since moving to San Francisco in 1976, I have worked to develop and sustain organizations dedicated to music. I was the executive director of Pocket Opera for 10 years, and worked for another 10 years as executive director of the Midsummer Mozart Festival. I've also consulted with chamber music groups in the Bay Area. At the moment I am concert manager for the Concert Connect events at Calvary Presbyterian Church.

Why do you give back to LAU?

LAU gave me a great deal — not only in knowledge, skills and competence, but also in human relations, interpersonal skills and outreach and networking. The least I can do is give back. I want to help in any way I can to create equal opportunities for future generation of young promising students.

Do you have a message that you would like to convey to your fellow alumni or current students of LAU?

LAU is an important institution with enormous educational and cultural influence in Lebanon, and — through alumni from other countries — in the Arab world. I encourage all alumni and students to support LAU in every way you can, to promote the wealth of knowledge, wisdom and training they are getting through their years of studies and scholarship at LAU.



THE LEGACY
& THE PROMISE
LAU CAMPAIGN FOR EXCELLENCE

The Frem brothers are visionary Lebanese entrepreneurs and philanthropists, and firm believers in synergy between the private sector and higher education.

The Georges N. Frem Foundation has contributed immeasurably to the peace, prosperity, and pluralism of Lebanon, and to the cultivation of a civically engaged student body at LAU.



✧ THE FREM BROTHERS
ARE THE LEGACY AND THE PROMISE.

"No sustainable economic value and growth can be created without engaging local communities and society in shaping national and social values."

— Antoine N. Frem, member of the LAU Board of Trustees



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