

LAU magazine

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& ALUMNI BULLETIN

The Wild Green Yonder

Ecotourism awakens at the edges of Lebanon's urban sprawl

Waste Knot

Recyclers big and small take on the nation's trash problem

No Stroll in the Park

The challenges of greening a concrete city

Water Foul

The upstream battle to protect Lebanese waterways



Green Shoots



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The Wild Green Yonder

Ecotourism awakens at the edges of Lebanon's urban sprawl

From mountain trekking to village visits, ecotourism is a growth industry in Lebanon, and one with high hopes of protecting the environment as well as rural economies. Muriel Kahwagi reports.

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Recyclers big and small take on the nation's trash problem

Large-scale recycling is still in its infancy in Lebanon, despite the country's conspicuous solid-waste problem, but informal gleaning is ubiquitous. Jessica Hollows looks into the offices of the big firms and the underworld of enterprising *zabbaleen*.



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An upstream battle to protect Lebanon's waterways

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Letters to the Editor

"What a great issue! Congratulations! My compliments to all the staff."

—Dr. Zeinab Mirza Jabban

"I love Lebanon, LAU, and this magazine. It radiates excellence—not simply in its editorial standards but in the stories it tells about its people and their life's work. A real window into the robustness, high standards, and humanitarian nature of Lebanon and the Lebanese. This magazine takes me home, and only then is my heart reunited with what I left behind in my beloved Beirut. Thank you so much."

—Marianne H. Hraibi, BUC faculty 1977–1984

Corrections for LAU Magazine, Volume 14, Number 1, Spring 2012.

The article on LAU's revamped E.M.B.A. program ("Master Class," page 47) misidentified the manager of the corporate office of INDECO's Interstate Resources Inc. as "Rita Farah." Her name is Rima Farah.

The "Alumni News" section (page 57) stated incorrectly that Arminee Choukassizian received the A.A.S. degree from BCW in 1961. In fact, she graduated that year with a B.A.

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Joseph G. Jabbra

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From the President's Desk

Dear friends,

We all know that this is a critical juncture in the history of our planet. Modernization since the Industrial Revolution — for all its incalculable cultural, technological and economic benefits — has come at grave cost to the earth, air and water that sustain us. In some cases the damage is reversible; in others it isn't. Meanwhile, as industrialization of the developing world accelerates, and we witness a wave of climate-change-related natural disasters most scientists regard as a harbinger of things to come, the question of our future ecological balance is posed with unprecedented urgency.

It is a paradox of modernity that the technological progress posing this environment threat in the first place is also yielding the innovation, intellectual dynamism and conceptual breakthroughs needed in order seriously to address it. If pollution, emissions and habitat destruction are at an all-time high, so is environmental consciousness. In politics and popular culture as much as in corporate, professional and academic circles, we are seeing an awakening of the will, the stirring of a new spirit of ingenuity and resourcefulness in facing the issues, daunting as they are.

Universities have a unique role in this awakening, a role at once ethical and intellectual. We are guardians of the values of the society that sustains us, and no civic responsibility is greater than that of protecting the planet. At the same time, environmental awareness increasingly suffuses lecture halls, libraries, and conference rooms, shaping fundamental research questions in a variety of fields. From the ecocriticism movement in literary studies to environmental economics to sustainability in architecture and engineering, we behold a "greening" of academic disciplines across the board.

As a rising university in the midst of its greatest institutional transformation, LAU is doubly committed to being part of the solution. Our new five-year strategic plan includes provisions aimed at greening both the campus and the curricula. Energy efficiency and the use of renewable materials are a core consideration in every construction project we undertake, and we are designing a campus sustainability audit to produce pilot projects for implementation by 2016. Our environmental science minor is an increasing draw, and we are considering introducing majors in environmental engineering and environmental design. Meanwhile, our Outreach and Civic Engagement Unit is cultivating and channeling environmental activism in multiple ways, and students and faculty alike — in fields ranging from the humanities to the natural sciences — are devoting their passion and expertise to environmental causes in greater numbers than ever before.

This issue of LAU Magazine and Alumni Bulletin is both a wake-up call about the gravity of the environmental challenges we face, and a celebration of the intelligence, creativity and moral vision of those grappling with them. To appreciate what they do is to see our responsibility in a new light.



Joseph G. Jabbara
President



A photograph of a herd of goats grazing on a rocky, green hillside. The goats are of various colors, including white, black, and brown. They are scattered across the slope, which is covered in green grass and small yellow and purple flowers. The background shows more of the hillside and some distant trees.

FEATURE

The Wild Green Yonder

Ecotourism awakens at the edges of Lebanon's urban sprawl

By Muriel Kahwagi



Lebanon Mountain Trail Association tour through Kfar Bnine, in Dinnieh, North Lebanon

Destroyed seven times in its long history, now rounding out a fourth decade of sustained political volatility, Beirut is a city whose identity — matter and spirit — has been recreated time and again.

Its reversals of fortune can indeed be dizzying. Badly crippled in the war of 2006, by 2009 Beirut was crowned the top destination for travelers by The New York Times, and voted as one of the ten liveliest cities in the world by Lonely Planet, the largest travel guidebook and digital media publisher in the world.

In the eyes of the world as well as those of Lebanese, the city has in this sense become a synecdoche for the country. So much so that Lebanon's immense natural endowments — its rich landscapes, valleys, snowcapped mountains, coastlines and natural reserves — tend to be overlooked, or worse, malignly neglected.

In recent years, however, cultural and ecological tourism in Lebanon have been on the rise, and Beirut is no longer the country's sole attraction. Interest in Lebanon's rugged and ravishing — if damaged and ever-threatened — hinterland is surging not only among tourists and expats but also among locals.

History's knock-on effects have not been kind to what's left of Lebanon's wilderness. Numerous wars and periodic political conflicts have, in several ways, accelerated urbanization and triggered dramatic population shifts from rural areas to the country's burgeoning cities.

While these shifts may have economic and cultural upsides, they have ineluctably fostered neglect and exploitation of Lebanon's natural gifts.

A backlash against this neglect, however, is beginning to make itself felt. Considerable efforts have been directed — and resources dedicated — to highlighting the essentiality of Lebanon's scarce green spaces. In fact, there is a budding environmentalist movement to promote ecological and responsible tourism in the country, which contributes not only to the preservation of natural reserves but to the welfare of local communities rooted within them.

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the wellbeing of local people."

Indeed the two goals are closely, even symbiotically related. The more viable local communities are, the greater the incentive to ecological conservation; the healthier Lebanon's wild and rural areas become, the more vital — economically and culturally — its communities grow.

Ecotourism following TIES' definition is palpably taking shape in Lebanon, with outdoor activities such as hiking, rafting, snowshoeing, caving and mountain climbing slowly but surely gaining popularity among the country's youth.

"Ecotourism is economically beneficial — it can be practiced all year — and it fosters interaction between tourists and local populations," says Karim El-Jisr, president of the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association, which promotes responsible tourism by maintaining and protecting the 440-kilometer national trail extending from Al-Qbaiyat to Marjaayoun. "It sensitizes people to the importance of natural heritage and the need to protect it." 🌿

But the incentive for ecotourism stretches beyond the established intent to conserve the environment and enhance the locals residents' wellbeing, according to Jad Abou Arrage, a volunteer at Arc En Ciel, a Lebanese NGO whose primary goal is to nurture durable development at the environmental, social and economical levels.

“Ecotourism is economically beneficial – it can be practiced all year – and it fosters interaction between tourists and local populations.”

—Karim El-Jisr, president of the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association

“Although allowing local communities to actively participate in ecotourism activities is essential, another really important determinant of ecotourism is environmental education, which should be factored in as often as possible,” says Abou Arrage, who also teaches ecotourism and alternative ecotourism courses at the University of Balamand and the Lebanese University.

Arc En Ciel's contribution to the ecotourism industry came to light in 2005, when the NGO began working on the construction of Taanayel Ecolodge, an environmentally friendly and architecturally traditional youth hostel located in the heart of the Bekaa and built entirely from local materials.

Taanayel Ecolodge allows tourists to enjoy stunning scenery in the area Taanayel village area, while exploring and immersing themselves in the conventional customs of the Bekaa residents.

It became fully operational in 2007, being shaped around the notion of the existing, but often overlooked, symbiotic and synergetic relationship between mankind and the environment.

“Taanayel Ecolodge is a community-based project, managed in partnership with the people of Taanayel and Zahle,” says Abou Arrage. “All those who have participated in the building and the running of the site are from the area.”

Indeed, the local community's involvement in Taanayel Ecolodge is key to the prospering of the project — the residents of the area, that is, are not a cosmetic supplement to the ecolodge, but a critical component lying at its very core.

“They own the resources, and thus the project should be managed by them. They play a major role in protecting and conserving the site, as well as being its cultural guides to the visitors,” says Abou Arrage.

In point of fact, the local community currently manages Taanayel Ecolodge in every respect, making it a separate, but sister NGO to Arc En Ciel.

The most striking aspect of Taanayel Ecolodge is the cooperative interplay it fosters between tourists and locals.

While vacationers benefit from fresh mountain air, a traditional Lebanese breakfast (a delicious combination of omelets, Baladi cheese and jam) and an all-embracing understanding of the ecolodges' authentic and rudimentary architecture and history, the local community have the chance to promote and increase awareness of their cultural heritage — and the architecture and natural setting in which it's rooted — as well as reap the financial revenues necessary to conserve it.

“This type of ecotourism appeals to many people because it combines the natural and environmental aspects of tourism with the human and social aspects of it,” says Abou Arrage.

Ecotourism aims to diversify the tourism market on the global

as well as local levels. As vital as it is to safeguard the environment and preserve traditional communities, ecotourism may help to achieve even more important goals on a larger scale.

Seventy percent of the Lebanese population currently resides in cities rather than villages, an imbalance that is only increasing. The numbers are dramatic, and with good reason: people are moving from rural villages due to serious shortfalls in job opportunities and access to education.

According to Chaker Noun, founder of Baldati (“My Village” in Arabic), a Lebanese NGO that aims to revive Lebanese villages, reunite their communities and support their institutions, ecotourism can act as a tool to reanimate rural villages and break away from the pattern of urban centralization.

Established in 2003, Baldati organizes hiking, snowshoeing, and winery trips (among other activities), with hiking being the most popular of these activities. In fact, Baldati has organized over 700 hiking trips in about 500 villages to date — although hiking itself, maintains Noun, is not the highlight of these excursions.

“Baldati's hiking club is not primarily about practicing the sport,” says Noun, who is also an expert on green architecture and renewable energy. “It is a portal to our main objectives — and it complements the idea of Baldati, which is to help to rebuild these villages.”

With so many Lebanese increasingly based in cities, emotional attachment to their original villages is predictably fading. While homesickness may be enough to lure people back to their hometowns for a visit, it is not going to precipitate a large-scale,



long-term reversal of urban sprawl or return to rural life in Lebanon.

"Sentimentality and nostalgia are great, but they will not solve the problem. Wadih el Safi and Fairuz's romantic, patriotic songs will not solve the problem," says Noun.

"People are seeking real jobs and real work opportunities. You have to provide these basic needs to the residents of rural areas so they can stay there, and so that those who left them would return. We need to aim for decentralization," he adds.

Indeed, ecotourism is an industry in itself. Any burgeoning business needs capital to survive — whether it's gasoline, petroleum, or money. Similarly, ecotourism, from a business standpoint, also requires certain resources, and these are plentiful in Lebanon: the pleasant climate, the rich landscapes, the multiculturalism and famed hospitality of the Lebanese people.

"Every city and every town in Lebanon has a different identity, even when it's within the same region. Lebanon is a melting pot of cultures and customs, and this is exactly what tourists seek the most," says Noun.

Indeed, ecotourism activities in Lebanon draw almost as many foreigners as they do locals, especially during the warmer seasons. The Chouf cedar nature reserve is particularly popular.

Comprising six cedar forests stretching over 50,000 hectares in the Mount Lebanon range, the Chouf cedar nature reserve is the largest nature reserve in Lebanon, hosting a plethora of bird and plants species, as well as wild mammals.

The reserve is surrounded by a small number of villages, the residents of which consider the reserve to be part of their home.

"The reserve is like their own backyard, a garden they deeply treasure," says Dr. Ahmad Hourri, associate professor of chemistry in LAU's Department of Natural Sciences. "This emotional bond is precisely what drives them to care for it and protect it."

But love of one's garden is not enough, notes Hourri. No matter how romantic we may be about village life and natural splendor, monetary benefits constitute any sustainability project's bottom line.

Indeed, the Chouf cedar nature reserve encourages local communities to sell their own goods — honey, marmalade, keshek, yoghurt — at a shop located in the reserve, which also forms part of the financial infrastructure of neighboring villages.

"You won't find chips, chocolate or soda at the shop," explains Hourri. "Only homemade goods produced by the local communities."

In short, the Chouf townspeople protect the reserve not only because of its national relevance and significance, but also because of the economical safety net it provides them.

"The number of activities you can do outdoors is so huge, you are bound to find something that suits you. But the question is: are you willing to get out of bed, and do something other than sit in a café and smoke arguileh on a Saturday afternoon?" asks Hourri.

How to spend one's weekend leisure hours may seem the epitome of a small-stakes question, but — for those investing in ecotourism's chances of shoring up what remains of Lebanon's wilds — a great deal indeed may ride on it. ☐



Hikers walking along Sin Ehden, a ridge overlooking Ehden in North Lebanon





Out of the Chrysalis

The metamorphosis of UMC – RH

By LAU Staff



Renovating a well-known city hospital that has been both a landmark and a lifeline for generations of Lebanese requires equal parts teamwork, ingenuity, and patience. “Patient safety and comfort is at the core of our concerns,” says Dr. Elie Badr, member of the UMC–RH Board of Directors and Interim Dean of the School of Architecture and Design, explaining that renovations are carefully synchronized to minimize disturbances.

“The main challenge for the design team has been the design of a functional Master Plan that will eventually get UMC–RH accredited by The Joint Commission International (JCI),” he says. “We have designed the Master Plan in coordination with JCI consultants who already visited the hospital on two occasions.”

The major projects transforming UMC–RH into a world-class 21st century facility are numerous. So far the following departments have been completed: a new dialysis unit, Radiology Center, GI/endoscopy unit, Dermatology and Varicose Vein Clinic, Billing Center, and 3rd floor patient wards. There are new HVAC systems with advanced infection control, data management centers, new high-tech equipment and electronic resources. And while various floors and units get their — often simultaneous — state-of-the-art makeovers, the hospital has remained fully operational.

Commitment to excellence in patient care has brought together the hospital leadership with LAU faculty and administrators across schools and disciplines, from the School of Medicine to the School of Architecture and Design, to the Finance and IT Departments.

The results speak for themselves. A new central billing area in the main lobby in the connector between building A and B acts as a one-stop shop for patients who come for outpatient testing, X-rays, labs and procedures.

“There are insurance representatives at the station so if you have tests to do, you walk into the insurance office, get your approval through billing, pay at the cashier and you’re done.

It’s much better for patients and for the billing and insurance side,” says Roy Majdalani, Chairman of the UMC–RH Board of Directors.

Majdalani, with his expertise in information technology, has spearheaded the IT transformation of UMC–RH, implementing an advanced IT infrastructure that includes a wired and wireless network, telecommunications and multimedia throughout most of the complex, a modern nurse call system, and a state-of-the-art data center with redundant and powerful servers. In addition, new medical and business IT applications are being planned and implemented, including a new Picture Archiving System (PACS) and Radiology Information System (RIS) as a first step to installing a leading Hospital Information System (HIS) and a comprehensive Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP) system that automates all clinical and administrative processes.

“Our mission is to provide robust, reliable and secure IT systems and services that foster a productive environment for UMC–RH patients, medical, nursing and administrative staff,” he says.

The vision for the hospital renovation, according to Dr. Maroun El-Daccache, chairman of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design and lead designer at UMC–RH, was to have a distinctive design, unlike those found in traditional hospitals. “The strategy was to create a new image and configuration unique to UMC–RH. Departments are identified through different design configurations.”

Badr expressed admiration for his colleague’s design leadership, and graciously noted that several young graduates of LAU’s architecture program — Natalie Bou Reslan, Joelle Merchak and Raed El Hajj Hussain — form the team El-Daccache heads.

“As interim dean, how much prouder could I be?” Badr says. “This is clear testimony to the quality of architects that El-Daccache and the department’s faculty are graduating.”



UMC-RH's newly renovated 3rd floor surgical recovery unit

Upgrading the infrastructure and equipment is only part of a greater shift within the hospital. When LAU acquired the facility, the staff was operating under a French system in which RNs weren't allowed to conduct physical assessments (patient exams before the physician visits the room). "In the American system we're implementing, RNs will do this routinely, and feel as a result more empowered in administering patient care," says Nader.

"The whole approach is multidisciplinary," she adds. "Physicians consult and cooperate with nurses, physical therapists, pharmacy, and so on."

Training is ongoing, according to Dr. Tony Zreik, Chief Medical Officer with thousands of hours devoted to acquainting nursing staff with the new devices, zones, and policies.

So what's next? Current renovations on the second floor (OB/GYN and maternity wing) are almost complete, and work will begin on the first floor of building A. The Radiology and Imaging Department on the ground and -1 floors of building A will soon be open to the public. "This will be not among the best, but the best in the Middle East," says Zreik. "We partnered with a group of New York radiologists and have equipment that is only the second machine of its kind in the world."

With each new renovation, the UMC-RH steering committee must take into account the requirements of JCI (Joint Commission International), an international hospital accreditation body. "We must get approval for everything," says Zreik. "They are coming periodically to visit the grounds to check what's happening on various fronts — from patient care to renovations and safe designs, among other things."

Majdalani acknowledges the challenges in turning a privately-owned, for-profit hospital into a university teaching hospital with the latest technologies that support excellence throughout the complex. "It requires raising the standards of care in all aspects of the hospital operations," he says.

Might it be easier to build a new hospital from scratch? "Much easier," Zreik wryly jokes.

"In the purely bricks-and-mortar sense, yes," Majdalani gamely concurs. "But Rizk Hospital is an iconic community hospital for generations of Beirutis. LAU's approach to medicine is about fusing advanced technology and expertise with deep-rooted community care and trust."

"As medical practitioners, as architects, as university leaders, we're here to transform, not demolish," adds Badr.

Medical staff at UMC-RH check on a patient after surgery



Donor Profile

Education of Body and Mind

Visionary donor endows major sports facility at LAU Byblos

By LAU Staff



"Having knowledge, sports and entertainment grouped on a single site promotes social ties, especially among young people from different communities," he says. "And it ensures the strength and permanence of such ties."

Why would a leading banker with no affiliation to LAU donate \$6 million to the university to construct, of all things, a sports facility?

Antoun Sehnaoui, chairman and CEO of Société Générale de Banque au Liban, has built a reputation for his philanthropic efforts in Lebanon, supporting cultural projects that include the Beirut International Film Festival and the Beirut Art Center.

"It is conventional to support the development of universities as providers of knowledge," he says. "Their sports activities however are still generally perceived as a the poor relative — despite the fact that they contribute fundamentally to the human being's fulfillment."

A proper campus sports facility, he says, is critical for students to maintain a healthy mind and body. But promotion of health is only part of the picture. For Sehnaoui, who saw the worst of the civil war years, a sports center can bring together students from all backgrounds to interact, to build trust, form lasting bonds and discover the importance of unity — all of which are at the core of his philanthropic mission.

"Having knowledge, sports and entertainment grouped on a single site promotes social ties, especially among young people from different communities," he says. "And it ensures the strength and permanence of such ties."

The donation indeed speaks to Sehnaoui's own active nature and ambitious spirit. Having celebrated his fortieth birthday only this year, Sehnaoui has an impressive list of accomplishments to his name.

Upon completing his B.S. in international financing and banking from the University of Southern California in 1994, Sehnaoui returned to Lebanon to found News Media, a publishing house that created Executive, Lebanon's leading English-language business magazine. He also took over FIDUS, transforming it into one of the country's leading financial

investment firms, and played a key role in the unprecedented success of SGBL after being appointed chairman in 2007.

The donation was welcomed by LAU with enormous gratitude and enthusiasm. Joe Moujaes, director of athletics for the Byblos campus, where the facility will be located, described it as a "necessity."

"An athletic sports center on the Byblos campus is a must, not only for our student athletes who have for years endured the hassle of transportation to and from rented facilities," Moujaes explains, "but more importantly, for the great campus life the center will bring to the university."

The sports center itself will be monumental, consisting of a three-level, 9,000-square-meter building at the northeastern edge of the Byblos campus. It will feature a semi-Olympic sized swimming pool as well as an indoor multipurpose court, surrounded by two sets of bleachers with the capacity to accommodate about 500 people.

It will also include outdoor mini-football, tennis and basketball fields on its top level, using artificial turf to allow for year-round use. The lower floors will probably house a gymnasium, dance rooms, squash courts, exercise rooms, a spa, cafeteria, administrative offices and other needed facilities. At this point, the projected completion date lies somewhere during the 2015-2016 academic year.

"This center speaks to the heart of our mission at LAU when we talk about the education of the whole person," says LAU President Dr. Joseph Jabbra. "It is not enough to merely educate in the classroom, to expand the minds of the young through instruction. It is also our duty to ensure their access to facilities to participate in physical recreation — a fundamental component of their development, and therefore of any serious university."



Reaccreditation Milestone for School of Pharmacy

Distinguished Pharm. D. program granted full six-year term

By Jessica Hollows

LAU cleared a milestone when the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) certified its Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm. D.) program in 2002. Following successful re-accreditation this January, the School of Pharmacy (SOP) continues to throng with students soliciting the only ACPE-approved course outside the United States.

Dr. Pierre Zalloua, who became interim dean of the School of Pharmacy in the fall of 2010, led the reaccreditation effort, working intensively with his colleagues to ensure compliance with all 26 ACPE standards and compile an encyclopedic report.

"Coming from outside, I was able to take an innovative look at how things could move forward," he recalled.

Under Zalloua the school redoubled its dedication, facilitating the rigorous reorganization process. "There is lot of positive energy among faculty, staff, and students here," notes Associate Dean Dr. Imad Btaiche, who came to LAU from the University of Michigan four months ago. "People are proactive instead of reactive."

"Naturally, ACPE standards are extremely high and demanding," observes Zalloua.

In order to keep up with these standards of excellence, SOP staff tailored the program around comprehensive data, guaranteeing its effective evolution and putting the monitoring process at the core of their overall strategy.

Straightforward communication and concerted inclusiveness among faculty members proved instrumental in the school's success. "All faculty collaborated on this accreditation," says Acting Assistant Dean Dr. Jad Abdallah. "We all learned about the standards, worked to improve them, and contributed to the report."

"When the ACPE people came, they saw, felt, and witnessed the enthusiasm, openness, and transparency we operate on," Zalloua affirms.

During the January 2012 inspection, ACPE determined that the school was in excellent compliance, and renewed accreditation for a full six-year term.

"This is really quite a coup for our School of Pharmacy," said LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara in a message to the university community. "Dr. Pierre Zalloua, his faculty, students and staff worked so hard and so meticulously to have accreditation renewed — and renewed it was, with flying colors."

SOP staff tailored their program around comprehensive data, guaranteeing its effective evolution. ACPE's report saluted the breadth and depth of the school's internal assessment scheme.

The Pharm. D. program's inter-professional bent was another point in its favor. "The school is involved at the faculty and student levels with the School of Nursing, the School of Medicine, and other healthcare disciplines," Btaiche notes.

The SOP's outreach program exemplifies interdisciplinary cooperation.

Combining invaluable hands-on experience with technical expertise and community understanding, students from LAU's Pharmacy, Nursing, and Medicine schools provide supervised care at the Volunteer Outreach Clinic (VOC) in Shatila every Thursday.

Once more lucent with laurel, the SOP is taking no respite. "Accreditation is a launching pad," says Btaiche. "We now need to use it to shoot for excellence in three major arenas: education, research and clinical pharmacy practice."

The school is spearheading clinical pharmacy, a nascent field in Lebanon. "We want to transform UMC-RH into a hospital where clinical pharmacists deliver care, consult on medications, and teach students," says Zalloua. In the future, this practical experience will equip SOP graduates to practice pharmacy in a hospital setting.

"We want to be — and remain — the best school of pharmacy in the region," says Zalloua.



Dr. Pierre Zalloua and SOP faculty members during the white coat ceremony



FEATURE

Waste Knot

Recyclers big and small take
on the nation's trash problem

By Jessica Hollows



“You will never find a better place than Lebanon for collecting trash,” says Saleh, a 33-year-old freelance waste collector. The country’s daily dreck averages 400 000 tons, the equivalent of 160 Olympic-size swimming pools full of bottles, boxes, crushed cans and carcasses.

Upon quitting Syria 16 years ago, Saleh alighted in discount digs down a Sabra backstreet graced with neither streetlights nor pavement. Together with brothers, cousins and friends, he set out to explore Beirut’s dumpsters and rubble.

Thirty-kilometer daily footslogs take the confreres through Dahiye, Tayouneh and Achrafieh. Spirited beasts of burden, they salvage up to 500 kilograms of jettisoned resources with mere handcarts. Their backs and feet are hurting, but big hauls spell high rewards. While some forages prove fruitless, others yield up to \$1000 cash.

Lebanon’s beleaguered infrastructure entices rag-pickers nationwide. Saline tap water and power cuts take inimical tolls on hardware, begetting ample scrap metal and electrics on the fritz.

In a nation largely unmoved by environmental perils, the *zabbaleen* are nonesuch conservationists. “The major recyclers in Lebanon are — unfortunately — these informal trash collectors,” says Dr. Ahmad Houry, associate professor of chemistry at LAU and something of a regional ecoguru.

Seasoned *zabbaleen* evolve into self-taught grease monkeys. “After seeing so many old motors, we figured out which ones could be fixed,” says 39-year-old Zain. Talking with voluble animation as he works, he proffers petty cash for devices otherwise doomed to landfill.

Zain is one of 10 tenants sleeping Saleh’s makeshift apartment. Now decamped down the block with his wife and daughter, Saleh comes through afterhours for tea, TV, and tinkering.

The cronies doggedly deconstruct and remodel, forging marketable recombinants from the motley shatters of all and sundry. Restored objets trouvés, which reap a 50% profit at Sabra souk, represent values beyond their market price. “In my hands, an Italian-made motor becomes Syrian-made,” says Zain with evident pride.

Zabbaleen vend irreparable schlock to scrap yards for slighter sums. Aluminum is procurable paydirt at roughly \$1.20 per kilo. Jackpot crop copper scores four times more. Rates shift Mondays, according to international markets.

Recycled metal middleman Wael Barbish oversees sought-after locales in Beirut and Shoueifat. At ease in an office full of impeccably forged diplomas, he describes dropping out at 15 to follow four generations of forebears into a “black gold” consortium.

Every morning, Barbish sorts and weighs smorgasbords of sordid substratum before shelling out to *zabbaleen*, landowners and industrialists on the spot. 🍷

Forty employees dismember investments into distinct materials. Professional wrecker Abdal Salam sunders at least a ton of trash on his circadian shift. Prefatory butchering involves levying large claw cranes for oversized bounty and sedulously extracting wire filaments.

Salam then feeds fragments to the industrial scruncher, which emits stackable cuboids. Sometimes he receives DIYers in search of one-of-a-kind fittings. “Many people come looking for just the right doorframe or tap,” explains Salam, who retains requisite bric-a-brac for his own on-site lodging.

Walk-in containers crammed with pulverized stock sail to Europe, China, and beyond. Barbish’s business bounced back effortlessly after 2008.

Dr. Hourri deems reprocessing recyclables for local markets equally lucrative. Companies like Soliver crush and cast used glass into bespoke bottles of all forms and shades. A Kfarchima outfit transmogrifies soda cans into window frames, while Bekaa manufacturers produce vegetable crates from shredded water bottles.

“Lebanon has facilities to recycle, or compress for export, every material,” says activist Zahi Boustany, of environmental non-profit T.E.R.R.E. Liban. “The problem is that many factories are in deficit. Not enough people are providing them with the materials they need to work.”

Efficient composting could treat organic leftovers, obviating 60 to 90 percent of Lebanon’s solid waste output. Yet existing facilities in Tyr and Nabatieh operate at one-fourth capacity — at best. “When you build such factories, you have to plan for fuel, manpower, and maintenance,” explains Boustany. “International donors gave big money to cover construction, but nothing for ongoing costs, and the population was not trained to compost.”

Plastic and paper plants pay chump change per ton, scarcely incentivizing anyone except commercial printers and zabbaleen. T.E.R.R.E. Liban offers paper receptacles and collection services to help Lebanon’s academic and commercial institutions move slowly toward the recycling efficiency of its scavengers.

Last year, the non-profit amassed 457,470 tons of paper from 323 contributors. Remuneration from Solicar’s Wadi Chahrour fact funded 7777 tree plantings, offsetting carbon footprints and 1226 square meters of landfill. LAU’s Beirut campus recycled a commendable 10,015 kilograms of paper, with numbers set to spike following Byblos campus’ recent enlistment as part of a large-scale eco-stratagem.

Alan Kairouz, program coordinator for the Office of the Dean of Students at LAU Byblos, administered the masterstroke. “Two huge can compactors, some 20 can bins, and over 100 paper recycling bins were distributed around the campus, cafeteria and dorms,” he says, intimating that the project was no mean feat.

“It was difficult to find the right companies to collect and recycle papers and cans, as not many would venture this far to collect resources,” says Kairouz, who has yet to locate a plastic bottle collection service. “But the biggest challenge is motivating our students to use the bins for the right purpose.”

“The major recyclers in Lebanon are — unfortunately — informal trash collectors.”

—Dr. Ahmad Hourri, associate professor of chemistry at LAU Beirut

Last fall, inaugural high jinks goaded scholars into action. “A band played soft rock music, and an announcement and demonstration were presented about the bins and compactors,” Kairouz recalls. “Posters and small video sketches about environmental awareness were placed around campus and on the e-boards.”

The coordinator continues to update posters on a biweekly basis, and stresses the need for extensive publicity to boost environmental awareness throughout Lebanon.

T.E.R.R.E. Liban aspires to glass, plastic, and aluminum recuperation schemes to grease the wheels of future efforts. Some locals already deliver bottle tops, batteries, labneh boxes and detergent containers to the NGO’s Baabda garden.



"It is rare, but some people will recycle without expecting a financial return," Houri says. "It is beginning to happen when projects succeed in raising awareness of their environmental benefits." Past efforts at large-scale recycling were stymied by failures to raise public consciousness, he adds.

By depositing extricated recyclables alongside dumpsters, maverick waste sorters give *zabbaleen* a leg up. The latter stays shrewdly one step ahead of Sukleen, lest government-backed macerators abscond with their keep.

Powers that were contracted Beirut and Mount Lebanon's marquee waste managers in 1994, a mere three months after the firm's foundation. Unfortunately, Sukleen's invaluable services do not come cheap. Boustany says trash collection fees account for two fifths of some municipal coffers, potentially diverting funds from community development and green initiatives.

"Waste collection in Lebanon is more expensive than anywhere in the world, costing between \$150 and \$170 per ton compared to \$50 in New York," he laments whilst courteously sharing soya snacks.

Sukleen recycles at their Karantina waste processing plant, but meager manpower caps circadian sorting at 400 tons. Most miasmal harvests brim Naameh's noxious landfill, which emits an hourly 1200 cubic meters of methane by Dr. Houri's count.

"We are throwing trash in locations that are very bad for the environment, especially the water supply," says Houri, referring to Akkar's junk-choked river and Saida's infamous slagheap, which leaks flotsam all the way to neighboring countries.

Turkey, Cyprus, and Greece regularly criticize Lebanon for fouling Mediterranean waters and violating international conventions. But dumpsite freeholders Frankenstein the coastline and rake in a killing under the banner of urban rejuvenation.

In yesteryear, developers swept Beirut's quondam wasteland Normandy into the sea to lay festering foundations for downtown real estate valued at \$33,000 per square meter. Lebanese networks prohibit access to pre-2000 satellite views of the waterfront enclave.

"Everything was crushed, all valuable metals were extracted, then they built an underwater wall some distance from the coast and filled in the space with garbage to create new land," explains an activist, who wished to remain anonymous for reasons of personal security.

Analogous expansion of Karantina's seafront whipped up bad blood. Buildings erected 300 meters from the natural shore were eroded and displaced by 13-meter waves. "You can never compete with nature," says Boustany, lambasting proposals to build a newfangled highway on seaborne trash.

Boustany began campaigning for recycling in 1994, hoping ecofriendly concerns could harmonize residual hard feelings. "When it came to the environment, there were no labels," he recalls.

T.E.R.R.E. Liban continues to work across political boundaries, joining forces with environmentalists including NGO's, botanists, organic farmers and recycling plant proprietors. "We want to stay under one umbrella, that of the environment, rather than be colored politically," says Boustany.

Alas, concrete centralized progress requires legislative input. "Political support for a method of sorting and recycling is urgent," avers Boustany, heeding the government's retrograde procurement of five hand-me-down incinerators from the United



States. "Without it, we will remain a small and weak minority," he adds.

Houri also advocates collective solutions like regulated tipping and wastewater fees. "We need to provide organized financial incentives to minimize water consumption and waste production," he says.

Meanwhile, an alternative contender stands well placed to leave *zabbaleen* high and dry. Ziad Abichaker returned to Lebanon from Rutgers University in 1999 with a resumé rich in revolutionary technology. His brainchild, Cedar Environmental, began as a rank outsider in the solid-waste management race.

Abichaker promotes a decentralized solution to Lebanon's waste dilemma. "We like to build local waste management plants, where anything that comes from a municipal solid waste truck is taken care of under one roof," he says. "We are the only ones operating under a zero waste mantra. We don't need a landfill."

In Material Recovery Facilities from Jbaa to Kfarsir, enormous steel garburators use Abichaker's Dynamic Composting Technology to blenderize surplus provender and burnt out novelties in record time. "We are solving a major pollution issue, and adding value by producing a very affordable high grade fertilizer certified for organic agriculture," explains the eco-entrepreneur.

Abichaker's hired hands unsnarl inorganic materials, bailing bottles and shredding plastics for reuse. "We even have a patented technology for turning plastic bags into panel boards," he reports.

With 11 operative southerly facilities, Cedar Environmental continues to gain on Sukleen's stronghold. "We have a few more plants in the pipeline, and we are approaching Beirut and Mount Lebanon," Abichaker says.

Outside, a dilatory *zabbaleen* cops half-light pickings. ■



Stage of Adolescence

Abyad production invokes the muse of childhood memory

By Muriel Kahwagi

The child in us may never die; sadly, however, it sometimes goes into hibernation. *Fantasia Opus3*, LAU's major theater production for the spring, is at once a lavish, colorful spectacle and a bittersweet reminiscence of boyhood designed to awaken even the most dormant inner child.

Directed by assistant professor of communication arts Dr. Lina Abyad, *Fantasia Opus3* turned the Gulbenkian Theater into a time machine, transporting the audience to their schooldays and fatuous first loves, revisiting adolescent pipe dreams through the lens of adult desire.

The production initially took shape almost entirely through improvisation (*Fantasia Opus3* is the third Abyad production to be composed this way, hence the title). The first draft of the script was composed by Abyad as a kind of collage of the actors' impromptu recollections of their earliest memories.

"We didn't really know what the play would be about at first," she recalls, "but we talked a lot about childhood, schooldays, and longing for love. We taped everything, and finally identified the recurrent themes and began working on them."

The result weaves together embarrassing fracases, haunting insecurities, ingenuous crushes, and sensory firsts — at once ephemeral and indelible — into a tapestry of nostalgia and pain.

Curiously enough, the Communication Arts Department's very first productions in the early 1960's were children's plays, notes Dr. Mona A. Knio, associate professor of theater and the department's chairperson. "Abyad's improv-based production was ultimately — and uncannily — reminiscent of the department's early theatrical work," Knio says.

The surreal set — the stage is draped in white and pastels and lit by lanterns — was designed, says Abyad, to invite the audience to be part of the play, to send them into reverie.

"You have to give them — from the very beginning — an idea

of what to expect from the play, which is why the colors of the set are very soft and light," she says. "This is a very light play."

Light as it is, *Fantasia Opus3* is not devoid of the melancholy, the trace of sadness that can tinge youth as it's lived and as it's remembered.

In one scene, the actors — scattered on the stage, dressed in technicolor garments, and holding cardboard cages — are standing on doormats, miming the vehement, sometimes even tyrannical tone of parents trying to edify their children.

Comments that seem benign in the individual instance — "remember to say thank you," "don't pick your nose," or even "don't mention that you're doing theater in front of grandma" — become oppressive in the aggregate, and can leave an elusive scar on youngsters, one they may obsessively revisit as they grow older.

In another scene a young woman draped in white wanders the stage recalling the 2006 war in Lebanon — fondly, as paradox would have it, because awful as it was, it brought her and her family closer together, and taught her to appreciate life's small blessings.

"It is practically impossible to talk about memories in a Lebanese context and not evoke one war or another," explains Abyad. "I provoked the actors, and the result of those provocations was the play's raw material. All I did was edit, rearrange and design it into a script."

Theater-goers and members of the university drama community praised Abyad's compositional method. "The authenticity creates audience intimacy — people can relate to it almost immediately," says LAU theater coordinator Hala Masri.

Peter Matar, an architecture student at Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts (ALBA), concurred. "I felt the actors themselves were my memories," Matar said.



Glass Half Full

LAU trustee brings solutions to the water-supply conundrum

By Greg Houle

We've all heard that water may be "the oil of the 21st century," but the news has yet to sink in. For all we read about the havoc wrought by urbanization, burgeoning demand, and climate change on global supplies, we still tend to think of water as one turn of the faucet away.

As president and chief operating officer of Innovyze, which specializes in software for "wet infrastructure," Dr. Paul Boulos has a more watchful eye on the horizon. He describes decay of the "invisible" infrastructure of water distribution worldwide as posing the primary water-related challenge in the near and mid-term future.

A prominent expert on water resources engineering and drinking water distribution engineering, Boulos has co-authored nine books and more than 100 scientific publications. His work on distribution systems water quality modeling has become the global industry standard.

Boulos is a trustee of LAU, and has chaired the university's board of international advisors.

How have environmental and climate-change issues shaped the work of Innovyze since its founding in 1996?

Our clients face significant environmental and economic pressures caused by resource scarcity, population growth and climate change; we provide solutions that benefit both the environment and their bottom line. We help them strengthen and sustain the world's hydraulic infrastructures and prepare for increasing demand on diminishing supplies. Our work covers critical areas from water security to climate change and carbon management to green cities planning to real-time flood forecasting.

Like all dedicated engineers, we measure the value of our work by what it contributes to future happiness and the wellbeing of others. The need for safe drinking water — worldwide — is greater today than ever before. It is imperative to sustainable economic growth and improved quality of life. Our employees have made a climate change commitment that includes educational outreach, and last year we volunteered personal time to help young students — over 5000 of them — understand their own impact on climate change. We are thrilled to leave a lasting impression on future leaders.

What are your proudest moments, personally and professionally?

Personally, my wedding day and the day my daughter, Daria, the *noor* of my life, was born.

My first major business accomplishment was founding Innovyze. In just 15 years, we've become the world's leading provider of water and wastewater modeling and simulation technology. Our clients now include all the water utilities in the UK, most of the largest Australasian, East Asian, and North American cities, many of Europe and GCC largest utilities, and ENR top-rated design firms — a total of more than 10,000 progressive customers in 60 countries and territories. We're not only meeting our clients' needs; we're helping people across the globe live happier, healthier, more satisfying lives.

The second was my 2009-2011 stint as president of MWH Middle East (July 2009 to June 2011). Against the backdrop of a deep recession and a challenging business environment, we opened a new regional office in Dubai, successfully resolved the company's legacy problems, favorably settled doubtful debts, instituted rigorous risk management and compliance programs, established strong commercial and project disciplines, improved AR collection and reduced DSO by 57% to an all-time record low. We returned the company to profitability and placed it on a path to sustainable solid growth, renewed our commitment to local economies and job creation, and fostered opportunity for personal and societal advancement.

Entrepreneurial ethics means aspiring to be valued by customers as a trusted partner, and by society as a responsible enterprise.

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Integrated Care, Integrated Classrooms

Interprofessional Education Program synthesizes the fields of healthcare

By Muriel Kahwagi

Enormous scientific and technological advances in Western medicine in the past century were accompanied, all too often, by a more clinically detached approach to the healing arts; the country doctor who knew his community intimately gave way to the white-coated surgical-masked lab technician. The 21st-century emphasis on “patient-centered” health care — an integrated approach taking into account cultural traditions, personal preferences, family situations and community contexts — is in large part a reaction to this.



This new approach has in turn triggered a more integrated approach to medical education. The term “interprofessional education,” or IPE, is now in wide use to refer to interdisciplinary learning environments involving students and faculty from multiple professions in health and social care. The goal of IPE is to facilitate integrated professional practices that improve the quality of healthcare as well as the social wellbeing of patients.

The Interprofessional Education (IPE) Program work group at LAU offered two introductory sessions in April to introduce and acquaint the students enrolled in the health and social programs with the concept of IPE and its growing relevance to their future practice.

“Students can use the knowledge and skills they learn in IPE in any clinical setting and work efficiently with other health professionals. Collaboration is foundational to all health care work,” says Dr. Nancy Hoffart, founding dean of LAU’s Alice Ramez Chaghoury School of Nursing and chair of the IPE work group.

LAU’s IPE program was launched in spring 2011, and brings together students from nursing, medicine, pharmacy, nutrition, and social work programs, to take part in learning experiences in classroom, laboratory and clinical settings.

The IPE introductory sessions took place in the Selina Korban Theatre on the Byblos campus, two days apart. The April 2 “STEP 1” session was attended by a total of 135 students. These included first-year medical, first-year professional pharmacy, first-year nursing, third-year nutrition and first-year social work students, none of whom had substantial prior clinical or field learning experiences.

“We’re new to IPE, so there’s so much

to learn from this session about the integration of social workers with other healthcare professionals,” said Nadine Abdul Sater, a first-year social work student.

Faculty presentations highlighted the role of their respective professions in ensuring the success of IPE. Potential challenges to collaboration and integration — competition, lack of a common professional language and failure to solicit the input of other professionals — were also discussed.

“It’s not enough to deal only with medical causes of a patient’s condition,” said Dr. Hassan Hammoud, associate professor of social welfare in the Department of Social Sciences at LAU. “Health affects all aspects of a person’s life, and social workers are here precisely to bridge the gap between the individual and his social environment.”

The April 4 “STEP 2” session tackled more advanced IPE concepts, drawing extensively on students’ clinical experiences. The forum was attended by a total of 145 third-year medical, third- and fourth-year professional pharmacy, second-year nursing and third-year social work students.

Hoffart emphasizes not only the benefits of IPE for the wellbeing of patients and communities, but also the competitive advantage it confers on future professionals.

“When our students present their portfolios to prospective employers,” she says, “their interprofessional learning experience will link them to globally recognized standards such as those of the Joint Commission, a U.S.-based organization that accredits hospitals around the world.”

Inexhaustible Energy

Dr. Ahmad Houri brings eco-dynamism to the Department of Natural Sciences

By Curtis Brown

On paper, Dr. Ahmad Houri is a widely published associate professor of chemistry with research interests in a host of environmental issues, most deeply and consistently that of renewable energy.

In person, he is slightly harder to classify. Spry and nimble-minded, he speaks a babel of professional languages, shifting from academic jargon to casual banter to dollars-and-sense, bottom-line reasoning to the lyricism of a naturalist.

Houri “was not a born environmentalist.” His interest was aroused during his American postdoctoral years, by things he read and places — a wind farm, a sustainable house — he visited. It took hold firmly when he returned to Lebanon, where his love of the natural world grew alongside a love of photography.

“I came to environmentalism through my senses, through a whole sensory world,” he recalls.

In addition to wind power, solar energy and biofuels, he is involved in wastewater treatment and pollution monitoring in coastal rivers. He collaborates with national and international organizations to advance environmental initiatives, regularly traveling abroad to present his research. He serves on the board of trustees of the International Solar Energy Society. He and his wife are recognized authorities on Lebanese wildflowers.

It is dizzying to keep track of his degrees. Graduating in chemistry from AUB in 1990, Houri completed his Ph.D. in organic chemistry at Boston College five years later, going from there to a postdoctoral fellowship under the Nobel laureate Karl Barry Sharpless at the Scripps Research Institute in California. Four years ago, he completed his M.Sc. in renewable energy at the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland, and is today completing his E.M.B.A. at LAU.

Asked why one of the most recognized academic environmentalists in the country keeps enrolling in graduate programs, Houri replies: “A degree gives you more than knowledge — it gives you a methodology, a way of organizing your thoughts.

“An executive M.B.A. makes me stronger in saying ‘this is the feasibility of such-and-such project’. I’m better placed to persuade people, to get things done.”

The response is a window into his mind, into the mercurial shifts of tone and register. Like any successful advocate, he knows the value of speaking multiple tongues. He was publishing articles with titles like “Application of Zr-Catalyzed Carbomagnesation and Mo-Catalyzed Macrocyclic Ring Closing Metathesis in Asymmetric Synthesis” when he joined LAU in the 1990s. “Prospects and Challenges of Using Hydropower for Electricity Generation in Lebanon” is representative of more recent work.

Houri is gratified when work he has contributed to leads to policy initiatives, citing as recent examples the efficient-lighting campaign, a solar water-heater initiative, a biomass strategy assessment, and the creation of a wind atlas of Lebanon.

Houri is especially sanguine about the implementation of a “feed-in tariff,” which subsidizes individuals who produce renewable energy and feed it back into the power grid. “For this to work, we need regulation. But it can change the face of this country.”

Houri considers renewable energy the most exciting area of environmental research — “everyone knows oil is going to run out, whether in ten years or a hundred, and there are many alternatives to explore” — but says that ultimately, his wife’s field of habitat destruction and biodiversity may be more important.

“Once you infringe on virginal habitat, it’s gone,” he says.

Passionate as Houri is about research, there is a sense with him that his real laboratory is the classroom.

“All of this knowledge translates into teaching — that’s the beauty of research,” he says. “Ultimately, this is why we do it.”



Houri's personal nature photographs

An aerial photograph showing a vast, lush green park with numerous trees, situated in the middle of a densely packed city. In the background, a variety of high-rise apartment buildings and commercial structures are visible under a clear sky. In the foreground, a road with a few cars and a red container is partially visible.

FEATURE

No Stroll in the Park

The challenges of greening a concrete city

By Emily Morris



Feeling the grass between your toes or lying under the shade of a tree on a sunny day is a rare gift in Beirut, a city notoriously tangled with construction sites and car-choked streets.

According to the World Health Organization, a city should have at least 9 square meters of green space per capita, although 15 square meters is optimal. Beirut only has an estimated 0.8 square meters per capita. The implications of this are vast.

Parks and gardens are often called a city's green lungs. They purify the air we breathe by removing carbon dioxide and giving out oxygen, and filter it of pollutants and dust. Green spaces are also beneficial in more subtle ways, contributing to social and economic progress by fostering social cohesion and community development, as well as promoting healthy living and preventing illnesses.

From an environmental standpoint, they help mitigate the so-called "heat island" effect — the significant disparity of temperature between rural and urban areas that occurs when buildings, roads, and other heat-absorbing structures replace vegetation and open land. Heat islands, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, can increase "summertime peak energy demand, air conditioning costs, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, heat-related illness and mortality, and water quality."

Beirut's lungs have been on a steady decline since the 1990s, with development after development dramatically reshaping the landscape. The occasional tree-lined street and scattering of green spaces open to the public aren't nearly enough to mitigate the effects of air pollution spawned from rampant building, nor the ever-increasing traffic on Lebanese roads.

"We are racing against time here," says Fadel Fakhri, project campaigner at Green Line, a Beirut-based environmental non-governmental organization, which — among other things — lobbies for improvement of Lebanon's public green spaces. "The polluters destroying the environment in Lebanon are working at a much faster pace than the government entities acting against them."

A recent study by the Air Quality Research Unit (AQRU), a joint project between the American University of Beirut and St. Joseph University, revealed the startling extent of Beirut's air pollution. The group measured two sizes of particulate matter (PM) — PM10 and PM2.5, or particles with aerodynamic diameter of less than 10 μm (micrometers) and 2.5 μm , respectively — in three different locations around the city.

"Our selection of these sizes is based on findings from different international studies linking these particles with increase of morbidity (heart and pulmonary diseases, for example) and mortality," says Rawad Massoud, senior research assistant at the AQRU. "It should be noted that the smaller particles are more dangerous than larger ones, as they can reach deep locations in the lungs and even enter the bloodstream." 🌿

The WHO has set limits of 20 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (micrograms per cubic meter of air) for PM10 and 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for PM2.5. The AQRU study found yearly averages of PM10 were over three times WHO's recommendation at one of the locations, while yearly averages of PM2.5 were around two times the limit at all three sites.

It also showed that sources of air pollution in Beirut were more related to anthropogenic sources — i.e. human activities, including fuel burning and resuspension of dust from cars, brakes and tires. Vegetation, says Massoud, “can reduce the resuspension of dust from non-planted areas. In addition, several other studies have shown that trees could capture PM.”

According to Fakihi, 0.01 km^2 of trees can annually remove 13,000 tons of toxic gases and particles from the air, and 762 m^2 of green areas release enough oxygen for a family of four members to breathe (the size of a standard football pitch is 7140 m^2 , for example).

Armed with these telling statistics and a growing (however slowly) public consciousness about the environment, groups of dedicated individuals — architects, educators, urban planners and activists, like Fakihi — are working hard to green Beirut's grey.

One of the more creative projects in the pipeline is the Beirut Wonder Forest, a grassroots initiative on a sky-high mission to turn the city's rooftops into, as its name implies, a dreamlike treescape that is also accessible, cheap and easily maintained.

Lofty as it may seem, the concept is very simple, according to Wassim Melki (B.A.'08), architect, urban designer and the brains behind BWF. Each of Beirut's buildings would be required to place and take care of a couple of potted trees and shrubs on their rooftops, and also on their balconies on a smaller scale.

“In Beirut alone, without the suburbs of greater Beirut, there are around 18,500 buildings,” says Melki. “If only one tree is planted on each, we'd have an amount of trees equivalent to Central Park in New York City.”

But Melki hopes each building will have three to six trees, which would make Beirut upwards of 100,000 trees richer. He and his colleagues are still developing the feasibility study for the project, but thus far cost is ranging between \$3.5-4 million for

60,000 trees/shrubs, their installation plus seasonal maintenance for three years, and campaign and management costs.

The cost to Beirutis? Nothing. “The funding will be provided by private sector sponsors, so neither the residents nor the government will have to pay anything,” Melki says. “However we expect the municipality and the Ministry of Finance to offer tax reductions for buildings that maintain the trees well.”

The proposal has received mostly positive feedback, including over 8,000 “likes” on Facebook, spurring Melki to create the NGO ReAct to push for its implementation. “The prime minister himself, Mr. Najib Mikati, is fully supportive of the project and we are currently working with him, the Ministry of the Environment, and potential influential sponsors on a complete strategy to actually turn this into a reality,” he says.

“Sustainability is not only the right thing to do — it's essential to good design.”

—Dr. Nada El-Khoury, assistant professor of architecture, LAU Beirut

The issue of water usage is addressed in the BWF proposal, which suggests the installation of a basic rainwater collection system expected to harvest enough per building to irrigate the trees throughout the summer. “Most conventional rooftop gardens are very complex, and require a specific type of insulation and drainage, and a study should be conducted on the slab and how much weight it could support,” explains Melki. “Since many of Beirut's buildings are more than 50 years old, planting the trees in relatively large pots/planters will solve the issue of the added weight as well as that of drainage and insulation.”

Although some critics of BWF have pointed out that solar panels would be more effective conduits for reducing CO2 emissions, Melki points out that there's no either/or choice, and that green roofing may for many Beirutis be a more financially feasible first step.



What Beirut could like, courtesy of Wassim Melki



What Beirut looks like now, aerial view, courtesy of Wassim Melki

"Ideally we also want people to have solar panels, but the cost of one solar panel and its installation is equal to the cost of 100-140 trees/shrubs," he says. "Knowing that each apartment in a building needs a solar panel or two brings us to an average 10 solar panels per building."

"Since we are not turning the whole roof into a garden, there will be plenty of space left for the installation of solar panels in the future," he adds. "BWF is just a small piece of the big environmental puzzle."

Dr. Nada El-Khoury, assistant professor at LAU's School of Architecture and Design (SArD), knows how difficult it is to sell people on a sustainable design like BWF.

"In general, a school of architecture and design's mission is to improve and optimize quality of life," she says. "And this is precisely the argument for sustainable architecture. The air quality will be better, living spaces more efficiently laid out, and energy costs reduced."

Long-term quality of life in this sense, says El-Khoury, is sustainable architecture's critical economic factor, its *raison d'être*, the difficulty being that it's a difficult one to quantify and evaluate.

"We need people to understand however that sustainable development, recycling, and environmentally-friendly practices are not just trendy buzzwords," she says. "Sustainability is not only the right thing to do — it's essential to good design."

At the university level, El-Khoury and her colleagues in the SArD are hoping to drive this point home by "greening their teaching and encouraging sustainability in their actions."

As an institution, El-Khoury says, LAU can shape the consciousness of its student body through simple but effective measures, "such as reducing the number of car trips, organizing carpools, adding green spaces, building green roofs or green walls and installing low-flow toilets."

Cultivated, spacious and verdant, both the Beirut and Byblos

campuses are already a contrast to their surroundings, but there is room for improvement. To show its commitment to environmental sustainability, an entire section of LAU's new five-year strategic plan is devoted to the subject, including a clause calling for "enhancing the campus ecosystems and building a sustainable green campus."

"Our students will need cutting-edge knowledge, new skills and progressive attitudes in order to become members of a green workforce," says El-Khoury. "We must mobilize if we are to save the future."

Unfortunately, in the case of reviving Beirut's deteriorating green lungs, the future began yesterday. There are many things to be done. Experts on the issue agree on the need for much stricter enforcement of building regulations, and in general, more intelligent and informed urban planning at the state level.

"The responsibility falls on each and every citizen in this country to inform the government of any environmental abuse happening," says Fakih. "At least let's do our job and get the responsibility on the government's shoulders — and save them the excuse of not knowing about it."

He recalls when there was a plan in place to turn the popular Rene Mouawad Garden in Sanayeh into a parking lot. "A lot of people stood up next to Green Line, and we succeeded," says Fakih.

"Of course there should be proper transport systems, alternative energy production, more ecological incentives from the 'authorities,' etc.," says Melki. "But if only Lebanese people would drive smaller cars — we're not asking them to walk or take a bike yet — instead of the large SUVs or sports cars you see on our streets, we could cut down CO2 emissions by nearly 15 percent, for example."

In other words, a greener tomorrow is not outside the realm of possibility, as long as the Lebanese become accomplices in helping rather than hindering its realization. 🌱



LAU *Gala dinner*
Partnered for Excellence



The Great, the Good, and the Gala

LAU's first Beirut gala dinner gathers hundreds, raises millions

By Linda Dahdah Douaihy

LAU held its first ever gala dinner in Lebanon in late March at Biel. The event was held in honor of major university supporters, whose contributions have helped LAU make higher education accessible to needy and deserving students.



The event drew more than 850 people friends of the university. Attendees included prominent political, economic, academic, and cultural figures.

"I am honored by your presence here tonight and by your steadfast support for the university at a critical phase in its renaissance," said Joseph G. Jabbra, president of LAU.

Jabbra stressed the university's growth in recent years, both in terms of inaugurating new schools and major research facilities as well as successfully pursuing accreditations.

"This event is significant insofar as it reflects your generosity and your commitment to the vision of the university," he added.

If the \$7.5 million raised was anything to go by, that commitment indeed ran deep.

The gala's organizers raised \$297,000 through an auction of five antique pieces and two paintings by the internationally renowned Lebanese artists Chaouki Chamoun (associate professor of art at the School of Architecture and Design) and Rana Raouda (B.A. '83). LAU Trustee Ambassador Gilbert Chagoury and his wife Rose-Marie were the winning bidders for many of the items.

Antoun N. Sehnaoui, chairman and CEO of Société Générale de Banque au Liban, donated a staggering \$6 million for an athletic center to be built on the Byblos campus. The center will bear his name and that of the bank. Other lavish donations included \$500,000 from Edgar and Daniele de Picciotto.

In thanking LAU's supporters, Jabbra situated the university's goal of making quality higher education accessible to all within the context of its larger societal mission.

"Your commitment supports our university in its mission of providing academic excellence, and incentives — at the individual and societal level — towards prosperity and progress," said Jabbra. "These are the values we seek: a cultivated society where nobody is above the law in, where human behavior is led by innovation and achievement."

The gala dinner was held on the same weekend as the meetings of LAU's Board of Trustees and Board of International Advisors, and many members of both attended. All proceeds directly produced by the dinner will go toward the university's Endowment Scholarship Fund.



The World and the Word

Humanities Department introduces ecocriticism to LAU Beirut

By Curtis Brown

How can literature help us see relationships between our individual lives and large-scale environmental phenomena? What kinds of environmental expression transcend cultural differences, and what forms are unique to specific places in the world?

These are the sorts of questions addressed by the burgeoning field of literary scholarship known as “ecocriticism,” introduced in a lecture and seminar by Dr. Scott Slovic, professor of literature and environment at the University of Nevada, Reno, to a rapt multidisciplinary audience at LAU Beirut in March.

Slovic, himself a seminal figure in the field, offered several definitions of ecocriticism (short for environmental literary criticism) in the first part of his lecture, beginning broadly with “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical world.”

Ecocriticism takes an interdisciplinary approach to literary texts, combining traditional aesthetic interpretation with philosophy and formal training in the natural sciences. It is typically characterized by a strong ethical stance regarding the intrinsic value of the natural world.

Slovic stressed that it includes “the scrutiny of ecological implications and human-nature relations in any literary text,” not only explicitly environmentalist ones.

Indeed, while the field’s pioneers tended to be scholars of the British Romantic poets or American transcendentalists — 19th-century writers whose central subject was in fact nature — major ecocritical studies have since been published on writers ranging from Shakespeare to Khalil Gibran.

The events were organized by the Graduate Program in Comparative Literature at the Department of Humanities. Introductory remarks by Dr. Philippe Frossard, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, described the rise of ecocriticism as representative of a broader intellectual shift Frossard heartily welcomed, away from “over-specialization” and toward interdisciplinarity and holistic thinking.

Ecocriticism is a perfect example of this shift,” Frossard said, going on to cite genomics as an example from his own field, medicine. Practitioners are “in the position of classical or medieval scholars, navigating several disciplines at once.”

Slovic analyzed “Spring Pools,” by the American poet Robert Frost, to demonstrate how the approach can alter our experience of even a well-known work of literature. Addressed to snow-fed seasonal ponds — a familiar feature of the New England landscape, they appear and disappear rapidly — Frost’s poem is traditionally read as a lament about the ephemerality of experience.

LAU
School of Arts and Sciences
Department of Humanities

The Graduate Program in Comparative Literature
at the Department of Humanities
Cordially Invites You to the Following:

LECTURE
“Toward Consilient Ecocriticism:
Science, Literary Criticism, and the
Quest for Meaningful Interdisciplinarity”
Wednesday March 21st, 2012 @ 4:30
Business Building, room 905

SEMINAR
“Where Does Our Knowledge
of Nature Come From? An Introductory
Workshop on Ecocriticism
and Environmental Literature”
Thursday March 22nd, 2012 @ 4:30
Nicol Hall, room 222

By Dr. Scott Slovic
Dr. Scott Slovic is Professor of Literature and Environment in the
Department of English at the University of Nevada, Reno.
Since 1995, he has edited *ESL: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature
and Environment*, the major journal in the field. His twenty books
include *Seeking Awareness in American Nature Writing* (1992),
What's Nature Worth? (2004), *Going Away to Think: Engagement,
Retreat, and Ecological Responsibility* (2008), and the textbook
Literature and the Environment (1999/second edition 2012).

www.lau.edu.lb

Pointing out that such pools merely reflect fluctuations of the underlying water table, Slovic argued that the poem’s emotional tone of regret is balanced by an aesthetic understanding of nature’s cyclicity.

“If you know ecology, you know the water is there, but you just can’t see it,” Slovic said.

Dr. Vahid Behmardi, associate professor of Arabic and Persian literature and chair of the humanities department, expressed appreciation for insights made possible by ecocriticism, but wondered if the approach — especially when brought to bear on classical texts — carried the risk of anachronism.

“Is this faithful to the concepts that were in the mind of the poet when the poem was in fact composed?”

Dr. Samira Aghacy, professor of English and comparative literature, approached the question of anachronism from a different angle, suggesting that someone like William Wordsworth, a 19th-century British poet who wrote extensively about “the mind of man vis-à-vis external nature,” might be regarded not merely as a subject for ecocritics but an ecocritic himself.

Slovic urged fellow academics to not talk merely “to ourselves and with each other” — to move, that is, not only between disciplines but beyond them.

“It’s not just people in the university — in literature, in the sciences — who ‘own’ the knowledge,” he concluded. “People who live in close, daily contact with the natural world often have a deep wisdom that we need to learn from.”

Droid Rage

Youth robot games rivet LAU Byblos

By Muriel Kahwagi

In the second week of March, hundreds of robots descended on LAU Beirut from all over the Arab world. In an atmosphere formally courteous but fiercely competitive, the took turns besting one another in everything from line tracking to ball collecting to food delivery, while others cleared the mats and grappled with each other sumo-style.

They didn't make the journey alone. They were accompanied by their creators, some 400 budding young scientists and engineers, all under the age of 20, who came for the 5th Open Arab Robotics Championship (OARC).

Hosted by LAU, in collaboration with the First Lego League (FLL) Lebanon and under the patronage of Lebanese President General Michel Suleiman, the event marked the first time Lebanon hosted the prestigious competition.

Participants built and programmed robots in order to compete in four different tournaments: the First Lego League (subdivided into Robot Missions, Robot Design, Core Values and Project), the Line Tracking Robot Competition, the Sumo Robot Competition and the Ball Collector Competition.

"We tried our best to improve our model — to have its weight equally distributed on its four legs to optimize its performance," said Omar Al Daqaq, a 14-year-old Syrian contestant.

Al Daqaq, whose team came fresh from a robotics championship in Syria, described participating in OARC as an "honor and a privilege."

"This is an opportunity for talented Arab youth — robotics champions in their homelands — to get to know one another in a setting both educational and cultural," said Dr. Ramy Harik, president of the OARC organizing committee and assistant professor of industrial and mechanical engineering at LAU.

The competition has a central theme each year. Previous years' challenges have focused on topics such as nanotechnology, climate, and quality of life for the handicapped; this year's tackled safe delivery of food — through every stage of the production process.

"If a race were held in late 1903,



between the original Ford 'Model A' automobile and the Wright brothers' first airplane, it would have been close — but a horse would have beaten them both," said the competition's mission statement, reminding contestants that they should think big, that visionary potential was sometimes more important than technical point-scoring.

The meticulous conception of fully functional, independent droids is not the competition's sole purpose; OARC also aims at promoting the skills, experience, and career opportunities of its young participants.

Indeed, remarked Dean of the School of Engineering Dr. George E. Nasr during the opening ceremony, OARC seeks to promote not only creativity and technological advancement but also leadership skills and commitment to civil society.

"Knowledge and technology intersect in a milieu fostering both innovation and sociability," says Nasr.

The jury consisted of faculty from various Lebanese universities, including LAU, the American University of Beirut (AUB), Université Saint Joseph (USJ), Notre Dame University (NDU), and the Hariri Canadian University (HCU).

Farah Shaddad from Jordan and Abdel Rahman El-Zein, from Lebanon, whose teams were crowned the 2012 Arab Champions and the Robot Missions

Champions respectively, were rewarded with scholarships covering 50% of their undergraduate studies at LAU. Both teams, N.X.T Leaders and Dawn of Innovation 2, subsequently qualified for the Food Factor World Festival, which will take place April 25-28.

"At LEGO we see you, the students involved in FLL, as the coolest kids in the World — keep it as a secret," said Gerhard Bjerrum-Andersen, representing FLL World Challenge, in lighthearted remarks to OARC contestants.

"I am impressed by your energy and commitment — you are ambassadors of FLL. You are all winners just by coming here," he added.

This year's competition was sponsored by Roadster Diner, Cisco, Samsung, Hawat Trading Co., NRJ, and the municipalities of Blat and Byblos.



Surgical Pioneer

Dr. Chahine Assi heads orthopedic surgery at UMC – RH

By Curtis Brown

Dr. Chahine Assi has been appointed head of orthopedic surgery at the University Medical Center — Rizk Hospital (UMC–RH). Assi, an assistant professor in the School of Medicine at LAU Byblos, first joined the orthopedic division at Rizk Hospital in 2003.

Assi completed his M.D. at Université Claude Bernard, France in 1992. He then specialized in orthopedic surgery at the Faculté de Medecine Montpellier, finishing in 1999.

From 1999 to 2002 he was head of the orthopedic clinic at Le Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Montpellier, and for a brief stint in 2001 was a visiting surgeon in orthopedics and trauma surgery at Utah Hospital in the United States.

In his years at UMC–RH, Assi distinguished himself by performing advanced surgeries — including lumbar spine disc replacement, vertebral corpectomy by thoracoscopy, minimally invasive technique for total hip replacement — that had not previously been executed in the Middle East.

A French-Lebanese dual national, Assi describes joining LAU and UMC–RH as “the natural progression” from his decade of experience as a university-based physician in Montpellier. “It was a great opportunity to reintroduce academia into my practice,” he says.

Assi speaks with passion and conviction about his clinic’s role in regional orthopedics. “Our strength lies in the fact that we function as cohesive



surgical group, while each of us excels in a sub-specialization,” he says. “In this way we combine state-of-the-art patient care with excellent medical student and resident education and training, while becoming the first referral center for orthopedic surgery in the Middle East.”



The First Medical LAU | UMC-RH Annual Conference
jointly held with
The 12th International ALMA Congress

Healthcare Beyond Borders

University Medical Center – Rizk Hospital
Beirut, Lebanon

June 29 & 30, 2012

This activity has been approved for both American and Lebanese CME

Semaan becomes COO of UMC – RH

Former HR director brings wealth of experience with him

By Curtis Brown

After ten years of service as director of Human Resources at LAU, Nabil Joseph Semaan has been appointed chief operating officer at UMC – RH. In his new position, he will be responsible for overseeing Human Resources, Facilities Management, Information Technology, Quality, Marketing and Development, as well as various service departments. The appointment became effective February 1.

“Mr. Semaan will employ his rich experience in the corporate and academic world to best serve the hospital and its constituents,” said the hospital’s board of directors in an enthusiastic welcome message.

Semaan made an indelible mark during his time at Human Resources, revising the job classification and compensation systems following a detailed study, and implementing Oracle HRMS with segregation of duties between HR and

the Finance Department. He is known by virtually the entire LAU community; in a decade of exponential institutional growth, all newly hired faculty and staff passed through his former office, where they found an unfailingly courteous host.

Semaan completed his B.S. in biochemistry from AUB and an M.B.A. in management from LAU. Before joining LAU in 2002, he held managerial positions at a number of local and multinational corporations, including Eastman Kodak in Lebanon and the Gulf. He has further experience as a teacher, consultant, creative writer and translator, and has participated in seminars, workshops, conferences and exhibitions in more than 20 countries around the world.

Helping to instill an equal opportunity employment culture and make LAU an “employer of choice in the Lebanese market” has defined Semaan’s service



to the university, as has helping all departments achieve their individual missions.

“Every business is a value delivery system,” he says. “Every link in the chain should be stimulated — through training and awareness — to fortify the overall system, and allow it to deliver the promised value.”

Decades of Service Draw to a Close

Registrar and founder of computer science program retires

By Curtis Brown

After 35 years of service at LAU, first in the computer science department whose degree program he founded, and later as Beirut campus registrar, Vatche Papazian has retired.

Papazian is a widely known and loved figure at LAU, and news of his retirement elicited warm accolades from academic and administrative colleagues as well as the university’s upper brass.

Dr. Elise Salem, vice president for Student Development and Enrollment Management, described Papazian as a “man of firm conviction, integrity and enviable calm.”

“He was a prime resource, and often the conscience of the university,” she added.

Abdo Ghie, assistant vice president for Enrollment Management, concurred, praising Papazian’s integrity and meticulousness. “He conscientiously observed academic rules and regulations, and always reflected fully before giving his opinion or judgment,” Ghie said.

Papazian graduated from AUB in

mechanical engineering, and went on to complete his master’s in computer science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. After stints in Madison as a computer science instructor and programmer for the university’s Space Astronomy Lab and its Space Science and Engineering Center, he joined LAU as a part-time instructor in 1976, and became a full-time faculty member a year later. Since 2004, Papazian has been university registrar and student system coordinator.

Characteristically modest, Papazian is the sort of person who, in speaking with a reporter about his career, neglects to mention his time as a Fulbright Scholar in the United States, or the fact that he founded one of LAU’s most successful degree programs, the now-ABET-accredited B.S. in computer science.

His reputation for dignity and self-effacement extends from LAU’s administrative halls to its classrooms to its departmental offices. Tarek Dana, supervisor of the Academic Computer



Center and a former student of Papazian, remembers him as an exacting, demanding but humane teacher.

Dr. Samer Habre, associate professor of mathematics and chair of the Department of Computer Science and Mathematics, recalls — upon hearing news of Papazian’s administrative retirement — asking him to consider teaching computer science again.

“He demurred, saying he would need to update his knowledge of the field before returning to it,” Habre marvels. “It’s yet another indication of his modesty, integrity and commitment to excellence.”

Faculty on the Move



DR. LUCA BARELLO

Italian architect Dr. Luca Barello recently joined LAU's School of Architecture and Design as visiting assistant professor. Barello graduated in architecture from the Politecnico di Torino, and holds a Ph.D. in architecture and building design. Prior to joining LAU, Barello taught architecture and design courses at the Politecnico di Torino and at La Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti (NABA). He has also done research on open spaces, building in the alpine region, and the relationship between architecture and landscape. Barello hopes to give students at LAU the chance to better understand and deal with the complexity of architecture as a part of a natural or built environment.



ANDREW BOBROW

Andrew Bobrow recently joined the Communication Arts department as an instructor, teaching courses in filmmaking, film as art, and history and theory of film. He holds a B.A. from New York University and an M.A. in media studies from The New School, where he was a member of the graduate faculty prior to joining LAU. Bobrow is an award-winning producer, writer, and director, whose work includes productions for cable networks, corporate videos, as well as interactive projects for the web and disc-based media. As feature editor for the *Filmmakers Newsletter* in the 1970s, he published interviews with John Schlesinger, Sven Nyqvist, Alan Pakula and other notable directors, cinematographers, and producers.



DR. NADER EL KHATIB

Dr. Nader El Khatib recently joined LAU's School of Arts and Sciences as assistant professor of applied and pure mathematics. He earned his Ph.D. in applied mathematics from the Université Claude Bernard – Lyon 1. Prior to joining LAU, El Khatib taught at the Ecole Centrale de Lyon and was a postdoctoral researcher at the French National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Control (INRIA). His research interests include applied mathematics, partial differential equations, mathematical modeling, bio-mathematics, modeling of cardiovascular diseases and modeling of pedestrian traffic. El Khatib aims to develop a multidisciplinary research record through collaboration with scholars from other departments and backgrounds.



DR. MAYA FARAH

Dr. Maya Farah joined LAU's School of Business in the spring of 2012 as assistant professor of marketing, teaching both at the undergraduate and the MBA levels. Farah holds a Ph.D. in marketing from the Manchester Business School. Her research interests include the socio-psychological approach to consumer behavior, and boycotting behavior from a cross-cultural and religious perspective. Farah actively participates in leading international conferences, and her work has appeared in top marketing journals. She has previously held academic appointments at the American University of Beirut's Olayan School of Business, as well as the Toulouse Business School in France.



AFIF HACHEM

Afif Hachem recently joined LAU's School of Business as assistant instructor of hospitality and tourism management, bringing with him 15 years of culinary experience. Hachem earned his B.B.A. in culinary arts, and his Hospitality Department Trainer Certification (CHDT) from the American Hotel and Lodging Association in the United States in 2004. His teaching experience dates to 2001, and he has since taught at various established institutions, including the Collège Technique des Frères and the Technical Institute of Hotel Management. Hachem also operates and manages his own company, Feu Doux Catering.



DR. ALI IHAB

Dr. Ali Ihab recently joined LAU's School of Engineering as visiting assistant professor, teaching courses on sustainable energy and architecture, energy systems and heat transfer. He is concurrently the president and co-founder of Deeia Systems, an integrated hybrid wind and solar renewable energy company. Ihab has a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from the University of Maryland. He was previously the chief thermal architect at Apple, where he is credited for leading and innovating thermal technologies and design architectures for several of Apple's flagship products. His research interests include electronics and buildings thermal management and sustainability, energy efficiency, renewable energy and environmental impact.

BASSEM SLIM

Bassem Slim recently joined LAU's School of Business as an instructor of hospitality and tourism management. Slim earned his B.S. in business accounting and economics from Beirut University College in 1991, and his master's in hospitality management from the University of Houston two years later. Slim first joined LAU as a part-time instructor in 1999, after years of restaurant management experience in Houston. He has since returned to teach restaurant management and hotel operations classes at LAU, where he is also the supervisor of the Hospitality Club.

Education Across Borders

Operational since October 2010, LAU's Outreach and Civic Engagement unit (OCE) aims to integrate civic engagement initiatives with the extra-curricular activities of LAU students on both campuses, and to encourage students to broaden their horizons both within and beyond Lebanon.

Because LAU strives to graduate distinguished professionals as well as future community leaders, OCE helps LAU students enrich their education and deepen their cultural experience by studying for a semester in an accredited university abroad.

Mindful both of LAU's growing stature and Lebanon's status as a symbiotic bridge between East and West, OCE provides guidance and support to international students coming to study here.

For additional information, please visit our webpage, <http://students.lau.edu.lb/student-engagement/exchange.php>, or contact the study abroad coordinator at dina.arahman@lau.edu.lb





FEATURE

Water Foul

The upstream battle to protect
Lebanese waterways

By Marc Abizeid



Each morning Hadi Majed pulls himself out of bed before sunrise, suits up in his stained, gray overalls and crosses two army checkpoints to arrive at the Ouzai fishing port by 6 am. Passenger jets roar overhead as they prepare to land at the Beirut airport, just a stone's throw south of the docks.

And each morning, it seems, the coastal water gets a little thicker with sludge and a lot sparser with fish, as cement trucks and sewers flush their hazardous waste into the sea. After years of unregulated industrial dumping contaminating Lebanese coastlines, the fish have backed away, drawing the bearded men with their hooks and nets chasing after them further and further from the shore.

"Garbage, sewer water, mud, especially the mud and sand that come from cement trucks — all of it is dumped here," says the 40-something Majed, gesturing toward the water surrounding the docks, which has taken on the turbid brown opacity of coffee freshly splashed with cream. "Everything in the sea, all our problems, it all comes from this mud."

Majed says he doesn't wheel in a day's catch before 8 pm, making his a 14-hour work day.

It wasn't always like this.

After 15 years in the trade, Majed recalls the earlier days before Beirut's rapid, post-war reconstruction era had left the fishing industry in complete disarray. Back then, he would drift out in the night between 7 pm and 3 am, and spend the wee hours on the water pursuing certain types of fish that don't feed during the day.

But he can no longer afford to be picky. Fishermen like him now settle for whatever gets trapped in their nets between the layers of plastic bags and garbage.

"This all started about eight years ago," Majed says. "No one has done anything to stop it."

Other fishermen are quick to interject here that despite recent rhetoric from the government and municipalities about planned action to curtail dumping, nothing has materialized, and the situation continues inexorably to worsen.

The situation in Ouzai is but a snapshot of a problem endemic throughout the country, as rivers, streams and the entire stretch of the Lebanese coastline suffer routine exposure to toxic waste. A fuller picture of the extent of industrial pollution has been provided by Greenpeace Lebanon, which recently undertook a campaign to draw attention to it.

The organization visited over a dozen coastal sites where heavy industry has both compromised the sanctity of local habitats and presented dangers to nearby villagers. Greenpeace members collected water samples from each site that revealed acidic Ph imbalances on the coast. The samples were then sent to the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom for further testing, to discover what types of chemicals contaminate the water. 🐟

In one case, Greenpeace activists filmed a seemingly never-ending source of waste water jetting out from the backside of a chemical factory in Selaata, a coastal town in North Lebanon, directly into the sea.

"Most of the people we spoke to in Selaata were poor, weak, they just live their lives day to day suffering from the pollution around them," says Rayan Makarem, a campaigner from Greenpeace Lebanon.

"You can smell the sulfur in the air," he added. "The water around the factory has been bleached. You have a 700 meter radius around the company with no life there, and now the village next to it has been abandoned and people had to move up the hill."

The problem is old, dangerous and widespread, but it only seems to catch public attention when something spectacular or ghoulish happens, such as cows washing up dead on the beaches of Batroun, or the Beirut River turning suddenly and biblically blood red, as happened in February of this year.

The environmental ministry sent a team to collect samples from the red river, but weeks later, it had yet to determine the substance or source of the pollutant, suggesting only that the most likely explanation was a factory dumping dye used to color clothing.

Contamination is a concern for anyone who uses running water, not only for those living next to fouled waterways. Lebanon has countless water wells along its coast, which are a major source of the country's running water. Because contamination of these wells is a chronic problem, and because many of them are located near wastewater outlets, many conclude that Lebanese water supplies are non-potable due to industrial pollution.

The truth is more complicated, according to Dr. Samira

Korfali, assistant professor of chemistry at LAU, who has undertaken extensive research into the contamination of drinking water. Toxic wastewater dumped into the sea has many of its contaminants naturally filtered out ground seepage before it enters the wells. Seawater itself — with its heavy calcium, sodium, magnesium and other mineral content — is the major contaminant of coastal wells.

"Sea water gets into wells for one simple reason: You are pumping the wells underground which causes them to dry up, and due to a pressure difference, sea water will geologically seep into the well," Korfali explains. Toxic pollutants most likely represent a minor factor in overall contamination, she adds.

One of the least recognized but most serious sources of water pollution in Lebanon is the production of something few of its people could live without: olive oil.

Summer is big business for olive oil producers across the country who harvest and crush and squeeze the bitter fruit to satisfy the national appetite. Not many realize that about 80 percent of the total output of these mills is waste byproduct (30 percent solid waste and 50 percent dense olive oil wastewater).

While not toxic, this wastewater ranks among the earth's least biodegradable substances. When dumped into rivers and streams, it changes the texture, density and opacity of the water, ultimately wreaking havoc on local habitats.

The cost of treatment is beyond the reach of most of small, family-run mills. In search of a low-cost solution, Dr. Fouad Hashwa, professor of microbiology and biotechnology at LAU Byblos, and a team of student researchers established an experimental facility in Byblos that uses a process called aerobic treatment, which succeeded in reducing the pollution potential of the wastewater by about 75-80 percent.



Untreated sewage and industrial waste often enters Lebanese waterways directly

But the project goes even further than removing pollutants, converting much of the waste into biogas which are sold on the lucrative energy market.

"We wanted to use the project to help these communities and small olive oil mills not only curb pollution, but also earn economic benefits," Hashwa said.

The economic costs of water pollution can indeed be as crippling as the ecological ones. In addition to wreaking havoc on human health and environmental habitats, water pollution has been found to have broader consequences for Lebanon's delicate economy. A June 2004 World Bank report estimated that the cost of environmental degradation in Lebanon amounted to approximately 2.8 – 4 percent of the country's GDP in the year 2000. The average of those figures (3.4 percent) amounts to around \$565 million dollars.

The enforcement gap with respect to Lebanon's environmental laws may largely boil down to the absence of a specialized enforcement body.

Among the factors included in the study of environment degradation, water pollution proved to be the leading cause of the problem. Coastal zones and cultural heritage constituted its own category in the study, but if combined with water, the two factors measure to over half of the total amount of lost GDP as a result of environmental degradation. The figure has almost certainly risen by a significant number over the last 12 years as industries have flourished throughout the country.

Since 2000, every new factory in Lebanon has had to undergo an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) by the environmental ministry in order to operate. The ministry ensures that factories meet certain environmental requirements in order to pass the assessment and earn an operating license. Among the requirements, the factory must prove that it has the capability to treat and properly dispose of its waste.

But many older factories lack such capabilities. In their defense, even if factory owners wanted to operate by legal standards, that would require them to invest in expensive equipment to retrofit their facilities. And without significant precedent for enforcement of environmental laws, even newer companies with proper waste treatment facilities have little incentive to prioritize the environment over profit.

Despite mounting criticisms leveled against the Ministry of Environment for its ineffectiveness in prosecuting environmental criminals, Viviane Sassine, an environmental specialist at the ministry's Department of Protection of Natural Resources, insists that all citizen claims and complaints of industrial violations against the environment are thoroughly investigated.

"Whenever we receive complaints, we go on site to see what's happening; according to what we find, there will be letter from the minister or director general which may order immediate cessation of the work there," Sassine explains.

Something at any rate is missing at the level of enforcement. Notwithstanding Sassine's palpable confidence in the role of the ministry in going after polluters, and her genuine assurances of a proactive effort and solid commitment to environmental wellness, the reality on the ground is compelling prima facie evidence that much more needs to be done.



The enforcement gap with respect to Lebanon's environmental laws may largely boil down to the absence of a specialized enforcement body with the proper background and training to deal specifically with environmental issues. As things currently stand, the responsibilities of enforcement lie with the municipalities — who may be unfit and ill-equipped to vigorously pursue polluters.

But this may not be the case for long.

Nada Zaarour, the president of the Lebanese Green Party, picks up a copy of Lebanese Environmental Law number 444 and reads from article three, which stipulates that "everyone has the right to a sound and stable environment," moreover that "it is the duty of every citizen to ensure the protection of the environment."

"Okay," she says, "but how am I going to enforce this?"

For four years, she explains, the party has been working to get a new directive passed by the government which would create an attorney general for the environment whose sole purpose would be to enforce environmental laws. The directive finally passed through the council of ministers and the ministry of environment earlier this year, and a parliamentary vote is expected sometime in the near future.

If passed, the legislation would partition segments of the Lebanese police and army into a single force directed by the attorney general to go after environmental offenders.

Furthermore, the legislation would also create a special *sejel el aadel*, a sort of criminal record specifically for those who violate environment laws.

"You have to fine those who pollute," Zaarour says. "If they are fined, and if they see that other polluters are being fined, they will think twice before repeating the offense." 🧩



Born in the U.S.A.

Seattle, Houston,
and South Florida
alumni chapters
join the family

By Greg Houle

For a growing university like LAU, opportunities inevitably arise for new alumni chapters to spring up across the globe. Indeed, the alumni relations team is developing what they hope will become an alumni chapter in Ghana, the first LAU chapter on the African continent, and there has been continuous expansion across the Middle East and into Europe in recent years as well. The most rapid growth, however, has been in the U.S., where new chapters were recently opened in Seattle, Houston and South Florida.

Seattle, Washington is about as far from Lebanon as the Earth's surface permits, its weather an equally stark contrast to the sunshine of the Levant. Opportunity nevertheless knocks for a growing number of LAU alumni in America's pacific northwest. Recent grads have found themselves in or near Seattle working for Microsoft or Boeing — two of the region's most prominent global corporations. With the assistance of New York-based Director of Alumni Relations and Special Projects Ed Shiner, a group of alumni held its first meeting last September, and reconvened again for a Yalla! 2011 event in November. Things moved quickly from there, and in December chapter officers were elected and Georges El Khoury, a 2005 computer engineering graduate and a Florida transplant, became president.

Houston, Texas is a known hub for Lebanese expatriates, and LAU has long maintained an informal chapter there. But it was the work of Dania Awad, a 1980

communication arts graduate, and LAU Trustee Eva Farha that helped get the official organization off the ground. Shiner met Awad at LAU's 2011 homecoming event in Beirut, discovered she had recently relocated to Houston, convinced her to launch the chapter officially. Farha meanwhile proved invaluable in connecting Awad with fellow alumni in eastern Texas. The chapter held elections in January of this year and Awad became president. The chapter hosted an event for President Jabbara later that month, followed by a dinner and raffle for Valentine's Day.

The university's newest alumni chapter was born in March in Miami, Florida. For years the vast southern state had hosted a single chapter. Florida-based alums Nadia Zahr and Elie Andary — working alongside Shiner — took matters into their own hands and helped to get a new chapter formed. An initial meeting was held in late February, and a leadership committee will soon be selected. The group has also begun planning events.

"We have such a strong contingent of alumni in Florida, and we wanted to make it easy for as many as possible to participate in events. Creating a new chapter based in the southern part of the state was the best option," Shiner said. "Fortunately we had the wonderful assistance of Nadia and Elie, who helped the process along. It wouldn't have happened without their efforts — and the work of all of our alumni in south Florida."



Gulf Galas Raise Scholarship Funds

By LAU Staff



The annual gala dinners of LAU alumni chapters in Abu Dhabi and Dubai and Northern Emirates, held in mid-March, both drew record participation and raised large sums for student scholarships.

"Networking, getting alumni together, promoting LAU — all are important outcomes of these annual dinners," Abdallah Al Khal, director of Alumni Relations, said. "But most importantly, they raise needed funds for student scholarships."

Abu Dhabi's dinner — "From LAU to the World" — was held at the Rotana Beach Hotel. It honored four prominent supporters of the university: Amal Hourani, Kameel Sarieddine, Salim Zyr and Salim Sfeir.

"Year after year more people are learning about LAU and what we stand for, and they believe in what we are doing," said chapter president Naim Stephan.

Promotion of LAU through local chapters has been crucial to spreading word of its mission and goals in recent years, but Stephan points out that these efforts were largely made possible through the visionary leadership of Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara, president of LAU since 2004.

Jabbara, who attended both the Abu Dhabi and Dubai galas, was caught by surprise when Stephan — along with other chapter committee members — summoned him to the stage to receive an award for his service to the university.

"We felt it our duty to honor him for the achievements he brought to LAU over the past few years," Stephan said, pointing out that Jabbara's tenure has witnessed the establishment of the medical and nursing schools, the purchase of Rizk Hospital, NEASC accreditation and the accreditation of many degree programs.

The Dubai and Northern Emirates dinner took place at Al Bustan Rotana Hotel, and centered on a mother's day theme. "From our mothers we learned how to love, how to care, and most importantly, how to give," said chapter president Saad El Zein, toasting the hundreds who attended.

The chapter honored Leila Solh Hamade, former Lebanese Minister of Industry, describing her as "personifying the values of the dearest person to our heart." Solh Hamade also serves as vice president of the Alwaleed bin Talal Humanitarian Foundation, which has donated generously to LAU over the years.

El Zein explained that the gala's ultimate objective is to help LAU students in need of financial assistance. "It is our mission to raise scholarship funds to help them fulfill their ambitions, goals and dreams," he said.

For the evening's entertainment, organizers hired Lebanese singers Maya Diab and Joseph Attieh.

Local high-school principals from the UAE were invited for the first time to attend, both as a token of appreciation for their support of LAU and to offer them a sense of what the university stands for.

"This reinforces and personalizes the relationship we have with these schools," said Abdo Ghie, assistant vice president for Enrollment Management. It was also the first time Ghie, along with Nada Hajj and Michel Najjar, directors of admissions in Beirut and Byblos respectively, attended such galas as part of their outreach effort.

According to Ghie, parental interest in LAU far exceeded organizers' expectations. "I discovered very quickly that attendees were committed to LAU — they love it and speak extremely highly of it," he said. "They are eager to send their kids to us — in many cases, their questions were simply logistical."

He added that Hajj and Najjar deserve credit for "cultivating personal and friendly" relationships with high schools in the UAE.

Both events were sponsored by the Bank of Beirut.



Advancement Pauses for Goodbye

Richard Rumsey takes leave of LAU after transformative tenure

By Greg Houle

After serving LAU for seven years as vice president for University Advancement, Richard Rumsey resigned from his position in mid-May. He has accepted a position at Project HOPE, a major international organization that provides health education programs and humanitarian assistance in areas of need.

"LAU and Lebanon have changed me — and for that matter, my entire family — forever," said Rumsey in a statement to the university community. "The work we do here affects the lives of individuals, their families, communities, countries, and our world. I have been so blessed to be a part of that."

Rumsey oversaw a complete retooling of LAU's development, alumni, marketing and communications, and public relations offices, leading their evolution into a flourishing division representing LAU to key constituencies around the world.

A signal achievement of Rumsey's vice presidency was the implementation of the first comprehensive fundraising campaign in LAU's history. Known as The Legacy and the Promise, the five-year campaign proved so successful that it exceeded its \$65 million goal a full year ahead of schedule.

"Richard's commitment to LAU has been exemplary," said LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara.

"His relationship with his colleagues and the members of his division was warm, his hard work on the Legacy and Promise campaign impeccable, and his overall impact on the university extremely positive."

Rumsey also oversaw the exponential growth of the university's global alumni network, which more than doubled the number of chapters during his tenure.

"Richard understands the importance of alumni to the university, and this recognition was behind the rapid development of the Alumni Relations Office and the Alumni Association," said Abdallah Al-Khal, LAU's Executive Director for Alumni Relations.

In the marketing, communication and public relations arenas, Rumsey was central to the rebranding effort that introduced both a new visual identity for LAU and a more focused marketing and communications program. He shepherded LAU into social media, and a Facebook and Twitter presence now the largest of any higher education institution in Lebanon. Over the past seven years LAU has attracted more media coverage — within Lebanon, as well as regionally and nationally — than ever before.



Rumsey is credited with introducing systems both to implement LAU's strategic plans and helping Advancement function more effectively throughout the world. Whether working closely with Director of Advancement Services Amal Abdel Massih and her team to keep LAU's massive database running smoothly, or helping guide Marge Pfeleiderer, Executive Director for Operations in New York, through the challenges of managing a global institution, Rumsey is praised for collaborative agility and finesse.

"Rich's presence in New York was a great benefit to the team," says Pfeleiderer. "His help in professionalizing and systematizing the work we do has paid huge dividends to the entire university."

Colleagues say Rumsey will be remembered for his infectious passion and affability, a current of energy joining Beirut, Byblos and New York, and felt throughout the university community.

"He is a good friend and I will miss the frequency of seeing him," Al-Khal said.

Pfeleiderer added that Rumsey "helped us understand that the most important aspect of our job was building relationships."

Those feelings extend far beyond his division. "In addition to his valuable collaboration and insights, I will miss Rich's extraordinary friendliness and enthusiasm," says Dr. Elise Salem, vice president of Student Development and Enrollment Management.

"His passion for LAU was contagious," says LAU Trustee Ron Cruikshank, concisely summing up the feelings of many, "and his enthusiasm will be missed."



Richard Rumsey and the advancement team during his farewell reception

Conductor of Knowledge

Brigitte Wex at the borderlands of biology and chemistry

By Linda Dahdah Douaihy



Dr. Brigitte Wex joined LAU Byblos as assistant professor of chemistry in the Natural Sciences Department in 2006, in the midst of a decade of tremendous growth for the university as a whole. Wex describes it as a period of transformation, recalling the excitement as contagious. “I wanted to contribute any way I could, I wanted to be part of it,” she says.

Indeed the keynote of Wex’s conversation — one realizes after talking with her even for an hour — is transformation. It suffuses her mode of thought, recurring in personal, professional, and intellectual registers.

The metamorphic motif is appropriate enough, given the nexus of her research interests and educational background. Drawing on higher degrees in molecular biology and photochemistry, and postdoctoral work in optoelectronics (a broad field including everything from semiconductors to solar cells), Wex’s current research is at the threshold between nature and technology, where organic materials become semiconductors for opto-electronic devices (such as are found

in displays for computers, mobile phones and the like). This research is carried out in collaboration with researchers from AUB and Georgia Institute of Technology, U.S.A.

Wex’s research also touches on matters of epidemiological importance. She makes use of a technique in mass spectrometry known as matrix-assisted laser desorption/ionization (MALDI) mass spectrometry to study microorganisms in very high resolution based on protein extracts in collaboration with colleagues at LAU.

“We use this to characterize the profiles of microorganisms — their so-called ‘fingerprints.’ We’re currently working on *Staphylococcus aureus*, which is responsible for serious infectious diseases globally.”

A third axis of her current research is the quantitation of picocyanobacteria, ubiquitous in marine and freshwater environments. “The methodology of enumeration we’re developing in our lab can be used for environmental monitoring — as well as to monitor nutrient availability — in fresh and salt water bodies,” she explains, noting its relevance for ecological studies. This research is done in collaboration with researchers from Bowling Green State University in Ohio, U.S.A.

Wex aptly describes herself as a multidisciplinary researcher. Having completed her Vordiplom in biology at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität in her native Freiburg, Germany, she went on to complete a master’s specializing in molecular biology,

her Ph.D. in photochemistry at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, U.S.A. and a post-doctoral fellowship at Arizona State University on the design and preparation of optoelectronic devices.

She discusses her research with evident passion, and she expresses a wish to pass on the “virus” — the characteristic blend of wonder, curiosity and enthusiasm that scientists share with artists — to her students.

“A good day for me is when a student comes back to me saying ‘here is what you’ve taught me, here is what I have done, this is the result and this is how I think it should be interpreted,’” Wex explains. “This is the transformation I look for as a teacher — students shifting from merely attending class to actively, even zealously, taking part in research.”

Family is indeed her other great passion. Asked how she balances the demands of motherhood with those of research, Wex notes that her adoptive Lebanon “is a country where education is really valued,” and goes on to say she hopes her three-year-old daughter will remain here. “Lebanon has huge potential for development,” she says.

Wex has published 15 papers in peer-reviewed international journals, and participated in numerous international conferences. She is an active member of the Society for Optical Engineering, the American Chemical Society and the German Chemical Society.

Campusnotes

Edited by Linda Dahdah Douaihy

For more details about these LAU activities, visit the news section of www.lau.edu.lb.

Cultural and Academic Exchange



Opening new academic doors to Europe

In October 2011, LAU joined the WELCOME (Widening Egyptian and Lebanese Cooperation and Mobility with Europe) consortium, an exchange program which comprises 19 universities from the EU, Lebanon and Egypt, and is coordinated by Politecnico di Torino, Italy. The grant is worth €4 million (roughly \$6.7 million), \$600,000 of which was awarded to LAU, spanning a four year timeframe – from October 2011 to October 2015. Accepted candidates – undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students as well as post-doctoral faculty and staff – will spend between 6-36 months in a European partner university studying, training, teaching and/or researching. The MEDASTAR (Mediterranean Area for Science Technology And Research) project is similar to WELCOME in its objectives, details, and budget.

Rethinking paradigms on Arab autonomy

Hot on the heels of the Egyptian revolution's first anniversary, LAU's Social Sciences and Humanities faculty convened on February 2 to discuss how the Arab uprisings have changed lines of inquiry vis-a-vis the Middle East and the Arab world, in academia, pedagogy, and policy-making. Dr. Tamirace Fakhoury, assistant professor in the Department of Social Sciences at LAU Byblos, moderated the intercampus videoconference. The panel also included LAU professors Dr. Habib Malik, Dr. Walid Mubarak, Dr. Makram Ouais, Dr. Marwan Rowayheb, and Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouais. Fakhoury invited Dr. Rosita Di Peri, from the University of Turin, to address potential European involvement.



Face to Face: Videoconference initiative exposes cultural stereotypes

LAU students took part in a videoconference with peers at Nova Southeastern University (NSU) in Florida on February 12. This first Intercultural Dialogue Session deconstructed cultural stereotypes, fostering international understanding through face-to-face human contact. Dr. Marwan Rowayheb, assistant professor of political science and international affairs at the Department of Social Sciences at LAU Byblos, and NSU master's student Christina Wyler organized the event, during which students from both universities proposed potential means of countering detrimental prejudices. Suggestions included peace education, cross-cultural approaches to discriminatory propaganda, and active political engagement. Until the next session, participants in the U.S. and Lebanon are strengthening newfound friendships via Facebook.

TEDxLAU: It only takes ONE idea

LAU's Department of Humanities hosted the first TEDx Salon in January, bringing together over 70 students and faculty to screen a series of inspirational speeches. The independently organized event complied with guidelines set out by TED, the nonprofit organization dedicated to "Ideas Worth Spreading." Speakers addressed topics ranging from large-scale conflict resolution to personal hurdles. The event was so popular that LAU English instructor Reine Azzi organized a second TEDxLAU salon in April, attended by more than 90 students and professionals drawn to the "Dare to Dream" theme. Held in collaboration with the Rotaract Club of Byblos, four online talks portraying creative initiatives from around the world were screened.



Crossing the OCEAN

The Outreach and Civic Engagement (OCE) unit hosted the university's first Study Abroad Day on Wednesday, April 18, on the Beirut campus. The event marked the official launch of Outreach and Cultural Exchange Across Nations (OCEAN), a new initiative promoting creative international, civic engagement, leadership, and study abroad opportunities for LAU students, faculty and staff alike. The festive event included music and performances, and was organized in collaboration with the embassies of many of the top study abroad destinations in the world, including France, Germany, Denmark, Czech Republic, Spain, the Netherlands, Russia, Australia, Brazil, Ecuador, China, Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Representatives from these countries set up informational booths showcasing cultural exchange and study abroad opportunities, and advised students, faculty and staff members on scholarships available to them.



Business News

Family Affairs

The School of Business's Institute of Family and Entrepreneurial Business hosted "Building Family Business Constitutions," a panel discussion held March 29 at LAU Beirut. Influential members of Lebanon's family business community gathered to discuss common experiences and weigh the rewards and challenges of passing on values, business principles, and governance structures from one generation to the next. Keynote speaker Raphael Debbane, chairman of Desco Holding SAL-Debbane-Sakaily Group, regaled the audience with personal insight from 55 years in business with his five brothers, while IFEB Director and Associate Professor of Management Dr. Josiane Fahed-Sreih gave further insight into the process and theoretical framework behind forming constitutions.



Science, Technology and Engineering

Industry and academia unite

LAU signed an agreement of collaboration with Lebanese Industrial Research Achievements (LIRA), a program that seeks to bridge the gap between industry, academia, and research centers. In a ceremony held on April 5 at the Beirut campus, LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara and Dr. George Nasr, dean of the School of Engineering, welcomed representatives from Lebanon's industrial sector, including Minister of Industry Vrej Sabounjian, President of the Association of Lebanese Industrialists Nehmat Frem, and Secretary General of the National Council for Scientific Research Dr. Mouin Hamze. The partnership with LAU is expected both to foster new industry-related research projects and to make the engineering curriculum more responsive to industry needs and the job market.



Click here for the future of learning

A better grade is just a few clicks away, or at least that is the idea behind new clicker technology employed in Dr. Brigitte Wex's science classes. Wex, an assistant professor of chemistry in the Natural Sciences Department, says that the clicker system creates an inclusive learning atmosphere and transforms students from passive to active learners. Two sets of 25 clickers, each with a receptor, are currently being used by the School of Arts and Sciences on both LAU campuses. The system, says Wex, is perfect for SAS because it's mobile and "doesn't take longer to set up than a PowerPoint presentation."



A macro discovery at the microscopic level

LAU biology majors Mees Al Otaibi and Karim Mohamed reached the final round of the Global Innovation in Science and Technology (GIST) Competition by using silver nanoparticles to sterilize milk and vegetables. Under the supervision of Professor of chemistry and Chair of LAU Beirut's Natural Sciences Department Dr. Ahmad Kabbani, they found that milk treated with nanoparticles is markedly less perishable, lasting three days without spoiling. Mohamed says that their method could potentially revolutionize the way farmers are able to transport their products. To enter the GIST competition, the pair produced a short YouTube video, which got 567 "likes," securing them a spot in the top 25 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Istanbul to attend the Global Entrepreneur Summit.

Career guidance

CEP takes on CPA

Business graduates in Lebanon can now take part in a new CPA exam preparatory course offered by LAU's Continuing Education Program (CEP). The course consists of 45 three-hour evening sessions with professional trainers, who provide the proper knowledge and requisite confidence to sit for the uncompromising 14-hour, four-part exam. Several speakers took turns detailing the added value of earning such a title during a CEP-organized ceremony held on March 5 at LAU Beirut to launch the new program. In a nutshell, a CPA designation is a highly regarded distinction in the business world, one sought by major companies worldwide.



Building better career services for Iraqi students

LAU's Career Guidance Office held a workshop in January for a group of Iraqi university professors and administrators as part of a larger project sponsored by the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) to promote higher education reform in Iraq. The workshop covered various topics, highlighting the Iraqi educational sector before and after the 1991 uprisings, the different roles of traditional and modern career centers, and the advantages of career guidance services. At the core of the seminar was the career development process, which helps to identify the students' interests, and pairs them with a career path that is compatible with their character while also keeping market needs in mind.

Inside the Institutes

Scholarly migration

On February 2-4, LAU's Institute for Migration Studies (IMS) hosted an international conference entitled "Relationships between Diasporas and their 'Homelands' and Their Impact on the State, National Identities, and Peace & Conflict." Twenty-four academic papers, two keynote lectures and a roundtable discussion explored the impact of diasporas on international and domestic politics, economics, and society. An International Development Research Centre (IDRC) grant, awarded to LAU scholars Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss and Dr. Paul Tabar, made the groundbreaking colloquium possible. Case studies analyzed and illuminated the emigrant experience of Vietnamese, Palestinian, Filipino, East Timorese, Indian, Turkish, and Kurdish communities, to name a few.



They say they want a revolution

LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) celebrated International Women's Day by highlighting the role of women in the ongoing popular Arab uprisings. The discussion "Challenges ahead: Women, activism, social media and the Arab Spring," took place on March 5 at LAU Beirut and featured prominent female academics, activists and journalists. Dr. Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, director of IWSAW and assistant professor of communication at LAU Beirut, told the audience that women have often been at the vanguard of popular revolutions throughout history. The panel included Asmaa Mahfouz, an Egyptian activist, Mona El-Tahawy, an award-winning Egyptian-American columnist, and Hanaa Al-Sayaghi, a Yemeni activist.

The Center for Lebanese Heritage turns 10

Since its establishment in 2002, LAU's Center for Lebanese Heritage has been at the forefront of a movement to locate, restore and preserve material related to Lebanese heritage. Henri Zoghaib, CLH director and renowned Lebanese poet and novelist, presided over the center's 10th anniversary ceremony on January 31 at LAU Beirut. Organized under the patronage of Lebanese President Michel Sleiman, the event was attended by various prominent political and religious figures, including Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr. Hassan Diab; Ambassador Fouad Turk; and Father Gabriel Tabet, representing Patriarch Mar Bechara Boutros al-Rahi.



Architecture and Design



Designing for a grade and a good cause

A group of four LAU graphic design students has been selected to revamp the website of Child of Lebanon, a non-governmental organization that promotes good practices in child rights, after winning a contest to create a new online identity for the NGO. Members of the Graphic Design Department and representatives from Child of Lebanon announced the winners of the month-long contest on March 5 at the Beirut campus. For winning students Sari Awada, Hiba Fares, Mahmoud Daoud and Nour Chamoun, it was the first time dealing with a "real client."

Green Thoughts in a Green Shade

An afternoon with LAU Byblos' constant gardener

By John Jeha

Karam Karam kneels before one of many flowerbeds on LAU's verdant Byblos campus, meticulously inspecting the petals.

"Every plant has to fit into place; you can't get it wrong."

Following Karam's gaze as he surveys the trimmed trees, neatly planted lines of colorful blossoms and bushes precisely cut to resemble birds and other animals, one realizes just how seriously LAU Byblos' resident landscaper takes his job.

Karam has been working for LAU since the early days of the Byblos campus. As the university sourced plants and trees from local nurseries for the new campus — which is considerably larger than LAU Beirut — it became evident that a full time staff member would be needed to design, plant, maintain and sustain all the landscaping.

Karam was working for one of the local nurseries at the time, and his boss recommended him for the job. He has since developed a reputation on campus for both his work ethic and his emotional attachment to the university.

Both are palpable as we drive through campus. Karam points out a neat line of young pine trees, each about one and a half meters high. "You see those? I planted each as a seed 20 years ago when I first arrived here. Now look at them."

Much indeed has changed at LAU Byblos since then. The campus has expanded, leaving Karam and his semi-permanent crew of two with a substantially larger area to look after. Over the years, however, the university has both improved the landscaping equipment he uses and increased his budget.

A greenhouse filled with blossoming flowers and plants provides a vivid preview of what next spring has in store for the campus's many flowerbeds. Karam clearly loves what he does, and reiterates how thankful he is to LAU.

"My wife always tells me that I keep talking about the university," he jokes self-deprecatingly. "She says if only I could treat her as well as they treat me."

Karam begins the workday with a morning meeting with his crew. Their daily work usually consists of planting new

flowers or trimming trees whose branches have grown unkempt by Karam's exacting standards.

"I get off to a happy start every morning," he says with a smile, "not with one foot forward and one foot back, but with three feet forward!"

His enthusiasm is matched only by his experience. Indeed as his daily round takes him across campus, faculty members with their own home gardens approach him asking for advice. "*Ma3lim Karam!* My petunias haven't sprouted yet — what should I do?" asks one. "Give it another week, and try watering them a little less," he replies, not missing a beat.

An afternoon with Karam restores your appreciation of the knowledge, skill and effort it takes to keep the Byblos campus beautiful. From its sloping, manicured lawns and vibrant sprays of spring flowers to newly developed parts of campus that seem elegantly landscaped overnight — none is again likely to be taken for granted.



Donor Profile

George Abboud, founder of Earth Technologies

By LAU Staff



George Abboud (BS '02) knew what he was doing when he donated solar photovoltaic systems to LAU's Electrical Engineering department last fall. He was supporting student research projects, yes, but he was also championing a larger cause: the environment.

As founder of Earth Technologies, a company dedicated to finding environmentally sound energy solutions for public and private sector industries, Abboud understands that renewable energy is not an option but an imperative if we hope to preserve the delicate balance that sustains life on this earth. He saw LAU as an ideal place to instill this message.

"LAU holds a special place in my heart," he says. "I feel compelled to give back to the university that gave me the tools and knowledge to face the real world."

Though only a few years old, Earth Technologies already boasts an impressive record of achievements in installing renewable energy systems in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and several African countries. Besides being ethically and environmentally sound, Abboud explains, investing in renewable technologies makes financial sense, since not only hospitals, hotels, restaurants, factories and industries at large, but also everyday households, save significant amounts of money on energy bills.

The adoption of such technologies in the Middle East is especially critical since the region receives so much sun and so little water.

"In a constantly evolving renewable energy market, and with the various challenges facing conventional energy and fuel, having technical knowledge of solar energy in a place like Lebanon is a must," he says.

When asked what he most wished to convey to LAU students, Abboud was adamant about their need to understand that our habits in energy consumption matter. The earth, he stresses, is relying on them.

"Becoming energy-aware is not an elective course," he said. "It should be a requirement in each home. Humans thought that with their technologies they will conquer the cosmos, but unfortunately with their factories and fuel obsession and greed, they are destroying their own mother."

As a final point, Abboud encourages everyone to "consume less energy, become more efficient, waste less water, and use recycled products."



"Becoming energy-aware is not an elective course. It should be a requirement in each home."

Abboud's loyalty and commitment to his alma mater is clear and convincing, and in a visionary philanthropic sense seems of a piece with his passion for environmentalism. While his donation helps LAU in its educational mission by encouraging engineering students to learn and understand solar technologies, it is what those students do with that knowledge that will make a difference in the long run.



Op-Ed

From Catharsis to Mimesis

Dr. Ketty M. Sarouphim assesses the effects of media violence on children's behavior.



Sigmund Freud, the father of modern psychology, maintained that human beings are born with a drive for violence. To prevent acting on it, Freud recommended exposure to simulated violence, in order to produce what he called (drawing on Aristotle) "catharsis," the release of emotional tension. Contemporary psychologists conclude that this may instead encourage imitation, especially when the "aggressors" are celebrities. Empirical research — from Albert Bandura's seminal and extremely influential "Bobo doll" experiment in the early 1960s through to the present — supports theories of learned aggression, especially strongly in the case of children.

An examination of entertainment in recent decades would undoubtedly reveal an increase in both the frequency and intensity of media violence. Its impact is greatest on the young, especially those (mostly males) who are already prone to aggressive behavior. Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Conduct Disorder (CD), and Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD) are at a higher risk. Children who are abused by their parents, as well as bullies and others who lack social skills, are also more prone to emulating observed violence. Some psychologists believe that criminals and serial killers have watched more media violence than average. The dangers involve many factors and cutting across individuals and populations.

The side effects are numerous and range from the startling to the serious, from tantrums to recurring nightmares and debilitating phobias. The younger the viewer, the more impressionable. Parents would be well advised to keep the TV and computer in the family room to limit private access and ensure supervised viewing, and more generally to keep lines of communication open. Stay vigilant, I tell parents, and keep being in your children's lives, because prevention is always more effective than intervention.

When teaching about conflict-resolution, I often reverse the situation and ask students to brainstorm for ways of teaching violence to others. They inevitably conclude that the best technique is exposure to violence; one does not need a degree in psychology to reach this conclusion. In light of this striking consensus — a consensus comprising young and old, experts and lay people — why does media violence continue to thrive? Why are there not more calls for its cessation, from parents, teachers, and government officials? I am increasingly baffled by societal desensitization to violence.

Some argue that violence has in fact decreased over the centuries. They claim that people have become more civil, that the violence that continues in the present day, moreover, is more controlled. Evidence for this argument includes the disappearance of certain forms of brutality,

such as gladiatorial combat, a practice considered entertainment in ancient Rome. In the face of this argument one cannot but be reminded of the Roman Empire's decline and fall. Are we headed in that direction? Will the thrill we feel in the presence of violence lead to our ultimate extinction? Near the exit of the St. Louis zoo in the United States, visitors taking leave of the world's most spectacularly ferocious animals encounter a sign: "*Homo Sapiens*... the only species that kills when not hungry and the only species that kills others of its own kind."

I believe that greater awareness will lead to concerted action, to a call on governments to regulate media violence the way they regulate illicit drugs, for example. If children are influenced by models, then they should be exposed to models who engage in peaceful conflict resolution, and thus stand a better chance of maturing into adults who do not tolerate violence and who teach their own children, in turn, to live peacefully. Only then can we hope to survive and thrive as a species.

Ketty Sarouphim is an associate professor of psychology and education at the Department of Social Sciences, LAU Beirut.



Alumni Profile

Blueprint for Success

Accent Design Group co-founder wins global accolades

By LAU Staff



For Elie Abs (B.A.'97), architect and co-founder of Accent Design Group (ADG), the discipline and practice of architecture has always straddled two domains, uneasily — the commercial and the intellectual, the superficial and the substantive.

These days, he says, there is an acute need for architecture that “comes from within,” that “responsibly answers to current social, economic and environmental challenges.”

This desire to create intuitively is at the heart of ADG, which since 2006 has striven to find personalized design solutions for clients based on various facets of research, while at the same time not sacrificing the aesthetics of their work.

Their refreshing approach to design drew the attention of the international architecture community this past year, winning them a prestigious World Architecture News (WAN) award. “This is a major international competition celebrating and promoting the best in international architecture for residential use, attracting entries from all over the world,” says Abs.

ADG won in the “unbuilt” category for the WAN Awards Residential Sector for their design of the 11,000m² Beirut Observatory, a tower inspired by the urban form of Beirut. It is composed of a smoothly rising stack of glazed-unit apartments, “offering diversity while simultaneously creating a sense of unity,” says Abs.

“Cantilevered balconies and terraces take their cue from the typology of Beirut’s existing urban fabric,” he explains, “thus transferring the previously horizontal spread into a vertical composition, with panoramic views of the city and the sea.”

The client has approved the design concept, according to Abs, so it’s only a matter of time before the project goes ahead.

Long before his company skyrocketed into the realm of international award winners, Abs walked the halls of LAU — first as a student, and then, since 2002, as a teacher. He attributes his desire to teach at LAU as “the natural thing to do, sharing

knowledge and experience I gained in Europe.”

“But I never thought of myself as a teacher,” he says. “It was more like a design laboratory where we were experimenting together with the students.”

After receiving his B.A. in Architecture from LAU, Abs went on to obtain a Master of Architecture degree in architecture and urbanism from the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London. Looking back, he attributes his interest in architecture to his father, who worked in design and construction and helped cultivate his passion for the field.

“I believe that even within this complex and competitive environment we’re living in, there are plenty of opportunities — we just have to look deeper,” Abs says about the current market for serious architecture. “The challenge will always be to maintain quality.”



On the Court and on the Mat

Judo and basketball star represents LAU — and Lebanon

By Jessica Hollows

Student Profile



First-year business administration student Karen Shammass recently returned from the 12th Pan-Arab Games in Qatar with two medals for Lebanese judo: bronze in the under 63 kilogram weight category and gold in the open weight competition.

The double victory adds to the record of athletic triumphs for the young star. “I have won first place in the Lebanese Judo Championship every year since I was seven,” says Shammass, who was recruited to the national team in 2006.

The 18-year-old holds six gold medals from the West Asian Championships, two golds from the Arab Championships, and a silver and a bronze from the Asian Junior Championships. She placed seventh in the 2010 Youth Olympics in Singapore.

Shammass attributes her success to her vigorous training program. She began practicing judo biweekly at age five, and her current weekly schedule packs in no less than 16 hours of sports training, on top of games and gym work-outs.

Training intensifies in the lead-up to major competitions. “Before major international tournaments, we train twice a day, in addition to gym training,” says Shammass.

At age 10, Shammass added basketball to her sporting routine. She is a welcome addition to the women’s varsity basketball team at LAU Byblos, and continues to play for Dik El Mehdi’s prestigious Champville Club. The university acknowledged her achievements with a 15 percent discount on tuition.

Juggling judo, basketball, and a full course load is no easy feat. “I am trying hard to manage my classes and studies along with my training sessions and other social activities,” she admits.

“Karen is not only helping our women’s varsity basketball team by leading the team in scoring — she is also encouraging other LAU student athletes, making them believe nothing is impossible,” says Joe Moujaes, Director of Athletics at LAU Byblos.

Shammass derives a strong work ethic from her athletic background. “Judo and basketball taught me that practice, persistence, concentration, and teamwork are essential to reach one’s goals,” she says.

Moujaes says the difference between an ordinary athlete and a champion like Shammass lies in the latter’s mix of perseverance, commitment, inner peace, mental toughness, focus and most importantly, character. “A champion is a winner who can handle various tasks at the same time and succeed. To have it all — sports and schooling — proper time management is key,” he adds.

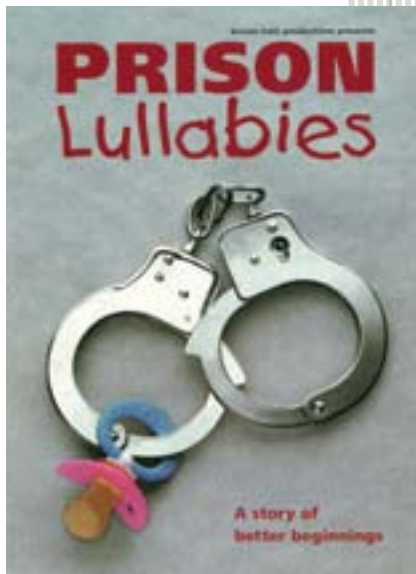
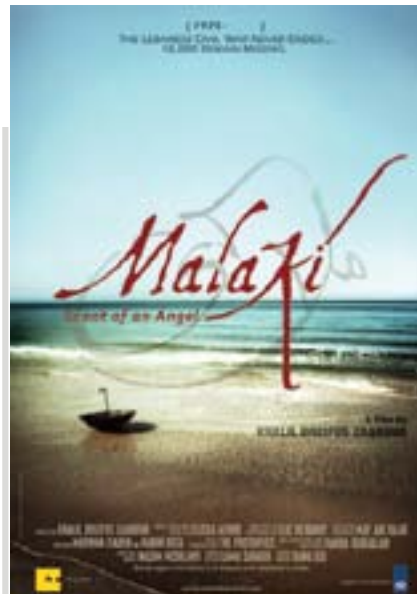
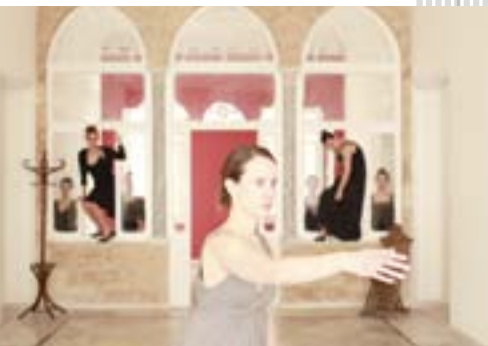
Shammass took on a new challenge in the recent Pan-Arab Games in Qatar, where she participated in the open weight category for the first time in her career. Advancing to the final proved exhilarating. “I was playing the semifinal and final games against judoists in the over 78 kilogram weight category,” she explains.

The gripping final match pitted the LAU student against Algerian world bronze medalist Sonia Asselah, whose size necessitated different throwing techniques. “I tried to keep balance every time she tried to throw me,” recalls Shammass, who managed to hold her ground for almost three minutes. “In the end, [Asselah] took advantage of the weight difference, and trapped and pinned me to the floor.”

Shammass received the thrilling news in late spring that she had qualified — as a wild-card selection in the judo competition — for the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

Shammass will also represent LAU at the 2013 Universiade in Kazan (Tatarstan, Russia).

“We are all behind Karen to best represent Lebanon and LAU, especially at the 2012 Summer Olympics,” says Moujaes. “She’ll make us proud.”





Down the Red Carpet

First Alumni Film Festival celebrates the cineastes of LAU

By Muriel Kahwagi

LAU just hosted its first ever Alumni Film Festival (AFF) in early spring of this year. The timing couldn't have been better, given the number of breakthrough figures in recent regional and international cinema got their start in LAU's Department of Communication Arts.

The program — which prepares students for careers in journalism, publishing, filmmaking and other media — is indeed one of the region's oldest and most renowned, and films by recent graduates have shown on Al Jazeera, featured at Doha Tribeca Film Festival and won prizes at Cannes.

AFF was organized by the Alumni Relations Office in collaboration with the Communication Arts department (under the School of Arts and Sciences), and held April 2-5 at Irwin Theatre on the Beirut campus.

"Our goal in organizing this was to promote our graduates through LAU and to promote LAU through our graduates," says Abdallah Al Khal, executive director of alumni relations. "These are artists of global reputation, moreover, whose success sets an example for our current students."

The Alumni Relations Office has indeed been bustling with activity in recent years. The 2011 Alumni Book Exhibition, a kind of precursor to the AFF, showcased the published works of 40 alumni writers, drawing in graduates prominent in every sector of the publishing industry. Like the Lebanese-Armenian talk show host Zaven Kouyoumdjian.

"The arts are key to keeping a society civilized," said LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara at the festival's opening ceremony. "If you want to understand the challenges a society is facing, you have to go to the theater, watch films, and read literature."

The festival screened a total of 17 films, including full-length features as well as shorts, all produced and/or directed by LAU alumni. These included prominent and rising figures in regional and world

cinema such as Dima El-Horr, Zaid Abu Hamdan, Walid Fakhreddine, Khalil Dreifus Zaarour and Mahmoud Kaabour.

Super. Full, a short film by Niam Etani, who teaches screenwriting at LAU Beirut, tells the story of a poor worker who promises to take his newlywed to dinner in a lavish hotel on her birthday, all the while chronicling the cordial routines of their married life.

The film has screened at several international film festivals, including the Seattle International Film Festival and the CFC Worldwide Short Film Festival, and won the MAISHA & DFI Screenwriting Lab Zanzibar award.

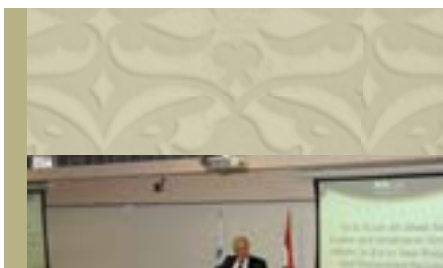
"We are thrilled to see our graduates excel and compete for key positions in the media industry," said Dr. Mona A. Knio, associate professor of theater and chairperson of the Department of Communication Arts, at the festival's opening ceremony.

While some films were light and witty, others centered on serious issues such as sexual harassment.

The Adventures of Salwa, a three-minute animated short produced by Liliane Hanbali, a part-time instructor of film editing at LAU, follows its titular character in various situations. Salwa was originally written and directed by Amanda Abou Abdallah as a PSA for sexual harassment, and gained popularity through an online campaign meant to raise awareness about domestic violence, pedophilia and sexual harassment in the workplace.

"Alumni film festivals such as this one can really motivate current students to work to have their own films screened in the future," said Hanbali, who graduated from LAU in 1996.

The festival also featured films produced and/or directed by Sabine El Chamaa, Sawsan Darwaza, Mervat Faddoul, Elie Habib, Wafa'a Halawi, Farh Al Hashim, Remi Itani, Lina Matta, Rakan Mayasi and Noura Sakka.



Alumni Events

January

The secret to success lies in serving others

LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra presented an altruistically themed lecture "It is Never All About You, Ladies and Gentlemen: Serving others as key to your personal and professional success," at the Beirut campus in late January. This was the second talk of the 2011-2012 academic year in the Alumni Relations Office's "Keep Learning" lecture series. "Providing value, help, and support to others will provide more spiritual, psychological, financial, and other benefits than any self-improvement concept out there," Jabbra told the audience. Over 150 alumni and friends attended the lecture, which was followed by a reception.



Election day for the Beirut Chapter

On January 9, the LAU Alumni Association - Beirut Chapter held elections, voting in seven new members to the 15-member committee.

February

LBC editor-in-chief and news anchor talks to alumni

Georges Ghanem, editor-in-chief and news anchor at LBC, came to LAU Beirut on February 8 to deliver a lecture to over 100 alumni and friends of the university. The BCW Chapter organized the event, which was followed by a reception.



Byblos Chapter dinner

More than 120 alumni and friends dined at the restaurant Raclot in Jounieh on February 18. The Byblos Chapter organized the dinner, which counted Dr. Jabbra and former LAU President Dr. Riyad Nassar among the attendees.



Valentine's Day-themed dinner in Houston

The Houston Chapter of the LAU Alumni Association held "Love You LAU" in honor of the upcoming Valentine's Day holiday. The event drew more than 20 alumni and their loved ones to Houston's Forno's restaurant.

South Florida Chapter celebrates new beginnings

On February 26, alumni residing in South Florida, accompanied by Director of Alumni and Special Projects in North America Ed Shiner, organized their first gathering at Sawa restaurant, owned by alumna Nadia Zahr. The gathering was a success and a strong start to the establishment of the South Florida Chapter.





March

Beirut Chapter honors mothers at Mandaloun Café

The Beirut Chapter organized a Mother's Day Brunch at Mandaloun Café on March 24. More than 80 alumni brought their mothers and friends along to enjoy the cozy atmosphere.



Byblos Chapter hosts a pub dinner

More than 120 alumni and friends gathered at the Cockney Pub & Restaurant in Keserwan on March 24 for a dinner organized by the Byblos Chapter.

400 alumni gather in Kuwaiti desert

On March 9, the Kuwait Chapter organized an Open Day in the desert at Ahl Al Barr camp. The event attracted more than 400 alumni and their families. Everyone enjoyed the sunny weather and the games that the committee members organized for all ages.



Veils Exhibit arrives in Los Angeles

LAU's Southern California Alumni Chapter, in conjunction with Loyola Marymount University (LMU) in Los Angeles, hosted the photographic exhibit "Veil(s)," produced by LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW). A panel discussion titled "Veil(s): Perception(s) and Misperception(s)," which featured LMU faculty members Feryal Cherif, Amir Hussain, Nancy Jabbra and Rana Sharif, took place on March 14. The "Veil(s)" exhibit is now on its way to the San Diego Public Library and will open from June 3.

Washington brunch

On March 31, LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra had the opportunity to meet the new officers of the Washington, DC Chapter at a Saturday morning brunch at the famous Old Ebbitt Grill next to the White House. Several SINARC alums also joined this gathering and Jabbra updated everyone on all the exciting developments at LAU.



Alumni News

Rima Nasir Tarazi (A.A.'49) attended "Composing History," an event held in March during which a short documentary about her life – made by Sawsan Qaoud – was shown.

Dia Al-Azzawi Tayyarah (B.A.'72) recently joined a writing group organized by AUB's University For Seniors (UFS) program. The goal of the ongoing workshop is to learn how to pen a memoir.

Vivian Baitie (A.A.S.'75) now lives on the East Coast of the U.S. where she has made contact with quite a few fellow alumni in the region and is always looking for opportunities to meet up with more.

Dr. Ghada Hijawi-Qaddumi (B.A.'76) is a multiple-degree holder and received her Ph.D. in History of Islamic Art from Harvard University in 1991. From 2004 to the present, she has served as vice president of the World Crafts Council/Asia-Pacific Region (WCC/APR) for the West-Asia Sub-region. In 2009 the WCC/APR board members elected her senior vice president to the WCC/APR. She will attend and participate in the next WCC/APR Regional Assembly in Chennai (Madras), India in October 2012. She published two works in 2011, including an Arabic translation of a book on the archaeological finds in an ancient site in Failaka Island in Kuwait.

Henry Matthews (B.A.'80) has translated his passion for comics into a career that has seen him organizing events to showcase Lebanese comic books to producing the Encyclopedia of Lebanese Comics Publications in Arabic for the 2010 Beirut World Book Capital initiative. He hopes to establish an Arabic Comics Documentation Center, which would serve as the epicenter for comic book lovers and writers and would house old Arabic pulp novels and illustrated children books.

George Wadih Wakim (Dual Degree'84) went to the University of Kentucky to pursue his civil engineering studies. He is an avid musician who has played in all sorts of gigs around Kentucky. His brother, Pierre W. Wakim, works for LAU's IT team.

Huda Naccache Akkari (B.A.'87) married Bassam Akkari in 1994 and has a son, Bassam Jr.



Linda Saab (R.C.D.'93) is a proud grandmother to two-year-old Tamara and one-year-old Yasmina.

Samer Ghandour (B.A.'97) works as sales director of Choueiri Group in Jeddah. He and his wife Nisrine, and their two-year-old Yasmina, would like to share their happiness in welcoming their newborn baby girl, Tulai.



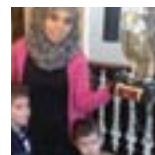
Ahmad El Hamawi (B.S.'98) kicked off his marketing and communications career in Dubai in 2000, working with leading communication firms and multinational companies. He has recently explored an entrepreneurial venture with leading multinational firm Aprais, based in the UK, to represent them in MENA region and Turkey.

Mohamad Hanbaly (M.B.A.'98) recently started a D.B.A. program at the University of Liverpool and has contributed to a book related to management in the Arab world.

Nadine Maktabi (B.S.'98, M.B.A.'01) moved back to Lebanon in 2006 after spending five years in Riyadh with husband Hassan and their three children – Karen, Abdallah and Celina. Maktabi is a senior instructor of marketing research, promotional strategies and management topics at American University of Science & Technology.

Mazen O. Bekdash (B.S.'02) is now heading Kenyon International Emergency Services' Regional Office in Beirut. Kenyon is the international leader in worldwide disaster management. Prior to joining Kenyon in 2010, Bekdash worked at Arab Air Carriers Organization (AACO) and numerous airlines. Mazen holds an M.B.A. in Aerospace Management from Toulouse Business School, and a Diploma in Aviation Security Management from Edith Cowan University and Emirates Aviation College, an IATA Diploma in Airline Studies and is a certified Aviation Security Professional Manager by ICAO and Concordia University. He and his wife Lama Mekdashy are proud parents to five-year-old Abdul Aziz and one-year-old Loulwa.

Dalal Ghabban (B.A.'02) has fond memories of her university days. She is now married and has two boys, Mohammad and Zayed.



Maya Harb Njeim (B.E.'02) had a baby girl in February of this year.

Tarek U. Chbaklo (B.S.'03) lives in Milford, Massachusetts with his family and works at Diamond Diagnostics as a senior clinical service engineer and clinical process manager. He has two kids, Lea and Adam.

Rana Haddad (M.B.A.'03) works for ADCB as a senior manager in Corporate Credit and has recently launched a new business with her husband in Lebanon — a chocolate boutique named Augrey (in the Naccache area). She lives in Abu Dhabi and has two boys, Marc and Michael.

Serge Jean-Paul Kandalaft (M.B.A.'03) was voted Administrator of the Year in 2011. He works as product manager of the Dry Section at Kallissi Trading Corporation and recently got married.

Dana Shatila (B.S.'03) lives in Dubai and is IT operations and planning manager at HSA Group. She got married in 2004 and has one boy.



Serge A. Andezian (M.B.A.'04) is senior internal auditor / IT auditor at Bank of Beirut and has numerous certifications to his credit. He is a member of the LACPA, ISACA, IIA and ACFE. He composes and records music in his spare time at his studio PROSOUND STUDIOS, which he established in 2006.

Aoun Bassam Shaer (B.S.'04) has been promoted to media director at Initiative Media in Riyadh. He has a one-year-old baby girl named Mariam.



Reina Jamhoury (B.Pharm.'05) owns Reina Pharmacy in Dekwaneh. She has been married since 2006 and has two young girls, Lynn and Lea.

Jamal Maadad (M.B.A.'06) recently became a sales account manager at DELL Corporation – Middle East, based in Dubai. He will be handling sales and solutions for the education sector in the UAE, as well as enterprise accounts.



Omar Baz Radwan (B.A.'02, M.A.'06) received an M.A. in Comparative Literature from Dublin City University, Ireland in 2009. He is currently working on a Ph.D. thesis in Comparative Literature at Dublin City University. Radwan is a published author of two poetry collections – Amaranth and My Poetry Room – and a part time English Literature instructor at LAU.

Suad Matar El Houssami (B.S.'92, M.B.A.'07) received a master's degree in hospital management from Ecole Supérieure des Affaires. He previously worked at Rafic Hariri University Hospital as head of the Material and Purchasing Division.



Norma M. Makarem (B.S.'07) is both a computer scientist and published author. She currently works as an Oracle application consultant and launched a novel called "Experienced, not Defined" in April. The book employs clever analogies to simplify intricate ideas and ultimately encourages the reader to be skeptical, tolerant and aware of the true meaning that lies within.

Joanna Daaboul (B.E.'08) recently received her Ph.D. from Ecole Centrale de Nantes, France. Her thesis focused on producing customized products at a cost similar to that of mass production (MP).



Alaa Minawi (B.A.'08) is a visual artist who has worked in more than 150 performances in Lebanon and the Arab world as a lighting designer, technical director, and performer since 2006. He participated in several local and international theater workshops and joined many festivals in Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, and the U.S. This year Minawi is preparing a series of installations that involve light as a breathing entity, and he recently collaborated on [a piano in my pillow], a light and sound performance by Vladimir Kurumilian and himself.



Dana Soueid (B.S.'08) got married last year and moved to Riyadh with her husband.

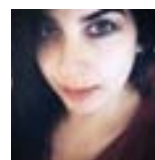


Roeya Awada Hajj (B.A.'09) recently wrote and published a children's story in Arabic titled "Tito Al Asfour Al Momayaz." In 2010 she and her husband Samer welcomed their third child, Rama, who joins sisters Mageda and Sara.

Rita Hanna (B.S.'09) got married in August 2011 to Antranik Backlayan (B.E.'10) and lives in Achrafieh, Beirut.



Farah Al Hashim (B.A.'09) is currently working on her narrative – feature film "Breakfast in Beirut," to be shot in Beirut soon. She is currently in the pre-production process of the film in Hollywood, California, and recently finished shooting the short film "Marilyn Monroe in New York," which was screened at this year's LAU Alumni Film Festival.



Rana Shehadi (B.A.'09) married her sweetheart, best friend and colleague of seven years Abed Zaher. The couple enjoyed a nice wedding surrounded by LAU friends.



Firas Arab (B.S.'10) has been living in Barcelona for two years now where he finished a double-degree master's in International Business. He recently opened a company called Fly Foot, which flies people from the Middle East region to watch some of the best football games in Europe. See www.fly-foot.com.

Patrick Helou (B.S.'10) is currently working at AAW (Ali Abdul Wahab & Sons), a distributor for P&G. He is currently the district field assistant for TSC's key account in Kuwait.

Lyne Ran Lakis (B.S.'10) was promoted to the role of customer team logistics manager at P&G Distributor in Kuwait. For five months in a row P&G has ranked her first CTLM in the Gulf.



Dima El-Masri Chaarani Nachabe (B.S.'08, M.B.A.'10) married fellow LAU alumnus **Dany Nachabe (B.S.'03)** and has a young daughter named Tala. She currently works at the American Community School as the high school administrative assistant.

Hanine Charaf (B.A.'11) got a job at the Lebanese Embassy in Abu Dhabi after graduating with a degree in political science and international affairs.

Remembered with Love

Laure Kourani Lunt (A.A.'43 Torch Award)

passed away in April 2011. After graduating from the Junior College for Girls, she earned her B.A. in Arabic Literature from AUB in 1945. She then embarked on a career in teaching English that would last for almost 50 years. She taught at International College in Beirut and Broummana High School during the 1950s. Lunt briefly moved to England, where she hosted an Arabic-language program for BBC World Service which introduced western pop music to the Arab world. After returning to Lebanon in 1961, she resumed teaching English at IC for the next few decades until her retirement. Even after leaving IC, she taught at AUB, Saint Joseph University and Broummana High School until retiring, for the final time, in 1994. Lunt is survived by her three children and six grandchildren. Her two daughters are BCW graduates **Bernadette Lunt Ghorayeb (B.A.'70)** and **Irene Lunt Dahdah (B.A.'72)**.



WHY I GIVE BACK

Hussain Sharaf *B.S.'01*



What did you study at LAU?

I studied business marketing, and graduated on July 14th, 2001. I still remember the commencement and the graduation party that followed, at the Saint George Hotel. I see it as one of the most important days in my life.

Where do you live now?

After graduation I returned to my native Bahrain, where I still live today.

What is your occupation? What have you been up to since your university years?

I work at the National Bank of Bahrain (NBB), in the treasury and international banking department. I worked previously at the Bahrain Bourse, at the financial analysis department. I received a scholarship from the bourse to pursue my M.B.A. at DePaul University, in Chicago, where I graduated with an emphasis in marketing and managing change.

My years at LAU and in Lebanon had a huge impact on me. I looked up the Alumni Bahrain Chapter after graduation and have been an active member since 2003. Today in fact I am chapter president. We continue to promote LAU and Lebanon's image among the Bahraini community, in all aspects but mainly education, tourism, and health.

What message would you like to convey to fellow alumni and current students?

I would like to tell alumni first: never stop qualifying for your profession, you can always improve. Secondly, one needn't be a millionaire to donate.

As we say in Arabic, "القليل من الكثير كثير" — "a little bit from a lot is a lot."

I'd like to tell current students to make the most they can from LAU's wealth of knowledge, and not to forget their alma mater after commencement.

How is LAU different today from when you were a student?

In so many ways. The campuses are bigger, the student body larger, with more international students, more schools, faculties and degrees. It's wonderful that we have schools of medicine and nursing now. It's evidence of a very bright future for LAU, with continued growth and progress.



THE LEGACY
& THE PROMISE
LAU CAMPAIGN FOR EXCELLENCE

Driven by a passion for challenges, Fouad Makhzoumi has risen through the business world of Lebanon and beyond.

He created the Makhzoumi Foundation, which contributes to the development of civil society in Lebanon through vocational training, health care and micro-credit programs.

He and his wife May were moved by the loss of their son Rami to redouble their support for the youth of today, especially in the area of education.



FOUAD MAKHZOUMI
IS THE LEGACY AND THE PROMISE.

The founder and chairman of Future Group and Future Pipe Industries Group, and founder and honorary president of the Makhzoumi Foundation, Fouad Makhzoumi is a generous friend of LAU.



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