

LAU magazine

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& ALUMNI BULLETIN



Brave New Classroom
Teacher versus machine

Love 2.0
Online dating in the Arab world

Surfing for Charity
Effective outreach in the information era

Technology's Dark Side
The dangers of surfing the 'net

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What's Next?

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Brave New Classroom

Teacher versus machine

Technology has allowed for dramatic rethinking of the education process. From digital books to online courses, the traditional classroom is being challenged. What is the role of teachers in the future of education? Mehrnoush Shafiei reports.

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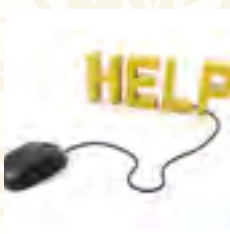
Love 2.0

The social dynamics of online dating in the Arab world

With the mounting trendiness of niche online dating websites in the Arab world, the days when a traditional *khatba* was needed to concoct convenient romances and marriages are long gone, though cyber anonymity doesn't come without a price. Muriel Kahwagi reports.



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Effective outreach in the information era

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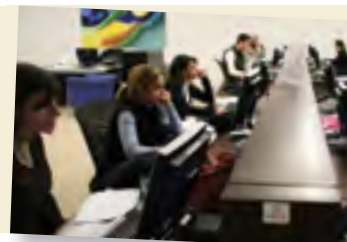
The dangers of surfing the 'net

In an age where all of our precious information is online, people must beware of more than burglars. Brooke Grasberger reports on hackers, web security, and how to stay safe online.



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Letters to the Editor

"I wanted to congratulate you and your team for a stellar winter issue on athletics. It was gratifying to see attention paid to the excellent work of our athletics directors and to the achievements of our student athletes. I know LAU is committed to strengthening athletics on both campuses and this issue will help get us there."

—Dr. Elise Salem, Vice President of Student Development & Enrollment Management at LAU

"The LAU magazine did a great job highlighting the importance of sports in society. Often, athletic pursuits get relegated to the margins of academia, but this issue succeeded in highlighting its central place within various disciplines of study; be it psychiatry, medicine or economics."

—Maxime Chaya, Sportsman, Mountaineer and Explorer

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LAU would like to extend a special thanks to Vice President for Information Technology **Camille Abou-Nasr** and to Associate Director of Marketing and Communications **Karina Rodriguez** for their help with this issue. Their valuable expertise proved indispensable to the magazine.

From the President's Desk

Dear friends,

Whether it is serious and swift natural phenomena, or a singular idea that alters our world-view in an instant, the pace and frequency of change has seldom been greater than today. The advent of the Internet, social media, self-publishing and open-source programming have brought with them the democratization of ideas and information, and profoundly transformed the way we live, work and learn. These instruments of change give us a novel ability to rally individuals around a single idea, raise awareness around a noble cause, start a business from our living rooms, or even find our soul mates.

Yet the capacity to absorb these transformations for the betterment of society can only be realized by championing the true essence of openness and equality.

LAU has always been at the forefront of discovering how technology can propel us to greater heights. In this academic year, Lebanon native and former chair of the LAU Board of Trustees Charles Elachi again made us proud when his team at NASA saw the Mars Rover land on the red planet in search of new life and untold revelations.

But while this newfangled era may usher in novel discoveries, it also foretells of old challenges and presents new obligations. An open arena of information constitutes a fresh stomping ground for subversive players. We must strive to protect our online personas against those who seek to exploit them for personal or seditious acts.

Our region's age-old dictates are being contested by open discussions online, shaping the consciousness of generations to come. The global economic and financial order is being meticulously examined in the West, and regulations are being updated and revised. People with newfound confidence are challenging social and political constructs previously deemed taboo. Indeed, we are all coming to the same conclusion: that fostering egalitarianism through the open exchange of ideas and information will result in a global society that is not only more prosperous, but also more just.

The ethos of open access cannot, however, affect such change without being cultivated by institutions that not only teach, but also embrace it as LAU does. The majority of our courses are now taught in smart classrooms where the latest in cutting-edge teaching tools are utilized to make learning inclusive in addition to instructive. Our libraries offer more than 100,000 e-books and extensive online resources. Today LAU develops its curricula and learning methods around the technology of tomorrow. Students emerge from this institution armed with the know-how, the mindset and the critical reasoning to contribute to a world where information is increasingly associated with success. And for this to persist, it is imperative that LAU remain an open and free arena in which technology and ideas evolve in unison—a responsibility we gladly accept and will continue to cultivate.

This issue of LAU Magazine and Alumni Bulletin is a rallying cry to embrace open access in learning and in life. Because even if opening up means we must delve into the unknown, that is where untold knowledge resides, and where true progress is ultimately found.



Joseph G. Jabbra
President



Brave New Classroom

Teacher versus technology

By Mehrnough Shafiei



Fourth-year LAU biology student Sarah Baydoun is nervous. Her exam is three hours away, the electricity has gone out in her dorm room, and her laptop is dying. *My teacher is running out of battery, she thinks frantically.*

As you may have guessed, this is not an allusion to an over-worked, caffeine-depleted instructor; rather it is a harbinger of what appears to be the new frontier of academia: technology doing the work of teachers. Without a doubt, widespread access to new, open-source technologies has created tectonic shifts in education.

But could text messages really replace textbooks? Could iPads replace notepads? And most importantly, could technology replace teachers? Everyone remembers the fate of floppy disks and hard drives. Poof! They've all disappeared. Could this be the fate of teachers too? The "traditional" classroom — which conjures up images of students seated in an orderly fashion, facing an authoritative teacher who is positioned in front of a chalkboard — has admittedly survived for decades and is ubiquitous around the world.

Yet today, you find schools that have dramatically departed from this model, such as the Wellspring Learning Community in Beirut. In a complete overhaul of the rigid structures of a traditional classroom, small groups of students sit in clusters while an acutely observant teacher tiptoes around the class, listening and occasionally interjecting to steer conversations in the right direction.

At Wellspring there are neither textbooks nor loose sheets of paper; everything is online.

This gives students the freedom to assume responsibility for their own learning and encourages them to be up-to-date with contemporary issues, asking questions and conducting independent research.

Sara Sibai is an LAU graduate who, shortly after completing a master's degree at Oxford University in 2011, went on to become a third-grade homeroom teacher at Wellspring. This year, she is teaching seventh, eighth and ninth grade students. Within moments of being in Sibai's orbit, it becomes clear that her down-to-earth warmth is integral to creating an inquisitive atmosphere for her students. "Today, more than ever," she explains, "the role of teachers is to ask the right questions, not necessarily to provide all the answers."

She is a passionate advocate of heuristic instruction, an ancient method made famous by Socrates that fosters independent learning. Indeed, there is something of a Socratic hint to Sibai's insistence that teachers don't have all the answers, evoking the >



philosopher's famous adage, *I don't know, nor do I think I know*.

A cursory glance at Wellspring's alternative school system would suggest a touch of bohème to the structure, though as it turns out, there is nothing cavalier about it. On the contrary, teachers there have the Herculean task of preparing focused academic lessons each day without the crutch of the traditional emblems of education: textbooks, one-size-fits-all curriculum outlines and rote memorization.

"Education is no longer preparation for life, it becomes life itself."

—Wellspring Learning Community

Wellspring's philosophy is that education is no longer preparation for life; it becomes life itself.

Sibai's concept and inquiry-driven lessons situate local topics in a globalized context, and this sophisticated approach to learning begins at quite a young age. "My role is to enhance and facilitate children's intrinsic curiosity by putting the right tools in their hands," she says. And the tools of choice are the latest in technological advancement.

A child of the 1990s, her own educational experience growing up was nothing like the environment she teaches in today, replete with tablets, smartphones and apps. And though some teachers may be afraid to relinquish their traditional role as the source of all information, a shift in power dynamics has beneficial consequences for learning, according to Sibai.

"With this shift in focus, technology becomes a tool; it confers

a great deal of advantages, but it is only a tool to help us globalize our outlook," she says. "Having the ability to make connections across subject areas, cultures and disciplines is what we try to cultivate among our students."

Though technology plays an integral role in a Wellspring classroom, it is far removed from the distressing image of a student hunched over a computer alone, consigned to the virtual world.

"We don't learn in isolation; we can't just sit alone in front of a computer. We need to have interaction to be able to critically engage with technology."

Reine Azzi, instructor of English and moral reasoning at LAU Beirut, agrees wholeheartedly. "While access to these technologies has challenged the traditional models of education, it is unlikely to replace them," she says.

And the proof is in the pudding. Students flock to this dynamic professor, who is as keen about teaching as she is about connecting with her students. It is that kind of nonconformist approach that compels students to wander into her office outside of class time just to chat.

Azzi has an uncanny ability to connect disparate topics, and indeed, watching her speak in casual conversation is like having a front-row seat to a TED talk. For the uninitiated, TED is a nonprofit organization that began in 1984 devoted to "Ideas Worth Spreading" and bringing together people from the three worlds of technology, entertainment and design. Through a series of 18-minute talks that are available online for free, people from all over the world can share information. It is widely touted as open-source knowledge at its best and Azzi has a special kinship

to this platform, as the curator of the TEDxLAU series, which is held several times throughout the academic year.

Though a few staunch traditionalists may raise their eyebrows at such endeavors, suggesting that it may be the 'easy' way of teaching, the reality is that integrating such technology into the classroom requires much more effort than meets the eye. "A great deal of planning goes into selecting appropriate TED talks to screen in class. They have to be very relevant to the subject at hand and have to complement the curriculum," reveals Azzi.

And while open-source technology is widely viewed as a democratizing force, as it prevents the monopoly of knowledge and instigates collaborative learning, Azzi warns that there needs to be a recognition of the technological shortcomings encountered even while making seemingly innocent computing choices.

In other words, students need to learn how to skillfully navigate the occasionally murky waters of online resources.

"The problem with gathering information solely from Wikipedia, YouTube and Google is that some students blindly adopt other people's opinions without requisite critical thinking. We need teachers to help us harness these open-access tools to further our understanding," she insists. According to Azzi, a university education takes on even greater significance in a digital world as it helps to build a critical character. "Professors give you tools to characterize and evaluate what is worthy information and what is not."

"In this digital age we need students who know how to synthesize information and to be critical and creative. Our priority is to teach skills. We must teach a new type of technological literacy, just like we learn keyboarding skills and programming skills," she says.

In a world deafened by the roar of unreliable information, open-source technology does indeed have the potential to be a pied piper of sorts — the convenience and accessibility of a source like Wikipedia could perhaps lead budding scholars to their doom.

"Technology is not a replacement; it is only as resource," stresses Azzi.

While technology may never replace professional educators, it has created access to education for many people. Indeed, the egalitarian hope to foster education that travels across borders and socioeconomic lines is being realized at Stanford University through the establishment of massive open online courses (MOOCs).

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—Reine Azzi, instructor of English and moral reasoning at LAU Beirut

Coursera, an online educational consortium founded by Stanford University professors Dr. Daphne Koller and Dr. Andrew Ng, was launched on April 18, 2012 with little fanfare, yet it still managed to attract an astounding 300,000 registrants within days. According to their website, MOOCs will make it possible for anyone to have access to a world-class education anywhere, anytime.



"Technology is not a replacement, it's only a resource."

—Reine Azzi, instructor of English and moral reasoning at LAU Beirut

"We envision a future where the top universities are educating not only thousands of students, but millions. Our technology enables the best professors to teach tens or hundreds of thousands of students," Koller and Ng write.

The fact that over a million students have logged on to this platform bears testament to the popularity of this trend and sharply raises the stakes of the teacher versus technology debate.

All things considered, advocates of traditional education should fear not, as critical thinking will always trump artificial intelligence. "There is one arena where teachers will have the advantage over machines, that is, in symbolic thinking," Sibai says of this decidedly human attribute.

And this, it seems, is the Achilles heel of technology: It cannot work in abstractions.

Though technology is an embodiment of innovation, the actual drivers of innovation are symbolic, abstract and creative thinkers. Pointing to a need to re-calibrate our definition of teachers, Sibai insists, "Teachers have a lot to offer. We need to expect them to do more. They are not robots."

Considering that open-source technology makes information readily accessible, those teachers who do little more than spout out information may indeed be in danger of becoming obsolete and replaced by technology.

As famous science fiction writer Sir Arthur C. Clarke suggests, "A teacher who can be replaced by a machine, should be."

But those who can't, won't. ■

Man on a Mission

Charles Elachi leads team to Mars

By Dalila Mahdawi



Dr. Charles Elachi receives an honorary doctorate in Humane Letters from LAU

“Exploring Mars can teach us as much about our own planet as it can the solar system.”

—Dr. Charles Elachi, former head of LAU Board of Trustees



Dr. Charles Elachi was just ten years old when he heard about Sputnik, the first artificial Earth satellite launched into orbit by the Soviet Union in 1957.

Listening to the news unfold on a radio at his home in the sleepy Bekaa village of Riyak, the young Elachi was enraptured. Like so many others around the world that evening, he gazed up at the twinkling stars and contemplated one of the most enduring of all questions: “What is out there?”

The technology used to explore space has evolved dramatically in the decades since Sputnik, but the thrill Elachi gets out of learning about the cosmos has not diminished. “It is amazing to think about what we have accomplished in just one generation,” he marvels.

Sputnik prompted a space race between Cold War rivals the USSR and the U.S., and led to perhaps the quickest technological advancements of all time. Only twelve years later, the first humans walked on the Moon. Fast-forward to present day, and humans “have now visited all the planets” in one way or another, says Elachi.

As director of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California, Elachi has played a pioneering role in modern space exploration and is responsible for over 45 flight missions and the development of instruments for Earth observation, remote sensing, planetary exploration and astrophysics.

In 2011, Elachi led a team of 5,000 in orchestrating the biggest NASA feat since Apollo 11 landed on the Moon. The groundbreaking landing of the high-tech rover, aptly named Curiosity, on Mars, was watched live by 50 million people in the U.S. alone. A core component of NASA’s \$2.5 billion Mars Exploration Program, Curiosity took nine months just to reach the red planet. The stakes were high: Curiosity, which is the result of over a decade of planning and features the largest parachute ever built, had a zero margin of error. Once the rover reached the top of the Martian atmosphere, it took seven minutes to land, enduring temperatures of 1,600 degrees Celsius (2,912 Fahrenheit) and slowing down from 13,000 miles per hour



to zero. As it takes 14 minutes to transmit the signal back to Nasa, Elachi's team and onlookers worldwide spent seven minutes in nail-biting uncertainty, wondering if the mission had been a success or a spectacular failure. "It's called 'the seven minutes of terror,'" Elachi notes with a smile.

A core reason behind the building of Curiosity is to discover whether life on Mars ever existed, or if it could in the future. About one quarter the size of our planet, Mars has volcanoes and polar ice caps that, like those on Earth, shrink and expand according to the seasons. The fourth planet from the sun, it has an atmosphere and tectonic activity, as well as geology that closely resembles that of Earth. In fact, the two planets share so many similarities that if you put two photos of parts of them side by side, it would be difficult to discern which planet is which.

"The key question we are trying to ask with Curiosity is why Mars does not have life," says Elachi. "By comparing the two, we can learn about ourselves. We can learn

about how life started on Earth and how life evolved. How did the Earth form, how did the solar system form, and why do we have the diversity that we do in our solar system?"

In recognition of his contributions to science, LAU awarded Elachi an honorary doctorate in November when he visited the Beirut campus to give a public lecture on Curiosity's mission. The former chairman of the Board of Trustees accepted the award and urged Lebanese students to follow their dreams. "One of the most fortunate things anybody can do in life is to pursue their passion. Anything is possible if you pursue your passion." The Lebanese state also decorated Elachi with an honorary certificate during his visit, adding another accolade to a dizzying constellation of international awards and honors.

To those who might question the feasibility of Lebanese graduates pursuing careers in space, Elachi is quick to point out that the foundations of contemporary understanding about the universe rest

on ancient discoveries made by Arabs. "Exploration is nothing new for Lebanon," he says. "It really started with the Phoenicians, who used the sky to locate themselves. The Arab world has been a major contributor to the science that we now base our knowledge on. Many of the stars in the sky have Arabic names."

There is something very humbling about staring into light years of space, stars and galaxies, acknowledges Elachi. Viewed from outer space, the Earth hovers like a tiny speck of dust in an infinite cosmos. Elachi rehashes the oft-cited words of another of science's most erudite professors, Dr. Carl Sagan: "On it lives everyone you love, everyone you know, and everyone you have ever heard of. It's the most cherished of all the planets and we should take good care of it."

A Kick-Start on Life-Long Learning

LAU opens Early Childhood Center

By Nisreen Kaj

In keeping with its history as a pioneer of early childhood education, LAU will soon inaugurate a refashioned educational facility for children between the ages of two and four. The Early Childhood Center (ECC) exposes pupils to the joys of learning from an early age and starts them on a path of academic distinction.

The ECC was originally established in the 1950s as a nursery, providing educational childcare to Lebanese and expatriate families. The premises and curriculum have since undergone drastic changes to give youngsters the most stimulating education possible at a pivotal time in their cognitive development. "Research has shown that it is important for children to be exposed to numerous thought-provoking activities to identify what and how they best learn," says Dr. Philippe Frossard, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences.

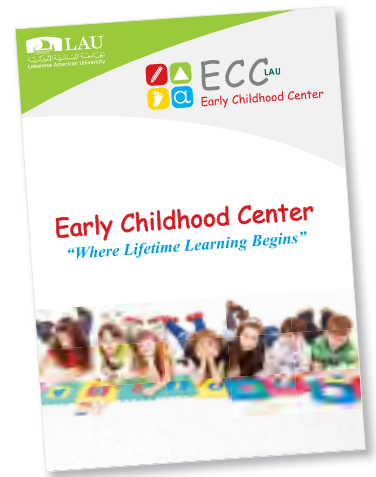
ECC is the only childhood center in the Arab world within an academic institution, which puts its students at an advantage, he adds. The center is "not merely an addition to the daycare already available in Beirut, but an optimal learning environment where pupils interact with LAU students and faculty." Located on the ground floor of Shannon Hall at the Beirut campus, the ECC is open to children of LAU staff and faculty, as well as community members.

It provides a child-centered space "where lifetime learning begins," says ECC Director Ghina Mounla. Children are cared for by specially trained teachers in a modern center equipped with smart boards and interactive touchscreens, an outdoor playground, and an art atelier. "We use tailored educational techniques that respond to the different ways in which our students learn," she says. All furniture has been imported from Europe and the U.S., and all toys and materials are non-toxic.

One of the ECC's defining features is its emphasis on parent involvement. Two observation booths, which are camouflaged as mirrors and equipped with cameras and headphones, allow up to five parents at a time to watch how their children interact. "The fact that you can observe your child means you get a personalized learning environment," says Diala Ammache, an ECC teacher who plans to enroll her own daughter Lynn at the center. "For me that parental involvement is very important. You can grasp what triggers your child's attention, what distracts them, and see how they grow."

The booths are also useful to the many LAU students and faculty who conduct research on education practices, says Dr. Garene Kaloustian, assistant professor in the Department of Education. Students from her department will benefit from placements at the center, as student teachers will accompany homeroom teachers in both of the ECC's two classes, giving them first-hand experience with early education settings. "Our idea of what constitutes early childhood education differs quite a lot from the prevailing attitude in Lebanon," says Kaloustian. "Our student teachers will gain experience in teaching ethics, acquire effective teaching and learning strategies, and become familiar with children's social, cognitive and emotional development."

Sawsan Khanafer, a graduate student who enrolled her daughter at the nursery when she was an undergraduate in the 1990s, recalls how valuable it was to have a secure facility nearby. "I could drop her at the center, attend class and pick her up after. Being on the campus of a reputable university like LAU, in a place where strict international professional standards are upheld, meant I never had to worry about safety, security or credibility."



"Research has shown that it is important for children to be exposed to numerous thought-provoking activities to identify what and how they best learn."

—Dr. Philippe Frossard, dean of School of Arts and Sciences



New at LAU

Food for Thought

LAU's revamped cafeteria serves up healthy choices in modern setting

By Sabina Llewellyn-Davies

Improvements include an extension of the main dining area and the creation of a cyberspace where students can connect while munching on snacks and coffee.



It is often said that the quickest route to someone's heart is through their stomach. Providing students with satiating cuisine in a friendly environment is therefore perhaps just as important to universities as a sound education.

What is more, cafeterias provide a safe and comfortable space for students to interact, form friendships and exchange ideas.

"Students usually use the cafeteria as a place to socialize," says Dr. Raed Mohsen, dean of students at the LAU Beirut campus. "They meet between their classes to discuss course-related issues, projects, as well as personal matters. Some also come to watch their favorite ballgame or listen to music."

The foundation of the Beirut cafeteria dates back to the 1940s, and despite some modernization in the 1990s, the university last year decided the time had come for a complete overhaul.

"There were not enough seats, and overall it was just too small for the growing campus," says Georges Hamouche, assistant vice president for Facilities Management at LAU Beirut.

Many students are thrilled with the idea of a new space, particularly as the rainy season robs them of outdoor options. "The cafeteria is important for us because we have no other place to meet, especially in winter or when the weather is bad," says Dima Abou Rjeilj, a second-year Communications student. "So we are eagerly anticipating the re-opening."

The doors to the renovated 200-seat cafeteria will open to the LAU community this spring. Improvements include an extension of the main dining area and the creation of a cyberspace where students can connect while munching on snacks and coffee.

"The new cafeteria will feature computer stations, fully equipped with charging posts, and the lighting has been enhanced with special equipment to mimic natural light," notes Hamouche.

Other renovations include a new kitchen with state-of-the-art equipment, as well as a spacious dining area, well lit and decorated in hues of blue and red. Large screens and projectors will continuously display LAU presentations and programs, as providing a lively ambience for visitors was one of the key strategies of the renovation.

At the projected cost of \$1 million, the new cafeteria is financed by the university's Capital Projects budget.

Nabil Bedran, director of Capital Projects for LAU Beirut, is quick to point out that the cafeteria is not a commercial endeavor but rather a service to improve student life and well-being. "Of course the cafeteria expects to generate more sales as more people visit and eat there," he says. "When we renovated the Byblos cafeteria in 2010, its sales doubled within a year."

For pharmacy student Karim Ramadan, it's important to have a modern cafeteria, not just for "hanging out" but also to offer nutritious meals.

"I like to look after myself, so I want food options that are healthy," he says.

Making healthy choices available at reasonable prices will be a top priority.

"The price rates of the food have been closely studied, and LAU's Hospitality Department will conduct continuous reviews to ensure that the hygiene standards of the catering staff remain first-rate and that a wide variety of different dining selections are always available," adds Bedran.

According to Nehmat Aoun, director of Hospitality Services, options such as organic ingredients and sustainably farmed produce are being considered for the revised cafeteria menu.



FEATURE

Love 2.0

The social dynamics and repercussions of online dating in the Arab world

By Muriel Kahwagi



Statue of Eros, the Greek god of passionate love, at Piccadilly Circus, London

Nary a soul sang the praises of love quite like the ethereally romantic William Shakespeare did. With over 30 plays and 100 sonnets in his repertoire, England's favorite lyricist and dramatist rightfully earned his reputation as literature's unfailing patron of lovers, edifying the timorous junkies of love on the art and etiquette of courtship, verse after verse.

"Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind," cries Helena of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, pained at her unrequited affection for Demetrius. "And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind," she continues, a heartfelt plea from one of Shakespeare's most beloved heroines — and a candid one.

Love is (debatably) blind, but Cupid — ancient Rome's god of affection and erotic love — is less so. Often portrayed as a troublemaking winged putto who concocts love schemes where love is least likely to burgeon, Cupid is a conception that takes on many forms, not least among them is the *khatba*, 1950s Egypt's very own, albeit markedly different, Cupid. Neither winged nor armed with a bow and a quiver of arrows, the *khatba* is a middle-aged female matchmaker whose paid services are sought, as often as not, to find an eligible suitor for suburban families' young sons and daughters. With the rise of Web 2.0 and the inception and popularization of online dating services, however, the *khatba* tradition is (understandably) verging on extinction.

Conjuring up a world without social media is an inconceivably difficult task today, but 60 years ago, the very concept of online dating was entirely unfathomable. In fact, online dating services sprung up a mere 17 years ago, with websites like Friendfinder.com and Match.com gaining modest popularity in 1995. But what was deemed quirky at best and unorthodox at worst in the mid-1990s gained much warranted attention at the turn of the millennium, both socially and economically, with online dating services generating close to one billion dollars in revenue in 2008 in the United States alone.

Though not as courtly or as romanticized as love in the time of Shakespeare, online dating seems to be a crowd favorite, with over 40 percent of the single adult American population resorting to online dating services. Despite their relatively novel use in the Arab world, online dating websites like Arablounge.com and Qiran.com are slowly but surely gaining popularity, sensibly justifying the piecemeal vanishing of the traditional *khatba*, whose services can now be leisurely sought online.

One of the many perks of the relocation of the *khatba* practice to cyberspace is that the World Wide Web provides world-wide possibilities for Arab singles, who often find themselves unable to fraternize with the opposite sex due to stringent gender segregation. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, under no circumstances are unwed men and women allowed to socialize or even have a tête-à-tête without their parents' consent. In conservative communities like these, the internet provides much needed relief for Arab youth, giving them an open platform to not just pursue romantic relationships, but, equally importantly, to simply get to know the other sex.

True enough, partner-seeking possibilities online are endless. But curiously, the romantic partners that Arab youth have a penchant for on the web tend to have the same profiles as the ones that would have been assigned to them by the *khatba*, rendering the presumed progressiveness of online dating in the Arab world open to question.

"In certain communities, social norms and expectations are so deeply engraved in people's subconscious that it is very difficult to break out of them, even on a modern and technologically advanced medium like the Internet," explains psychotherapist Dr. Hélène Issa, lecturer of psychology at LAU and assistant professor of psychology at the University of Balamand. "To put it simply, the Internet provides what real life cannot: a place for people to meet. But more often than not, Arab youth are seeking exactly what they would otherwise be seeking in real life — which also tends to coincide with what society expects them to seek."

"In a culture where only men are allowed to initiate relationships, online dating empowers and frees women, as it frees them of the social inhibitions associated with their initiation of such relationships."

—Injy Galal, scholar, American University in Cairo

Thus, the Internet is not necessarily paving the way for modernization *per se*; rather, it is helping certain conformist communities make a safe transition to neo-traditionalism, which could then debatably make way for modernization. Issa says it helps to think of the Internet as "a country you've never been to before." When some people travel, she explains, they completely immerse themselves in the country's culture; they learn the local language and explore the country through the eyes of the locals. Others prefer to find their own community in that new place. "When Lebanese people travel, for instance, they often try to locate the Lebanese community in the country they're visiting, and limit their social interactions to other Lebanese people," she says. "When some people are in a new place, they have the tendency to adhere to their own customs and stay in their comfort zone."

In her research report entitled "Online Dating in Egypt," Injy Galal, a scholar at the American University in Cairo, argues that one positive of online dating is that it propagates further gender equality. In communities where sex segregation is exceptionally rigid, online dating services give both men and women equal correspondence rights. "In a culture where only men are allowed to initiate relationships, online dating empowers women, as it



frees them of the social inhibitions associated with their initiation of such relationships," she writes.

Rakan Nimer, a computer engineering student at the American University of Beirut and co-founder of Et3arraaf.com (Arabic for "Meet"), a private beta dating website targeted toward the GCC region, says online dating services in the Arab world not only have the potential to empower women, but also to favor them, however limitedly.

"The ratio of men to women on online dating websites in the Arab world is massive," he says. "For every woman, there are seven or eight men, sometimes more." In the end, notes Nimer, Arab women wind up having more choice on dating websites than they would in real life, but this also regretfully means they are more prone to harassment and objectification. In order to encourage women to join dating websites and bring the men-to-women ratio closer to 1:1, women are exempted from paying any subscription fees upon creating an account. Men, on the other hand, are charged with monthly fees that range from \$25 (Et3arraaf.com) to \$40 (ArabLounge.com).

"You'd be surprised at how much people are willing to pay if it guarantees they will find the right partner," notes Nimer, adding that paid online dating services provide the psychological reassurance that unserious users and fakers are weeded out. "The more you pay, the better results you expect — and the better results you are likely to receive."

"You'd be surprised at how much people are willing to pay if it guarantees they will find the right partner."

—Rakan Nimer, co-founder of Et3arraaf.com



The “stranger-on-a-train” phenomenon makes it easier for us to disclose personal information about ourselves to people we don’t know and aren’t likely to see again

It goes without saying that one of the main appeals of online dating is anonymity, a feature often abused in the virtual realm. Doubtless, cyber anonymity is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can be completely liberating, and may encourage people to disclose information about themselves that they would otherwise be too hesitant to divulge. In other words, notes Issa, “It can help us to be more honest about ourselves.” To be sure, honesty is just as easy to achieve online as it is with a complete stranger you meet on a train for the exact same reason: anonymity. American psychologist and author Dr. Zick Rubin refers to this occurrence as the “stranger-on-a-train” phenomenon, whereby it is easier for us to disclose personal information to people we don’t know and aren’t likely to see again.

Dr. John Suler, professor of psychology at Rider University in the U.S. state of New Jersey, expounds on this concept, explaining the equivalence of the “stranger-on-a-train” phenomenon to interactions in cyberspace, an occurrence referred to by researchers as the “disinhibition effect.” Suler writes that “when people have the opportunity to separate their actions from their real world and identity, they feel less vulnerable about opening up. Whatever they say or do can’t be directly linked to the rest of their lives,” which, agrees Issa, is in part the reason that people tend to open up to strangers online.

But the downside of cyber anonymity, she warns, is lack of

accountability, which makes it tremendously effortless to lie about oneself and create an online persona that is completely different from one’s true identity. “You can be anyone online. It’s all about the image you want to build for yourself,” says Issa. “It’s the perfect platform for us to be who we always wished we could be, and to search for the people we always wished we could find in real life.”

“In certain communities, social norms and expectations are so deeply engraved in people’s subconscious that it is very difficult to break out of them, even on a modern and technologically advanced medium like the Internet.”

—Dr. Hélène Issa, psychotherapist and lecturer at LAU

Offline, explains Issa, our verbal and non-verbal communication — and people’s reaction to them — dictates much of what we choose to divulge about ourselves. Furthermore, rejection in real life engenders more prominent narcissistic injury — a graze on one’s self-esteem and self-worth — than does online rejection, hence the appeal of online openness.

But while it is far more uncomplicated to falsify one’s image in cyberspace, the physical remoteness accorded to people who use online dating services makes it contrastingly easier to be true to their heart. It is thus more tempting to relay one’s feelings in writing than in the physical presence of one’s object of affection, but this emotional transparency comes at the price of the sporadic flaunting of one’s own image. As American author Anna Marie Quindlen aptly puts it, “The age of technology has both revived the use of writing and provided ever more reasons for its spiritual solace. Emails are letters, after all, more lasting than phone calls, even if many of them r 2 cursory 4 u.”





An Inside Look

Pharmacy students begin rotations at Ministry of Health

By Linda Dahdah

The 2012 fall season was not kind to the Lebanese pharmaceutical sector. A governmental crackdown on counterfeit drug firms and the revocation of some 15 fake pharmacy licenses shook the industry to its foundations.

"The scandal raised serious concerns among our students," said Dr. Aline Saad, clinical assistant professor and pharmacy practice chair at LAU's School of Pharmacy. "They asked all sorts of questions and we tried to answer them knowing that our program already places a strong emphasis on ethics."

That commitment to high standards was taken a step further last December when the School of Pharmacy administration signed an experiential agreement with the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health, giving students a unique opportunity to get an inside look at the pharmacy industry's regulatory affairs.

Now in effect, the agreement allows SOP students — through a one-month elective — access the ministry's facilities, personnel and services within a specially designed plan that rotates them through several departments at the ministry and its affiliated centers.

"This collaboration is a unique opportunity for our students as it draws on the wealth of knowledge and experience provided by the ministry's professionals," says LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra.

Minister of Health Dr. Ali Hassan Khalil expressed his satisfaction towards a "first-of-its-kind collaboration" adding, "It is part of the ministry's strategy to provide youth with the opportunity to gain new skills that will help them make a difference when they are in the job market."

The recent pharmacy scandal was a stark reminder that pharmacists are involved in many levels of the pharmaceutical business, from drug research and development to clinical trials, drug manufacturing, to regulation, promotion, distribution, surveillance and last but not least, patient monitoring.

"This initiative will allow our students a comprehensive vision of what their profession is about; to learn what they cannot be taught in the classrooms," says SOP Dean Dr. Pierre Zalloua. "This is what will make our students unique."

Dr. Imad Btaiche, associate dean for academic affairs at SOP, helped conceive the initiative, along with Dr. Lamis Karaoui, clinical assistant professor and director of experiential education, and Dr. Saad.

Saad explains that collaboration with the ministry actually started as far back as spring 2012. "A lot of time was spent on developing the syllabus to guarantee that students will get the best out of this experience while providing the ministry with valuable input in return." Indeed, students will be part of official public health projects including awareness campaigns.

There is also a big part dedicated to patient care, says Btaiche. "Students will spend time at the National Aids Program and different dispensaries and will have the chance to counsel patients, educate them, and interact with physicians," he says.

"There are very few opportunities in regulatory affairs in general," says Karaoui. "They usually partake in a residency or a fellowship with industrial companies, so this is an exceptional program, and we are proud to be the leaders in this area."



LAU's School of Pharmacy is a full member of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP). Currently, the Doctor of Pharmacy program at LAU is the only one outside the United States of America that is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE). The initial accreditation review took place in 2002, when full accreditation was granted. Hence, Pharm.D. graduates are eligible for licensure as pharmacists in most U.S. states and provinces.

Minister of Public Health and LAU President shake on agreement



A Winning Prescription

Pharmacy students earn third place in Vegas competition

By Paige Kollock

University students in Las Vegas. It sounds like a dangerous formula, but these LAU School of Pharmacy majors were not in the Entertainment Capital of the World to gamble — although they did win big. Not at roulette or slot machines, but instead taking third place at the Clinical Skills Competition (CSC) for their treatment plan of a psychiatry case.

The annual competition gathers pharmacy students from Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education-certified universities and colleges around the world, but since LAU is the only qualified school outside the U.S., Pharm D. students Melissa El Debs and Caroline Der Nigoghossian were the only non-Americans to compete.

"It intimidated us initially," said El Debs. "But we realized how good our school is after winning the first leg of the competition."

Organized by the American Society of Health System Pharmacists (ASHP), the competition tests pharmacy students in direct patient care by posing a mock scenario.

"The patient had schizophrenia and depression along with other comorbid complications, and he was resistant to many drugs," said El Debs. "So we had to find the best treatment for this specific case while taking into account other problems," namely that he didn't have insurance, so cost-effectiveness was a factor. And despite extensive preparation, neither student had ever done a psychiatry rotation.

In the span of two hours, they had to assess patient information and current therapy, identify and prioritize drug therapy problems and treatment goals, and formulate a comprehensive patient-care plan, finally giving a ten-minute oral defense of their plan to a panel of judges.

"We work very well as a team, and we always separate the tasks, so I managed the schizophrenia, and Melissa managed the rest [depression and comorbid conditions]," said Der Nigoghossian.

Though they won third place, the path to Las Vegas wasn't a cakewalk. They first had to succeed at the local level, besting their classmates in a school-wide competition that was held at LAU in October. The students, both of whom recently completed semester-long rotations at the Methodist Hospital in Houston, Texas, were then tutored extensively.

"We coached our students on a weekly basis, providing them with practice cases, even touching on their communication skills, like how they should present themselves, how they should smile," said Dr. Lamis Karaoui, clinical assistant professor and director of Experiential Education. That attention to detail turned out a winning formula.

"This reflects very highly on the quality of education that our pharmacy students are receiving," said School of Pharmacy Dean Dr. Pierre Zalloua. "The motivation and drive of Caroline and Melissa, and the efforts invested by faculty and preceptors in preparing them, made all the difference."

Their rotations at Methodist Hospital also proved indispensable.

"I think it was the best experience I've ever had in my professional life," said Der Nigoghossian. "I got to work with clinical specialists, did two transplant rotations, and learned about the pharmacist's role in a medical team. This type of experience will help us come back to Lebanon and instill similar models."

With graduation in June, they will have the chance to put their skills to the real test. Until then, they can enjoy the recognition they are receiving in Lebanon and at LAU in particular.



"The motivation, drive and outstanding qualifications of our students Caroline and Melissa, and the time and efforts invested by school faculty and preceptors in preparing them, made all the difference."

—Dr. Pierre Zalloua, dean of School of Pharmacy



A Global Conversation

The *pas de deux* of Religion and Democracy

By Mehrnoush Shafiei

"Today, more than at any other time in the history of the Arab and Muslim worlds, there is a desperate need for a full understanding of the proper link between religion and democracy, between politics and faith, between the state and God."

—Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra, LAU president

The conference was organized by the Adyan Foundation in partnership with LAU, the Konrad Adenauer foundation (Amman Office) and with the support of the Institute of Missiology Missio and the Bank of Beirut and Arab Countries under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Lebanon General Michel Sleiman.



Consider this: There are approximately 4,200 known religions in the world, and about 80 percent of the world's population subscribes to some form of spiritual belief. It is no wonder, then, that the relationship between religion and politics is a source of ongoing debate.

Indeed, this was precisely the focus of a two-day international conference on Religion and Democracy in Europe and the Arab World, which took place in late November at LAU Byblos and was attended by dignitaries, faculty and students alike.

The event drew 40 academics from across the Mideast and Europe, including Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Italy, UK, Germany, Scotland, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Turkey and Iran — an impressive mélange that made for a lively debate as participants offered contributions to the global conversation about religion and democracy.

The conference opened with an address by LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra, who reminded the audience of Alexis de Tocqueville's compelling assertion that "Despotism can govern without faith, but liberty cannot."

"Today, more than at any other time in the history of the Arab and Muslim worlds, there is a desperate need for a full understanding of the proper link between religion and democracy, between politics and faith, between the state and God," continued Jabbra.

Dr. Fadi Daou, chairman and CEO of Adyan Foundation, which partnered with LAU to organize the event, concurred: "Raising awareness on cultural and religious diversity and coexistence is of utmost importance in these changing times."

Stressing that such arguments are no longer theoretical but real, with high stakes and serious consequences for the future, Dr. Makram Ouass, chair of the Department of Social Sciences at LAU, brought the discussion into focus, kicking off a vigorous debate on the complexities of the relationship between democracy and religion.

Though many consider the banishment of religion from politics to be the sine qua non of democracy, this assumption was readily challenged during the conference. "The questions raised in this event are important; we cannot take secularism for granted," said Manal Tayar, third-year political science student at LAU.

Over the period of two days, no envelope went un-pushed, as scholars tackled themes like the concept of the civil state in the current Arab political and religious discourse, as well as the redefinition of religion in the public sphere in both the Middle East and Europe.

"This is my first visit to Lebanon, and I was impressed by the welcoming and intellectually stimulating environment provided by LAU," said Dr. Fatima Tofighi, an Iranian scholar from the University of Glasgow in Scotland.

"Seldom does the occasion arise when academic musings are so timely and necessary, coming as people take to the streets and engage in the same important conversations that we are having," she added.

While the direction the region is heading in is still unknown, the current uncertainty presents fertile ground for political change. Will the future Middle East see a peaceful accommodation of democracy and religion? Let's pray it will.

By Brooke Grasberger

A classic team player, Badr is an expert at creating solid foundations for initiatives, laying the groundwork for success as he moves forward with another challenge. "You may not always have the ability to see a project through yourself from start to finish, but at the end of the day, if you build the momentum, someone else can run and score the goal," he says, underscoring the humility and dedication with which he serves LAU.



With Dr. Badr's continued guidance, LAU's horizons seem bright indeed.

—Dr. Elie Badr, assistant to the president and strategy officer for external projects and related entities



FEATURE

Surfing for Charity

Effective outreach in the information era

By Brooke Grasberger



In a comfortable chair, settled on a cushion with a cup of tea and my laptop in front of me, I can dig a well in Tanzania, fund panda habitats in China or help purify drinking water in India — and this isn't even counting the vast amounts of online shopping, music videos, flash games and news articles with which I can distract myself. Through the keys of our computers, we can touch lives all across the world, but the question is: what to reach for?

With so many causes finding their way into one's daily digital digest, even social sites like Facebook are beginning to work donation into their code. Along with Starbucks gift cards and chocolate-dipped cake pops, Facebook's "gifts feature" allows users to donate to a select group of charities.

The amount of information facing an individual Internet user is massive, and an activist or charitable cause has to find a way to distinguish itself, not just from other charities, but from the infinite permutations of groups and organizations to which the Internet has given life.

The growth of the Internet has caused groundbreaking changes in the way charitable, activist and philanthropic causes operate in the world — and in Lebanon. Jessica Dheere, former LAU staff member and founding member of the Social Media Exchange, a group that, in their own words, "envision[s] an Arab world empowered by access to information and the tools, knowledge and skills needed to leverage it," has a keen eye for the ways in which the Internet can advance the world of giving. To that end, she works to develop and deliver training on the strategic use of ICTs (Information and Communications Technologies), particularly digital and social media, to promote public participation in the governance of Arab societies through advocacy, citizen reporting and social networking.

In Lebanon as in the rest of the world, the Internet has increased the reach and scope of many an organization. The widespread availability of ICTs, including Internet and social media, is helping to make activism and non-governmental organization (NGO) operations in Lebanon more effective and wide-ranging.

"Digital and social media have helped NGOs get their messages out more quickly and with smaller budgets," explains Dheere. "It has made them much less dependent on traditional media. It has also helped recruit new members to their causes, people they might not have found otherwise."

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Though this all sounds quite positive, Internet technologies also come with their own unique challenges. As do-it-yourself as digital and social media are, it can be laborious to learn all of the tools and how best to use them, and NGOs don't often have the time and resources to devote to deliberate learning and testing. The possible configurations of social media tools are infinite, making it even more essential for organizations to have clearly defined goals.

Gone are the days when one could start a charity with a broad-based cause such as "for the children" or "for the poor." With the spread of technology, a charitable or philanthropic organization's goal has to be targeted toward a specific population, in need of a specific service. For example, among the top unique causes on Twitter are "saving Peruvian pets" and "reversing the environmental crisis with green sports." Lebanon currently faces added challenges because, despite small improvements, it still lags behind other countries in most Internet technologies, and its universities are only recently beginning to train graduates in computer sciences at a level necessary to ride the cutting edge of the Internet's wave.

As part of her organization's job is to educate NGOs in navigating this world of digits and data, Dheere is intimately familiar with the set of skills an organization should have in order to capitalize on technology and maximize their exposure and outreach online.

"Communications officers and project officers need to have digital production skills. They need to be able to use photo- and video-editing software for simple projects, and they need to understand how digital production and publications processes work to be able to guide professionals on larger projects. It's also great if someone on your staff has some HTML and CSS ability, and remember your IT person isn't necessarily a web person and vice versa," she says.

It is no longer possible for an NGO that wishes to succeed in effecting change to go without a web expert. Once this expertise is secured, an organization has to use him or her effectively.

"If you're clear on your goals with regard to social media and make them SMART — specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and time-bound — you're much more likely to have success," explains Dheere, who recommends getting familiar with the tools and what they can do before diving in.

"Each tool has its specific core attributes, or implements.

Generally speaking, Facebook is great for reaching extended family and friend networks, while Twitter is less personal and so better at reaching people with similar interests. Get started, and don't expect immediate results. Test the waters with one channel. Don't launch six channels at once."

LAU alumnus Yorgui Teyrouz is intimately familiar with the successful synergy of the Internet and social media. His NGO, Donner Sang Compter, connects blood donors to medical sites in need of donation. Formed in 2006, the group has come into focus as a leader in Internet-savvy, and its use of Twitter contributed to an outpouring of blood donations following the October 19, 2012 bombing in Ashrafieh. "We have a Facebook page, a Twitter account, and our own website and blog," says Teyrouz. "We see most of our traffic through Facebook, but Twitter is best for instant or emergency communication."

"Communications officers and project officers need to have digital production skills. They need to be able to use photo- and video-editing software for simple projects, and they need to understand how digital production and publications processes work."

—Jessica Dheere, founding member of the Social Media Exchange

Donner Sang Compter updates their accounts frequently, and keeps distinct usages for each social media outlet. Most importantly, they have a realistic idea of how social media will enhance their operations. "Our online presence is used mainly for awareness. You don't often get too many more attendees to events, but it does help to make people aware of us and encourage them to donate." Astute companies like these know that social media channels are an addition to, not the be-all end-all, of organizational tools.

Of course, there is more to championing causes online than outreach skills. Broader trends with regard to the Internet and the world that affects it must be kept track of. Dheere says it is important to have someone around who understands the mobile web. By all accounts, what we now know as the mobile web will soon just be called the Web, as more and more people come to use smartphones rather than computers to go online.



Social media trainings conducted by Lebanese NGO the Social Media Exchange



Finally, getting familiar with Internet and media policy, as well as privacy issues, is important for any organization that aims to become more than a fleeting Facebook campaign. “These issues and laws affect everyone, no matter what your NGO’s specific mission is. If your ability to communicate about your cause is restricted because of poorly drafted or repressive legislation, your cause will suffer,” advises Dheere. Technical specificity is not enough on its own; NGOs and their staffs must be highly aware of the Internet’s constant evolution.

Knowledge of these skills and technologies is critical for all organizations, not just NGOs. LAU itself, with its formidable presence in Lebanon and alumni in every corner of the globe, utilizes these very techniques to overcome the distance between itself and its constituents. Abdallah Al Khal, executive director of the Alumni Relations Office, acknowledges the power of the Internet in keeping up with the school’s vast and growing alumni network.

“We have noticed an increase in the attendance of our events and lectures. We send out an email far in advance, post the event on our Facebook page and on the alumni site, and we get more responses directly from alumni.”

—Abdallah Al Khal, executive director of the Alumni Relations Office

“It definitely makes it faster and easier to connect,” he says. “For instance, we have noticed an increase in the attendance of our events and lectures. We send out an email far in advance, post the event on our Facebook page and on the alumni site, and we

get more responses directly from alumni.” Like any organization with an effective web presence, LAU spreads its influence farther than would be possible without the Internet.

The Internet not only connects alumni with the school, but with each other. Al Khal reports that thanks to their Facebook and alumni pages, LAU graduates are now increasingly connected with each others’ lives and are therefore better able to assist each other. “They tell each other about events, plan to go together, and exchange CVs in the context of their various businesses,” he says. These networks, bonds streaming over thousands of miles, strengthen LAU’s sense of community and extend the university’s reach into life after graduation.

Access to and use of Internet technologies does, however, do much more than increase visibility and donor base. This global network and exchange of information is actually building something valuable in Lebanon: a collective national consciousness, making people more aware of events and issues in their country. Examples include the outpouring of support and assistance for victims of the October Ashrafieh bombing, and the creation of an anti-racism coalition after several racially charged incidents at the Beirut airport.

The wide world of the Internet presents an enormous amount of opportunity for organizations that seek to help people in a variety of ways. The necessity is, of course, to know the skills needed to chart true courses over this ocean of information, be it an NGO dedicated to increasing blood donations, or an institution such as LAU dedicated to providing a rich educational experience for young people worldwide. ■



More Than Skin Deep

UMC-RH dermatology center offers cutting edge skin treatments and quality care

By Paige Kollock



With University Medical Center – Rizk Hospital (UMC-RH)'s ongoing efforts to revamp and upgrade its facilities, the dermatology center will soon be expanded to become a center of excellence, incorporating state-of-the-art equipment to treat a variety of skin diseases, as well as a focus on aesthetics. The center has become a reference in Lebanon for laser surgery and for treatment of skin complications and vascular birthmarks.

Dr. Zeina Tannous is Chief of Dermatology at UMC-RH and we took the opportunity to ask her about the department's exciting growth prospects. Tannous comes to the hospital from Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts. Board-certified in dermatology and dermatopathology in the United States, she remains a visiting associate professor at Harvard.

Q: What areas of expertise does UMC-RH offer in dermatology?

We specialize in dermatopathology, a subspecialty that combines both dermatology and pathology. It focuses on the study of cutaneous diseases at a microscopic level and encompasses analyses of the potential causes of skin diseases at a cellular level. This practice allows for a more accurate and immediate diagnosis.

Another area of expertise is what we call MOHS micrographic surgery, a highly specialized and precise technique that removes skin cancer in stages, one tissue layer at a time. This way, we are getting 99.9 percent cure rates versus other types of surgery that blindly take the skin cancer out, resulting in an 85 to 90 percent cure rate. This method is quite advanced in the U.S., and we hope to install this innovative technique in the Middle East, and more specifically at UMC-RH.

Our third specialty is lasers and cosmetics. There are up to 50 types of lasers now that are used for different conditions, both medical and cosmetic and we provide services to improve the skin's appearance and to treat various skin imperfections.

Q: Can lasers be used for treatment of dermatologic conditions?

Yes, and at UMC-RH we are launching a specialized center for treating birthmarks in general, which includes pigmented birthmarks like giant moles and red marks for children who are born with them. They can be really devastating for the patients, the parents, and can be treated as early as one month of age with lasers.

Q: The center performs a lot of cosmetic dermatology. Why is it recommended to see a doctor for these procedures?

These procedures can have serious side effects. For example, injecting a filler in the wrong place can cause obstruction of a vessel, or necrosis (cell injury). Injecting Botox in the wrong place can cause temporary facial asymmetry. If the administrator is not properly trained, they will not know how to deal with such complications. By law, a doctor has to disclose his or her training, whereas an amateur can exaggerate their experience, and use products that are cheaper and poor quality.

In Lebanon and our region, the popularity of such cosmetic practices has grown exponentially in the last few years, and unfortunately we are seeing many patients who received botched treatments. We do our best to rectify the work, but it is of utmost importance to seek reliable medical expertise at the outset, even for these seemingly minor procedures.

Q: What is the vision for the center?

We are seeing more advanced cases of skin cancer, either because doctors could not diagnose it at the right time, or because patients have ignored it. One of our main objectives at UMC-RH is to establish a multidisciplinary clinic for skin cancer screening that would draw on all the areas of expertise offered at the hospital. If skin repair is required, plastic surgeons are at hand,



or vascular surgeons if the condition involves complications with the vessels, or pathologists for additional screening and diagnosis confirmation. Patients would come from all over the Middle East to be seen by a medical team, thereby ensure early diagnosis, or better yet, prevention.

Our second aim is to establish a partnership with Harvard University Medical School to foster exchange of expertise. UMC-RH would host visiting doctors specialized in dealing with complex birthmarks and our team would work side by side with them, advancing our collective knowledge.

In the near future, there are plans to expand our medical team by including additional subspecialties, and welcoming LAU medical residents.

Q: What types of equipment does the center offer?

We offer advanced lasers for a variety of skin conditions. The VBeam Perfecta — a vascular laser used for treating red birthmarks in children, broken blood vessels, rosacea, spider veins, warts and sun damaged skin, among other conditions — is top of the line and exclusive in Lebanon to UMC-RH. Our Fraxel Dual Laser is optimal for the treatment of skin pigmentation, melasma, burn scars, acne scars, etc., and the Lightsheer Duet is the latest laser for hair removal, offering better results with less pain.

We are embarking on clinical research to try new devices and new treatments for rare conditions. At the end, we're an academic institution and we need to contribute to science.

Q: How does being at a medical center like UMC-RH help in the diagnosis and treatment?

Establishing a dermatology center in an academic hospital puts us at a enormous advantage as we are able to draw upon the expertise of a variety of medical professionals, coupled with state of the art facilities and the latest technology. Sharing facilities with such

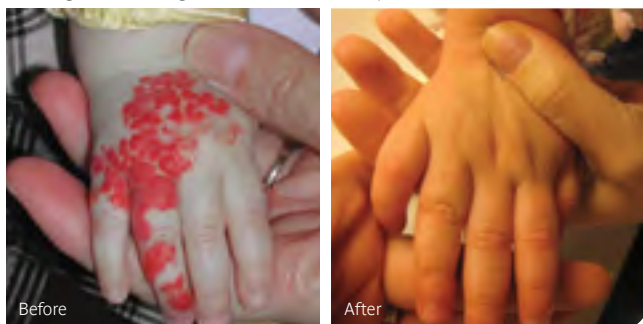
centers offers an ideal setting for a dermatologist to treat complex cases.

Q: What other aspects make the center unique?

We pride ourselves upon our well-trained nurses, who give the upmost care to patients, along with friendly premises and a private waiting area to maintain anonymity.

We are also planning to participate in national health awareness campaigns in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and relevant medical societies. Educating patients and the public at large about the importance of screening and preventive measures in skin care is at the core of our mission as an academic medical institution. Because skin is the mirror of the body, many diseases reflect on the skin first.

Hemangioma on the right hand of an infant. Complete resolution after laser treatment.



Proud and Committed

The President's Circle extends a hand at UMC-RH and beyond

By Paige Kollock

On Christmas Eve, while many people were dashing around town for last-minute holiday gifts, a group of nine dedicated Samaritans were strolling the halls of University Medical Center – Rizk Hospital (UMC-RH), doling out chocolates to sick or recovering patients, along with some holiday cheer.

They are the official UMC-RH volunteer group and they've become an indispensable arm of the hospital, counted on for both financial and moral support. The group is an initiative of the LAU President's Circle, a discrete but pivotal unit of the university committed to supporting the different areas of excellence at LAU as well as furthering the education of deserving students in Lebanon. While these two groups operate independently, they share a common trait: an admiration and respect for LAU.

"The President's Circle is a group of volunteers dedicated to promoting LAU in any way we can, outside of academics," says Dr. Layla Nimah, chair of the group. "We raise funds for a wide range of projects in the public interest that are not budgeted for by the university. Since the hospital is an important component of LAU, we said let's do something to help the hospital," and hence, the UMC-RH volunteer group was born.

Some UMC-RH volunteers are LAU graduates and have a vested interest in giving back to the alma mater that gave them a lifelong education. Others are parents of students, and still others simply believe in the mission of LAU. Whether housewives or high-powered professionals, they've come together to join hands for a common goal: to promote the excellence of LAU.

With the opening of a small gift shop, staffed six days a week by volunteers, the group generates proceeds, which along with other funds from the President's Circle, go to assisting needy patients. When not manning the shop, volunteers spend time comforting patients, a practice that for some hits close to home. Hala Finj is a volunteer and the mother of LAU graduate Ahmad Finj, who died in 2003 from a rare bone disease. Finj says her son spent

the best days of his life at LAU and that volunteering is her own way of giving back.

"The patients tell me they love that there's someone asking after their health and making sure they're comfortable," says Sister Mona, acting head nurse at the hospital. Often, she says, the sick feel more at ease opening up to a non-family member.

"The extra care we can give really helps, and the least we can do as volunteers is visiting the patients, making sure they are comfortable," says volunteer Roula Hussami, who graduated from LAU when it was Beirut University College.

But the Circle's role is much larger. It is also involved in community activities and in January held a debate about the ethics of genetic testing, bringing in four prominent experts in the health field to lend their expertise. Among their other plans is providing support for educational spaces on campus.

Nehmat Kanaan has been a member since 2010 and has a fond attachment to LAU.

"When I started my studies, I was 13 years old, so I grew up in this university and I'm so attached to it. When I graduated I was 17, and it opened so many doors for me," says the former psychology major, who went on to become the director general of the Ministry of Social Affairs in the 1980s.

"I can't think of a finer group of women to act as ambassadors to our beloved university and to further enhance our engagement with the community," says LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara.



"I can't think of a finer group of women to act as ambassadors to our beloved university and to further enhance our engagement with the community."

—Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara, LAU president



Volunteers with Sister Mona, acting head nurse at UMC-RH



LAU

Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury
School of Medicine

Grasping for Air

Under-diagnosed, life-threatening lung disease proves rampant in Lebanon

By Paige Kollock



"We have the highest rates of smoking in the area. We are the champions of smoking, and not only that, we're heavy smokers and we're mixed smokers."

—Dr. Marie Louise Coussa-Koniski,
head of the Respiratory Disease Division
at UMC-RH and associate professor of
medicine at LAU

If you live in Lebanon and are over 40, you are at serious risk of getting chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), an irreversible impairment of lung function that robs an individual of the ability to breathe properly.

In the first-ever regional research on COPD, called the BREATHE Study, Dr. Marie Louise Coussa-Koniski and her colleagues found that more than 13 million people in the Middle East and Africa (MEA) region suffer from the disease due to cigarette smoking. And Coussa-Koniski, associate professor of medicine at LAU and head of the Respiratory Diseases Division at University Medical Center-Rizk Hospital, calls that figure "conservative."

While the prevalence of COPD in the region is 3.6 percent, in Lebanon it's 5.3 percent.

"We are the second most prevalent country after Syria," says the pulmonologist. The explanation for this is simple: "We have the highest rates of smoking in the area. We are the champions of smoking, and not only that, we're heavy smokers and we're mixed smokers," meaning tobacco and shisha.

Often misdiagnosed by physicians as asthma, symptoms of the disease include chronic coughing, excessive mucus and breathlessness. While the major cause is indeed cigarette smoking, other risk factors include shisha smoking and pollution, especially from the bio-mass fuels that are often used for cooking and heating in Lebanon.

Over the course of a year, researchers surveyed more than 60,000 individuals in 11 countries by telephone, and found that awareness of the disease and its treatment were shockingly low.

"There's no real translation for COPD in Arabic, so we had to find a technical word because all the patients are told they have 'a kind of asthma, or allergy.' They were not aware that they have COPD."

Lack of awareness about what may seem a rather benign disease, but which is in fact very serious if left untreated, is ubiquitous.

"Patients arrive at severe rates without being diagnosed or treated," a problem that stems from lack of knowledge among patients and even medical professionals. "The longer you leave it untreated, the more complications you will have, and [the greater the] risk of fatal endpoints."

Contrary to many common diseases in the world today that are decreasing in frequency, the prevalence of COPD is rising, according to the World Health Organization. They predict it will become the third-leading cause of death worldwide by 2030.

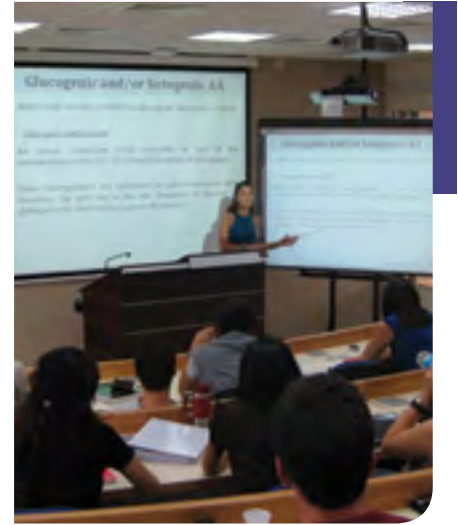
And the economic burden is staggering: A total of 1,000 consultations, 190 emergency visits and 175 hospitalizations per hour are attributable to COPD across the 11 MEA countries. Moreover, a third of COPD patients are obliged to stop working.

While the disease can't be cured, it can be treated.

On a national level, Coussa-Koniski says a number of preventive measures can be done to combat this dangerous disease, starting with tobacco control, including not just smoking bans, but also raising the price of cigarettes to deter smoking and enforcing quality controls on the tobacco that is sold in Lebanon.

For now, along with her colleagues, she is trying to spread the word through the medical community and in university settings like LAU.

"We are lucky to have different means of communication inside LAU. So let's start with our community, and this will help us engage advocates for this problem."



The Future is Now

Smart classrooms synthesize technology and teaching

By Brooke Grasberger

Nicol Hall 209 seems like a normal classroom in most respects: neat rows of desks and chairs under fluorescent lights, facing a whiteboard. The stunning exception to this traditional layout is the lectern. Instead of a traditional wooden podium, it is a gleaming black and white plastic structure, like something that's been beamed in from a science-fiction movie.

Though the lectern appears to be the only modern piece of technology in the room, the fact is, the whole class is designed specially to reflect a new attitude toward technology in the academic sphere. It is one of LAU's 63 such "smart classrooms" — 30 on the Beirut campus and 33 in Byblos. Camille Abou-Nasr, assistant vice president for Information Technology, explains the necessity of such avant-garde classrooms. "IT in higher education has evolved to a point where it is practically the core of teaching and learning," he says, underscoring this generation's aptitude for technological developments.

Hamid Saliba, director of IT Networks, Telecom and Multimedia, explains some of the positive changes brought by the implementation of smart classrooms. "From the lectern, the professor can control the lighting in the room, connect to the projector through a laptop or iPad, and initiate a video conference with distant colleagues or experts."

In 2011, for example, LAU students engaged in a videoconference with their peers at the American University in Cairo (AUC) on democratic transitions in the midst of the Egyptian uprising. Organized by Dr. Imad Salamey, associate professor of Political Science and International Affairs at LAU Beirut, and Dr. Mohamad Fahmy Menza, lecturer at AUC, students held a live discussion at a pivotal moment in political history, demonstrating how such features can revolutionize learning.

Another feature of smart classrooms is the clicker system, whereby professors can administer quizzes or ask questions using an instant feedback system. Armed with white plastic devices that operate like remote controls, students can choose answers to questions displayed through the projector with the click of a button, rendering lessons both fun and interactive.

"The smart classrooms help extend LAU's reach, too," Saliba says, as he demonstrates the videoconferencing abilities that enable professors to record their lectures for students to watch later, or from abroad.

Many of the classrooms were transformed under the auspices of a grant from American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA), awarded to LAU in 2007. The grant, in the amount of \$500,000, provided the university with the impetus to begin upgrading its facilities, including

a solid foundation of smart classrooms. Now in its third phase, LAU is utilizing its own budget to finance the remainder of the classrooms. At this point, "LAU is the leader in smart classrooms technology in Lebanon," Saliba reports.

At a class in the School of Business, students give presentations to their peers using an enhanced lectern similar in purpose if not shape to the one in Nicol Hall. Dr. Hussein Ismail, professor of Management Studies, watches the presentations carefully. "The smart classrooms make lectures more interesting for my students because I can include a wide variety of media," he says. "The sky is the limit."

By allowing for a greater degree of student participation and professorial outreach, LAU is increasing the scope of its education and leading the nation in technological sagacity.

"IT in higher education has evolved to a point where it is practically the core of teaching and learning."

—Camille Abou-Nasr, assistant vice president for Information Technology at LAU

Op-Ed

The Phone is Too Much With Us

By Dr. George Sadaka

"In modern philosophy and science, the word technology invokes the use of machines to make human lives easier. But does technology make our lives better? And should there be a binary relationship between "easier" and "better"?"

—Dr. George Sadaka

We can hardly define and configure strong academic parameters of education in a postmodern world if not in tandem with technology. But by the same token, technology can either help transfigure human life in serviceable domains, or it can remain a figurative concept and a word that carries more promises than real action. If not leading to a technological transfiguration that helps humans conquer time, distance and other confines of physics, the use of technology in education can sometimes be an impediment.

In modern philosophy and science, the word technology invokes the use of machines to make human lives easier. But does technology make our lives better?

of my pictures and a stockpile of everything I need for important activities in my life. This is certainly what life was not in the past few decades. Likewise, education in the very near past was certainly not what it is now.

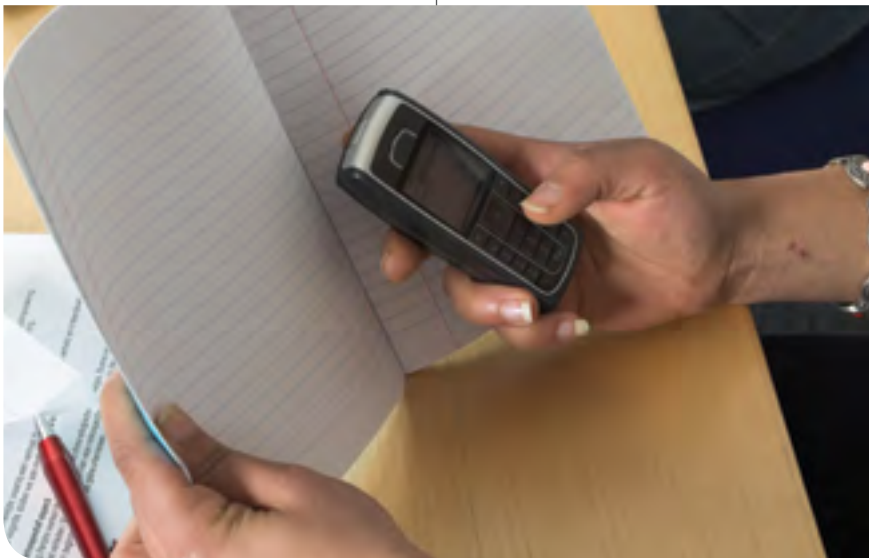
In our society, the mobile phone has practically become a bodily organ that is present wherever its owner is present: in class, on campus, off campus, in bed, in the car, in holy places, on the road, with friends, in the bathroom, etc. As a teacher, I have found it increasingly difficult to separate students from their mobiles. During class time, I often feel more attention is being paid to mobile screens than to the instructor, the textbook, the board and their colleagues. Using the very same tool that opens up the world to them, some students isolate themselves and enter a virtual world.

When students continue to use their smartphones in class despite constant warnings from faculty, they actually abuse technology. Though I have repeatedly tried to discourage this behavior, nothing seems to work. When I lecture, I cannot act as a policeman, judge, lecturer and schoolmaster simultaneously. I literally find myself helpless as to what to do with such students, as we lack a university policy that prohibits the use of mobiles in class. Rules are instead made by individual instructors.

LAU has done very well in creating a smoke-free campus. While smartphones have undoubtedly improved our access to information, the recognition of LAU classrooms as mobile-free would be yet another noteworthy achievement.

In 1806, the Romantic poet William Wordsworth lamented the gradual "worlding" of human purposes and interests in his poem "The World is Too Much with Us." Over 200 years later, we find a need to decry the gradual mobilization of a mobile-oriented university culture.

Dr. George Sadaka is a lecturer of English literature and cultural studies at LAU's School of Arts and Sciences.



And should there be a binary relationship between "easier" and "better"?

There ought to be some wider awareness of what qualifies and what does not qualify as technology in education. Calculators are very helpful and important in education, in work and life generally. By this token, can smartphones be located in the same slot as calculators? Can both be used openly during an exam?

A smartphone in my pocket is the world in my pocket. It is a constantly updated library, a store of my information, an album



It's Not Just About Books Anymore

LAU libraries evolve as dynamic centers for online resources and social activity

By Sabina Llewellyn-Davies

LAU's library system is a nexus of technological improvement. Libraries on both campuses are now capable of placing an astonishing collection of books, journals and scholarly works at the fingertips of the community.

The days of sifting through dog-eared index cards to find a book are over. As technology permeates every aspect of daily life, libraries are just one of the places finding themselves having to keep up with the times. Information technology is changing not only the way university libraries function, but also the ways individuals use them.

The central component of any library used to be its books, but as the written word evolves into the digital word, there is now an even greater need to create technologically advanced library spaces that are socially and intellectually conducive.

Communication and interaction are vital to LAU libraries, says University Librarian Cendrella Habre. "Technology is a popular tool these days, so in order to move with the times we have spent considerable time developing accessible online resources."

Indeed, LAU's library system is a nexus of technological improvement. Through partnerships with international organizations such as the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), libraries on both campuses are now capable of placing an astonishing collection of books, journals and scholarly works at the fingertips of the community. Approximately 529,000 books have been cataloged at the Beirut and Byblos campuses, and more than 100,000 e-books have been added, mainly in the Science, Technology and Medicine (STM) section.

"Students and faculty in those fields prefer an e-book because they are more up-to-date," says Habre. "When it comes to humanities, the end user prefers a print book. They want to see the actual pictures and they typically have to read the entire book, whereas those in the STM disciplines are often looking to extract a piece of information."



LAU libraries are also providing iPads and e-book readers such as the Kindle for in-library use. "This is an initiative we're particularly proud of," says Houeida Kammourié Charara, InfoCommons librarian at LAU. "We are the only ones circulating e-book readers among our students, and of course we also lend laptops."

Should a student need help finding a source while away from the library premises, Kammourié Charara says the online reference service is a helpful tool. Located on the library web page, it offers a real-time chat service with librarians.

"I used to spend hours in the libraries consulting the journals, but now most of the references I need are available online. If there's something I can't track down, I just email the library staff and they find it for me," says Dr. Rima Bahous, chair of the Education Department in the School of Arts and Sciences.

This emphasis on digital accessibility is coupled with an aggressively expanding corpus of printed material, including renowned special collections on women's studies, Islamic art and architecture, and education.

If the method of gathering information has changed, so too has the approach

to studying. Whereas university libraries were once silent buildings where students pored over dusty books, there is now a much greater emphasis on interactive learning and group study. The Riyadh Nassar Library in Beirut provides three group study rooms that students can reserve in advance. The Byblos Library, currently under renovation, will offer two.

"We want the students to feel welcome in the libraries," says Habre, who, along with her team members, has made an effort to designate "quiet" and "healthy noise" floors to meet different learning needs.

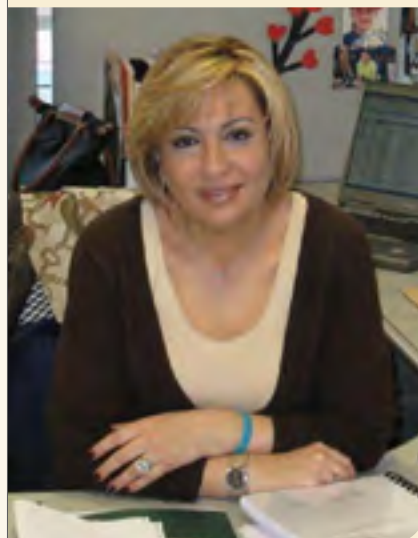
To accommodate changes in design and technology, the Byblos campus will soon be home to an entirely new library. The Gibran Library — planned to accommodate over 500 students at any given time — is expected to open its doors during the 2014-15 academic year.

Engaging the community is also key to the library team's mission. Through organized activities such as open house days, where library staff go out on campus and interact with students, they show all that the facilities have to offer. Other events include book exchanges, book signings and international librarian conferences.

Cendrella Habre LAU University Librarian

Since her appointment as University Librarian in October 2012, Cendrella Habre has overseen the extensive operations of the Riyadh Nassar, Byblos and School of Medicine libraries. Habre holds an Executive M.B.A. from LAU, a Master of Library Science from the Pratt Institute, New York and a B.S. from the Lebanese University. After serving as automation librarian at the American University of Beirut for five years, Habre joined LAU as system librarian in 1998, and was promoted to director of Riyadh Nassar Library in 2009. "In all of her positions at LAU, Ms. Habre has always been dedicated to providing the best service to our library patrons," says LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara. "She has always done it with exemplary competence, burning passion and inspiring joy."

Under Habre's leadership, the libraries have undergone major developments. She has led efforts to turn LAU libraries into premises without walls by engaging the LAU community and local residents through a number of novel outreach activities.



A New Address IWSAW's website gets a facelift

By Muriel Kahwagi



Thanks to IWSAW's cybernetic revamp, every single issue of *Al Raida* will be available online — from its very first edition published in November 1976 until today — indelibly memorializing over 30 years of scholarly excellence.

For the fifth time since its digital inception in the mid-1990s, the website for the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) is bravely undertaking innovative, comprehensive structural changes, which will culminate in the launching of an ingenious new site in the coming months.

"The old website simply did not do IWSAW's hard work and achievements justice," admits Dr. Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, assistant professor of communication and director of IWSAW. "The new one will give us the exposure, credibility and visibility we both need and deserve."

Indeed, the newfangled web page clearly displays the institute's events — both past and upcoming — and includes entire new sections on its academic programs, development projects and publications, not least among them is *Al Raida*, IWSAW's biannual, peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journal, established in 1976.

Thanks to IWSAW's cybernetic revamp, every single issue of *Al Raida* will be available online — from its very first edition published in November 1976 until today — indelibly memorializing over 30 years of scholarly excellence.

"Most of our publications will be available online, not just *Al Raida*," explains Anita Nassar, assistant director of IWSAW. "This includes the institute's latest title, 'The Guide for Working in Women's Prisons in Lebanon.' With time, we hope to have all our publications digitized."

"Our main objective was to make crucial information available and easier to find," says Karina Rodriguez, webmaster and associate director of the Marketing and Communications Department (MarCom). "We redesigned and restructured the website accordingly."

The website's remodeled interface was designed taking the end-users in consideration. "How do we make all this information easier to find? How do we make it more appealing? Answering these questions were some of our biggest challenges," stresses Dabbous-Sensenig.

Doubtless, enhancing user-friendliness and improving the visual aspect of the website were some of the main objectives when IWSAW's new virtual address was being conceived. Soon to be out of the chrysalis, the new homepage will make it easier for readers to stay up-to-date with the institute's latest developments, and the website's pastel color palette and spacious design promise to provide visual and cognitive relief from the old site's cramped look.

In an effort to capacitate the thriving scholars and activists behind IWSAW, MarCom plans to train the department on the technicalities of web management as well as the art of journalistic and news writing, in order for the institute to take full charge of the website's content once it's launched.

"Our main purpose has always been to reveal the true depth and scope of the institute's projects and undertakings," says Nassar. "With the new website, we can finally achieve this goal."





All the World's a Stage

Bringing the Arab world's Shakespeare to U.S. and Lebanese audiences

By Dalila Mahdawi and Nisreen Kaj

Honor killing, dictatorship, homosexuality and changing gender roles in the Arab world — these are just some of the divisive topics addressed by a play that LAU Professor Dr. Nada Saab will help bring to life, thanks to a \$50,000 grant awarded by the MacArthur Foundation.

Saab, assistant professor of Arabic Studies and coordinator of the Humanities Department's Comparative Literature Program, received the funding as part of a shared grant with Robert Myers, professor of English and creative writing at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Silk Road Rising Theater in Chicago. The two will translate and adapt the play *Touqous Al-Isharat wal-Tahawulat* (*Metamorphosis: Rituals and Signs of Transformations*) by acclaimed Syrian playwright Saadallah Wannus. It will then be performed in English for the first time for audiences in Beirut and Chicago.

"Wannus' play is easily one of the masterpieces of modern Arabic literature," says Saab. "We are very happy to receive such a prestigious and competitive prize that will allow a new generation of theater-goers to discover a brilliant playwright."

Generally acknowledged as one of the Arab world's most important playwrights, Wannus was a well-known personality in Arab theater until his death in 1997. Yet *Touqous Al-Isharat wal-Tahawulat*, written just three years before Wannus died, has rarely been performed in the region. The few productions that have been staged faced censorship for the play's explicit examination of such taboo subjects as sexuality, abuse, and political and religious hypocrisy. Loosely based on a historical story from 19th century Damascus, *Touqous Al-Isharat wal-Tahawulat* is about an upper-class woman's journey from being the wife of a religious leader to becoming an admired prostitute. Ultimately, it is a timeless story about infidelity, public scandal, imprisonment, divorce and love. Had Shakespeare been an Arab, he may well have written something like it.

The play, a French version of which debuts at the Comédie Française later this year, "is an appropriate fit in an era of globalization and in the midst of the Arab Spring," says Dr. Philippe Frossard, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. With characters who strive for transformative change and who criticize authoritarian rule, the play easily evokes the political and social tumult currently reverberating across the Arab world.

"The grant will give Lebanon and Arab culture the best possible exposure in the U.S. and the wider world," says Frossard. Saab, meanwhile, hopes the performances "contribute to furthering dialogue between the Arab and American publics."

Performances will be staged at LAU this year using actors from both AUB and LAU. A number of panel discussions about the play will also be held at AUB and at the Silk Road Rising Theater. The grant essentially allows for "a mini-Wannus festival," says Saab.

Chair of the Department of Humanities Dr. Vahid Behmardi sees the endowment as a proud testament to what can be achieved through academic partnership. "The grant is an important opportunity to increase cooperation and interaction between Lebanon's two major American universities."

Wannus' play will be the third time Saab and Myers have joined forces. The professors previously translated and adapted *Hamam Baghdadi* (*Baghdadi Bath*) by the Iraqi playwright Jawad Al Assadi, and *Al Diktator* (*The Dictator*) by Lebanese playwright Issam Mahfouz.

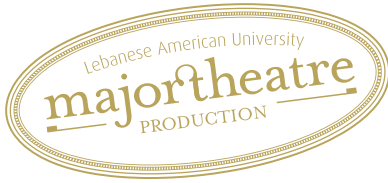
The collaboration doesn't end there. Saab and Myers have also penned an article about the play, "Sufism and Shakespeare: The Poetics of Personal and Political Transformation in Saadallah Wannus' *Touqous Al-Isharat wal-Tahawulat*," will appear in a special issue of the *Theater Research International Journal* published by Cambridge University Press in the spring.

"Wannus' play is easily one of the masterpieces of modern Arabic literature. We are very happy to receive such a prestigious and competitive prize that will allow a new generation of theater-goers to discover a brilliant playwright."

—Dr. Nada Saab, assistant professor of Arabic studies and coordinator of the humanities department's Comparative Literature Program







Play it out of tune!

Theatre production puts new twist on old storyline

By Linda Dahdah

"Considering our regional context, to have actors of these origins — with their respective accents — play such roles, put the play into perspective."

—Lina Khoury, stage director and theater instructor at LAU

What are you doing here?" asks Layla. "They put me here," replies her cellmate, who goes by the same name.

Mathhab, adapted and directed by LAU stage director and theater instructor Lina Khoury, is based on the 1977 Tom Stoppard play *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* about two men who share a cell in a Russian psychiatric hospital. One is a Soviet dissident who will only be released if he admits that his defamatory statements against the regime are a product of his mental illness; the other is a genuine mental patient who passes his time conducting an imaginary orchestra. Music forms an essential part of the show, and the score was originally composed by Andre Prévin, head of the London Symphony Orchestra at the time.

"Since tyranny and oppression are everywhere under different names, Mathhab can actually be taking place in any country," says Khoury.

In Khoury's adaptation, the main actors are two female students. The dissident is Syrian, the patient, Palestinian.

"Considering our regional context, to have actors of these origins — with their respective accents — play such roles, was important, and put the play into perspective," says the director.

Indeed, Syrian student actor Syrine Dardari's poignant call for the respect of basic freedoms continues to resonate hours after the play is over. Armed with courage and determination, Layla the prisoner does not yield, even to her daughter's supplications to give in and come back home.

When berated about her mental disorders by the hospital and national security-mandated physician, Layla the dissident cries out, "I don't have disorders, I have opinions." To which the doctor replies, "Precisely. Your opinions are your disorders!"

For Dardari, a second-year communication arts student, the experience was life-changing. "When I heard about the play I immediately auditioned and told Lina that I wanted the role, that I needed it."

She says she is proud to be part of what she calls a "revolutionary play." "It is a tribute to my people, to my country."

While the original title, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, derives from the popular mnemonic used by music students to remember the notes on the lines of the treble clef, Mathhab in Arabic has two meanings: "refrain" in music terminology, but also "sect," alluding to the fact that oppression is not only the weapon of tyrannical regimes.

The director's choice of two female prisoners is a clear denunciation of gender inequalities in patriarchal and sectarian societies. "Social tyranny can be worse than political oppression," says Khoury.

Although the themes tackled are heavy and eerily bitter, a sense of parody in the play keeps the audience on the edge of laughter.

The orchestra, led by professional composer Oussama el Khatib and mainly composed of students, also plays a critical role, using music to set a lighter or heavier tone at different parts in the production.

Layla the mental patient, superbly performed by Mira Saidawi, makes her point from the very beginning. "There is a little music in every one of us, and he who says the contrary is a tyrant."

She might just be the sanest of all.

The Department of Communication Arts produces two major theatre productions yearly, one in the fall and one in the spring, as part of the "Theatre in Performance" course. The plays involve LAU students and faculty members, graduates, professionals from the community, and students from different universities and institutes in Lebanon.

A close-up, artistic photograph of a person's face, focusing on the eyes and nose. The face is partially obscured by a spiderweb, which is the central theme of the article. The lighting is soft, and the colors are muted, with a focus on the textures of the skin and the web.

FEATURE

Spiders in the Web

The dangers of surfing the 'net

By Brooke Grasberger



With the spread of technology has always come a strain of techno-fear. From the 19th century's factory-destroying Luddites to the self-aware machines of *the Matrix*, doubts about technology have traditionally accompanied its advancements. In our digital age, the focus of fears is the Internet, the massive web that invisibly envelops our world. Though Internet use is widespread and growing, with more than one billion people online, most users only scratch the surface of the World Wide Web.

We interface through Twitter, Facebook and Google, but beneath these household names lurk myriad sites unreachable by conventional search engines. The deep web and the dark web, terms that conjure the mystery of the ocean's unexplored trenches, are for the most part hidden from the public eye. The "deep web" refers to sites that are not indexed through search engines and that must be accessed through specific methods. It encompasses a collection of data that is much larger than the so-called "surface Internet." The "dark web," on the other hand, refers to sites that for a variety of reasons have been left outside of the Internet's infrastructure, some perhaps providing cover for criminal activity, others drifting like derelicts through currents of information. These areas of the Internet are, for the most part, beyond the ken of ordinary users, visited and discussed primarily by people knowledgeable in the highly specific and technical field of computer science, or by law enforcement.

While the deep and dark webs may sound nefarious, the real threat for most users of the Internet is the cybernetic experts known as hackers.

While the term "hacker" may conjure up a shadowy figure with criminal intent, the fact is that there are different kinds of hackers, and not all of them are working for personal or illegal gain. The worldwide hacking community can be divided into three basic categories: white hats, grey hats, and black hats, the colors representing their place along the moral spectrum. White hats are hackers who use their expertise to improve web security, often working alongside governments or corporations to probe their armor and seal up its chinks. Sometimes they start out as black hats, but after getting caught, turn their talents to good. Black hats are straightforwardly criminal, using their expertise to gain illegal access to information for whatever purpose they desire. The third category of hackers, as their designation suggests, is much more ambiguous in character. Grey hats often act in dubiously legal ways, but their intent and end goals are not necessarily criminal. >



Sometimes they publicly post pieces of secure information to demonstrate a company's weaknesses, or they may replace content on a particular site, not to ruin it, but to spread a message.

Regardless of their type, hackers have only recently become part of the public discourse in Lebanon, where the slow and unstable Internet connection has long acted as a preventative measure. This changed in the spring of 2012, when several successful attacks on 16 Lebanese government websites took place. Hackers supplanted the sites' home pages with anti-governmental messages.

Samah Rifai, web and account manager in LAU's Marketing and Communications Department, was working as a web administrator providing hosting services to some of the government sites that were attacked. "The official response was very slow at first," she says, because "the concerned entities were not aware of the potential dangers that hackers represent."

This dearth of knowledge about hackers is due in great part to the fact that Lebanon's hacker community is nearly nonexistent. Before the government attacks, the Lebanese Yellow Pages were hacked by a group called the MadHackerZ, who might be defined as grey-hat hackers as they act not for personal gain, but to "inspire the Lebanese people to seize their rights as citizens." The titular leader of the group, who goes by the name of Mad Hacker, is a young man who keeps his identity secret and communicates only through email. He says that Lebanon's lack of skilled hackers is due to the fact that "everything about technology in Lebanon is very weak," and people are disinterested. "They believe the field [of Internet and related technologies] is mysterious and useless," he says. Even the attacks on government sites were not conducted solely by Lebanese hackers but with assistance from others around the world, according to Rifai. "It was a large-scale, premeditated attack, from local and international hackers," including the infamous worldwide network of hackers known as Anonymous.

Lebanon's current weaknesses in Internet security will change in the future, though, explains Mad Hacker. "Constantly evolving

technology will advance the world of piracy in Lebanon, even if it's delayed," meaning, as technology becomes more sophisticated in Lebanon, so too will the efforts of those trying to breach its barriers.

The minimal threat currently represented by hackers is paralleled by the lack of web security in Lebanon. Dr. Azzam Mourad, assistant professor of computer science at LAU, explains the deficits the country faces. "When people create websites, they don't think about upgrades. They create the site and then leave it the way it is, even though this makes them more and more vulnerable as time goes on."

"Constantly evolving technology will advance the world of piracy in Lebanon, even if it's delayed."

—Mad Hacker, Head of MadHackerZ group

Internet technologies are growing and changing at incredible rates, and organizations must realize that their online spaces are not built on rock-solid foundations but on the shifting sands of transformative technology. Additionally, says Mourad, websites are often created without the assistance of Internet security experts. "Many websites don't have professional firms set up their security, but instead leave the task to amateurs." Companies that do take a heavy interest in their security often host their websites in countries where web services are more established and secure. As for the companies that decide to hire amateurs or forgo security upgrades, Rifai says that they have chosen to do so for a very simple reason: security is expensive. It's much easier and more economical for sites to have cheap security, and since not much is known about hackers in the public sphere, site proprietors are largely unaware of the threat.

While the terms “deep web” and “dark web” may sound nefarious, the real threat for most users of the Internet is the cybernetic experts known as hackers.



For security to increase to a level where consumers and businesses can trust online interactions, it must be conducted in a more unified manner, says Mourad. “Businesses and governments should use one company to provide risk analysis, not get their assessments from a variety of companies or from amateurs.” Scattered and out-of-date systems provide a tempting target not just for those like Mad Hacker, who want to get out a message or start a movement, but for straightforwardly black-hat hackers who are after money or valuable personal data.

Weak security is part of the reason online shopping is nearly nonexistent in Lebanon. The party on the other end of the transaction is more likely to be a scam artist than not, and with the weakness of net security there is no real way to feel safe. “That’s why I personally never use online shopping,” admits Mourad. The country as a whole should learn from the Lebanese banking system, he says, “which is even more secure than banking in the United States or France.” Their philosophy, and the reason that they are so trustworthy, can be summed up by the fact that in Lebanon, banks ask for proven customers before extending their trust.

Though the possibility of a growing number of hackers in Lebanon may seem frightening at first, users should take comfort in the fact that it is indicative of a corresponding rise in web security. After her experience with the government hacks, Rifai acknowledges that awareness of the importance of web security is slowly growing. As technology spreads further across the world, Lebanon will be caught in the rising tide of Internet use and understanding.

For young and skilled hackers like Mad Hacker, Lebanon’s current incompetence with Internet technologies represents a missed opportunity to stay and work legitimately in the country. It may seem counterintuitive that a country should encourage such people to stay, but many hackers end up working for corporations.

Today’s hackers will often become tomorrow’s security professionals, shoring up the foundations of secure websites and greater online presence for Lebanon. Mad Hacker says he hopes to find a suitable opportunity and appropriate work in Lebanon, but is skeptical of his chances, because “Lebanon does not have too much of an interest in this discipline.” He believes that he and other hackers have the potential to contribute a great deal to their country if it would encourage the study of Internet and communications technologies.

“When people create websites, they don’t think about upgrades. They create the site and then leave it the way it is, even though this makes them more and more vulnerable as time goes on.”

—Dr. Azzam Mourad, assistant professor of computer science at LAU

Even if it is not immediate, web technology will become increasingly relevant in the world and in Lebanon, with all of the risks and advantages that accompany it. This change will in turn necessitate a greater level of Internet literacy on behalf of individuals, says Mourad, who has a few tips on protecting information and identity. The most important thing is to always be aware of your online transactions, as hackers and scammers will try to solicit information in ways that seem legitimate. Users should make sure their website URLs are exact, change passwords often, never download content from unknown publishers, and never give out personal information in response to emails or on public sites such as Facebook. Finally, much like Beirut’s ironclad banks, only place trust in sites and institutions that have proven worthy of it. ■

Campusnotes

Edited by Linda Dahdah

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

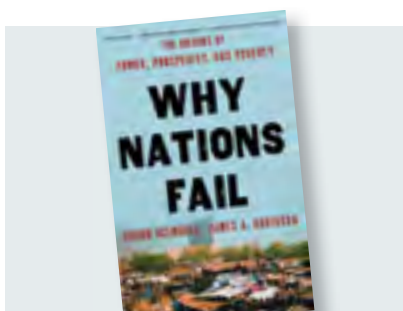
Alumni



A fruitful link-up

In December, the School of Engineering (SOE), in collaboration with the Alumni Relations Office and the LAU Alumni Association – SOE Chapter, orchestrated a panel discussion tackling employment and career opportunities for engineering students in the local and global marketplace. Five prominent LAU alumni — Joe Hawa, Rana Zeitouny, Chadi Nehme, Carine Baroudi Barakat, and Christian Manoukian — moderated the discussion, shared their own experience in the job market, and addressed engineering students' questions and concerns regarding the Lebanese job market. Director of Alumni Relations Abdallah El Khal called the event a success and hopes it will foster closer ties among students and between alumni.

Lectures and workshops



Rich nation, poor nation

On January 16, LAU hosted a presentation by distinguished Harvard University professor Dr. James Robinson, co-author of the recent book *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*. "The inequality we see in the world is not predestined — it is simply a result of weak institutions," Robinson explained to a room brimming with students and faculty members. Putting aside sweeping generalizations, Robinson explained that incentives are key to generating sustainable and sound institutions that reward innovation and promote creative thinking. The presentation was followed by a lively question-and-answer session whereby Robinson was prompted to offer something of a political forecast of the Arab Spring.

Raising psychological awareness

In early November, Dr. Brigitte Khoury, clinical psychiatrist at the American University of Beirut's Faculty of Medicine, shared the findings of a comprehensive study she conducted about Arab youth and sexuality with the LAU community. The Psychology Department, host of the event, also organized another lecture, "Treating Anxiety Disorders and Depression Using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy," that drew students, faculty and staff from a variety of schools and departments. The lecturer, renowned clinical psychologist Dr. Aimee Karam, focused on the latest developments in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).



John J. Fernandes at LAU

In December, LAU Beirut welcomed John J. Fernandes, president and chief executive officer of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), a prominent global accrediting agency based in the U.S. His five-day visit was aimed at introducing Fernandes to the university. It kicked off with a lively discussion attended by deans and senior administrators of top business schools in Lebanon and the region. The event centered on the importance of accreditation in today's interconnected, globalized world, as Fernandes offered valuable insights drawn from his countless years of experience in the field.



Sleuth reporting

In partnership with UNESCO–Beirut, the Department of Communication Arts hosted a national workshop on investigative journalism. The three-day event took place in November and brought together 17 senior journalism students from LAU and other Lebanese universities. Participants were thrilled to discover the concept of investigative reporting, revealing a gap between the reality of journalism and the academic curricula offered in Lebanon and the region. The workshop was also an opportunity for LAU to announce the launch of a course in investigative journalism, slated to begin in fall 2013.

The telecom language

LAU engineering students, faculty and staff gathered at LAU Byblos on December 12 to attend a lecture conducted by Dr. Nizar Dalloul, chair of Comium Group, on social media and telecom. The event was hosted by the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and consisted of an exposition of trends in computer engineering communication. After opening the floor for questions, Dalloul challenged students by announcing that his company is willing to sponsor the development of telecom software or an application.



Institutes



Mary Turner Lane Award

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) marked a watershed on November 8 when it held its very first Mary Turner Lane Award ceremony, announcing winners in a competition for best original paper in the field of gender and women's studies. Winners were selected in two categories: creative/journalistic and research-focused essays. The award in the latter category went to Patil Yessayan, Sawsan Khanafer and Marie Murray whose publication focused on the role of women in Lebanese politics. Leanne Abou Hassan was the awardee for best personal essay for her paper examining the sociological position of women in the Arab world.

Spreading a culture of respect

LAU's Institute for Women Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), in collaboration with Restart Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, launched its first series of trainings for law enforcement personnel in Lebanon. The project's goal is to foster a culture of respect for human rights within the Lebanese detention system, with special emphasis on the needs and rights of women inmates. The training program will cover international treaties, human rights standards, and rights of prisoners and detainees. Capacity Building for Law Enforcement Personnel in Lebanon is funded by the Open Society Institute-International Women's Program.



Dynamics of diaspora

In January, the Institute for Migration Studies (IMS) hosted a workshop to unveil the preliminary findings of its research project, "Home politics abroad: the role of the Lebanese diaspora in conflict, peace building and democratic development." The ambitious undertaking spanned three years and included more than 300 in-depth interviews with various political, religious and civil society leaders in Lebanon, Australia, Canada and the United States. Its presentation took place in the presence of dignitaries, policymakers and the LAU community. The project is funded by the Canadian International Research Development Centre (IDRC).

Awareness Campaigns

Joining hands against diabetes

Around 40 LAU students and faculty visited the Shatila refugee camp on November 17 to raise awareness about diabetes. Volunteers from the Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy, along with the help of nutrition majors, spent over a month organizing the event, which included customized consultations, awareness sessions on healthy eating habits, advice on how to prevent or contain diabetes, and blood glucose testing. Back on campus, the Nutrition program, together with the Nutrition Club, School of Medicine, and Medical Students Association, orchestrated a series of activities to raise awareness of the risk factors associated with the disease.



Civic Engagement



Green arts – SDEM

On November 14, the Beirut campus vibrated with curiosity and creativity as it celebrated National Environment Day in front of the Safadi Fine Arts Building. The Association for Forests, Development and Conservation (AFDC) set up a booth to educate people about the advantages of recycling old cell phones, as they contain gold, aluminum, copper, plastic and other raw materials that can be recycled and turned into useful items. Meanwhile, students rolled up their sleeves and put brush to paint to create nature-themed works of art.

Career guidance

A career in the works

Hosted by the Career Guidance Office, Dr. Khaled Itani, general manager of the Lebanese Association for Advanced Sciences, presented a lecture entitled “Career Guidance to the Job Market” on the Byblos campus on November 14. The presentation addressed the challenges of job-hunting upon graduation, as well as the shift in needs and demands of the local job market. Itani called on the participants to be prudent when choosing a career path, and to identify their own strengths and weaknesses before starting their search. “You can’t succeed if you’re not passionate about what you do,” he said.



Future prospects – SOE

More than 100 School of Engineering students had the opportunity to meet with Lebanese Minister of Industry Vrej Sabounjian as he addressed their concerns about the local and global marketplace, giving them both cordial and vocational guidance. The Q&A session was hosted by the Department of Industrial and Mechanical Engineering on October 31 at LAU Byblos. “The best advice I can give you is to capitalize on your academic knowledge and work experience,” said Sabounjian.

Internship Fair Week

In December, LAU hosted its annual Internship Fair Week. The event showcased 16 companies in Byblos and 13 in Beirut. Each company stayed on campus for two hours, making presentations and introducing students to their working culture and ethos. While interacting and exchanging business cards, some organizations took the opportunity to conduct interviews on site.



Sports



EuroValencia tournament

LAU's inaugural participation in EuroValencia 2012 turned out to be a victorious one. LAU student Kim Saidi came first in the tennis tournament and Mohamed Rifai placed third in the table tennis tournament. The inter-university sports competition aims to create a platform for improving relations between students from different countries and cultures. University students from Bulgaria, Romania, Switzerland, Serbia, Italy, Croatia, Spain and Lebanon converged at EuroValencia from November 22-25, bringing diversity and fervid athletic talent to Spain's third largest metropolis.

Literature

Romanian embassy donates books to RNL

The Romanian embassy in Lebanon made a generous book donation to LAU's Riyad Nassar Library on December 4, 2012. Ambassador Daniel Tanase visited the university to formally present approximately 20 books in both English and Romanian. "Our policy is to donate books to the most important libraries in Lebanon," said Tanase. "As one of the most prominent universities in the region, LAU is a symbol of the Lebanese higher education system." Among the books donated by the embassy are "When Angels Sing: Poems and Prose" by Magda Isanos, "Modern Architecture and the Totalitarian Project: A Romanian Case Study" by Augustin Iaon, and several texts on sculpture, politics and history.



Arts and Theater



Beirut days of Ibsen

As part of the "Orient the Day, Beirut in the Work of Ibsen" series, the Department of Communication Arts hosted a seminar and workshop on the work of renowned Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen that took place at LAU Beirut on January 11-12. Regional and international theater practitioners and academics were invited to reflect on the contemporary relevance of one of Europe's most prominent playwrights, best known for his scathing criticism of social norms. A lively round-table discussion concluded the seminar. It focused on the difficulties of functioning in an institutional environment that remains largely hostile to theater, and the challenge of procuring reliable sources of funding.

An artistic revolution

In October, the Department of Graphic Design at LAU Beirut invited internationally renowned author and computer media specialist Dr. Lev Manovich to speak about the cultural and artistic implications of the new wave of digital media. Manovich explained how he navigates collections of user-generated content containing millions of images, and thus is able to recognize patterns in cultural data that were not previously possible. The audience was particularly impressed by the sight of a pixelized abstract composition, which when enlarged on a projector, revealed millions of Manga (Japanese comics) illustrations.



Literary Pursuits

Old and new programs show synergy to be true

By Muriel Kahwagi

Inspired souls and starry-eyed free spirits with a flair for literature and linguistics will be elated to find a welcoming home at LAU this coming fall, as the university's Department of Humanities inaugurates two new programs: a B.A. in Translation and a B.A. in Arabic Literature.

"With the rise of globalization, the demand for translators across various fields — from business and law to literature — has witnessed unparalleled growth over the past decade, especially in the region," says Dr. Nuwar Mawlawi Diab, coordinator of the B.A. in Translation program. "We aim to instruct our students on both the theoretical and vocational aspects of the field of translation studies, and equip them with the needed skills to fit seamlessly into the workforce."

today's marketplace," he says. "It's not just about literature *per se*; it's about fostering a healthier understanding of multiculturalism and the concept of polygonal identity."

The program's flexibility and broad scope will allow students to tackle a wide range of subject matters — from classical literature and literary theory to post-modernism and globalization — while giving them the possibility to specialize in an area of their choice.

At the same time, the program's interdisciplinary approach makes it a stepping stone for students wishing to pursue a career in teaching, journalism and the media — or obtain a master's degree in a range of fields, including history, anthropology and comparative literature, the latter of which is also offered at LAU.

Though far from being new, the M.A. in Comparative Literature at LAU is the first and only program of its kind in Lebanon to explore literature and other cultural productions across national, ethnic and linguistic boundaries. Founded in 2003, the module draws budding scholars from a potpourri of disciplines, and schools them in the critical study of texts in four languages: Arabic, French, English and Persian. The program's highly individualized curriculum offers students thorough linguistic and cultural training, and equips them with a broad, intercultural knowledge of literary genre, period and theme.

"If there's one thing the field of comparative literature aims to prove, it's that the human condition is universal," says Dr. Vahid Behmardi, chair of the Department of Humanities. "All human beings experience the same emotions — love, anger, hate, sympathy. The only difference lies in our expression of these emotions, and that is one of the many wonderful aspects of human nature that comparative literature allows us to explore."



"We don't simply plan to graduate translators; we want to graduate thinkers and culturally versatile individuals who can use their linguistic nimbleness in any work environment."

—Dr. Nuwar Mawlawi Diab, program coordinator, B.A. in Translation

This three-year program is one of the few in Lebanon to be taught almost entirely in English. While translation from and into Arabic will be the backbone of the program, it will also offer an emphasis in French, setting it apart from other translation degrees in the country.

"We don't simply plan to graduate translators; we want to graduate thinkers and culturally versatile individuals who can use their linguistic nimbleness in any work environment," notes Diab.

Dr. Latif Zeitouni, coordinator of the B.A. in Arabic Literature program, echoes Diab. "Globalization has made it not only possible, but also favorable, for those who have a knack for Arab literature to thrive in

Passing the Torch



"Teaching and relaying my experience to LAU students has been a very fulfilling journey."

—Jihad Njeim, assistant vice president for Human Resources

Welcoming Jihad Njeim

Assistant Vice President for Human Resources

Jihad Njeim was recently appointed assistant vice president for human resources at LAU. In his new position, he aims to assist the university's administration in creating an outstanding workplace, as well as identifying opportunities to recruit, develop and retain human resource staff.

Njeim holds a B.A. from the American University of Beirut and an M.B.A. with a specialization in human resources development and management information systems from Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. He lived in the U.S. for eight years, and his career and subsequent string of successes in H.R. began there at a retail company called Overland Outfitters.

Upon his return to the Middle East, Njeim headed and structured the H.R. departments in many leading institutions, including BBAC Bank in Lebanon and Qatar National Bank in Doha. In addition, he has extensive expertise in the fields of communications and hospitality services, having worked at global companies such as Hard Rock Café Middle East and Bank of Beirut.

On the academic level, Njeim has taught graduate and undergraduate human resources and management courses at LAU for the past 15 years and at Université Saint Joseph for the past five years.

"Teaching and relaying my experience to LAU students has been a very fulfilling journey," he says. He has also conducted several workshops and training courses for private and public institutions. He says he looks forward to using his considerable expertise to "better serve the LAU community."

Turning the Page

Acting managing editor Paige Kollock joins MarCom team



The Marketing and Communications Department (MarCom) recently welcomed Acting Managing Editor Paige Kollock. She comes to LAU from a career in journalism, where she's worked as a reporter, producer, videographer and editor for a variety of news outlets, including Bloomberg, Reuters, Fox News, PBS, CBS, Voice of America, *USA Today*, France24 and others. Kollock also has a strong print background, having spent time as a writer for the website NOWLebanon.com.

Over the years, her assignments have taken her to Turkey to cover Pope Benedict XVI's historic visit, to Cuba to cover hunger strikes at the U.S. army detention center of Guantanamo Bay, and to the Democratic Republic of Congo, where she interviewed Congolese displaced by clashes between rebel groups.

Kollock received her B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania, where she majored in creative non-fiction writing. She later got her M.A. from New York University in journalism. An advocate of continuing education, she has also taken courses throughout her professional life in writing, psychology, Spanish and Arabic. In her free time, she enjoys hiking with her Husky Taj, playing squash and practicing yoga.

In her new role, she will spearhead production of the LAU Magazine & Alumni Bulletin, including developing story concepts, writing articles and editing content.

"Paige has been such a delightful addition to the team," says Muriel Kahwagi, content developer at MarCom. "Her radiant energy has definitely helped us stay on our toes."

A Man of Vision

Charbel Fakhoury and the new wave of transcontinental communication

By Muriel Kahwagi



As Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Services for Microsoft Middle East and Africa, LAU alumnus Charbel Fakhoury is responsible for some of the most vibrant and diverse divisions of one of the world's leading multinational software corporations.

He is at the helm of Microsoft's regional headquarters and business operations that focus on socioeconomic priorities in the Middle East-Africa region, and he has been applauded for fostering a culture of leadership and diversity.

Fakhoury graduated from LAU (then Beirut University College) with a B.S. in Computer Science in 1990, a time when only a handful of universities in the region offered the major.

After working at various local and regional Information Technology (IT) companies, including Sun Microsystems, Fakhoury joined Microsoft in 1998 as the business development manager for the Levant region. He was later promoted to subsidiary general manager of the eastern Mediterranean countries, where he successfully reached out to governments, customers, partners and IT professionals, ultimately shaping and developing their knowledge-based economies.

Fakhoury's understanding of the power of IT in the Middle East has been instrumental in training the region's youth to connect with different parts of the world. He has supported programs such as Women in IT (WIT), in addition to several other educational initiatives, helping to bridge the gender gap and equipping the next generation with the skills to thrive in today's market.

Under his leadership, Microsoft Gulf was voted "The Best Subsidiary" twice in three years. Fakhoury is currently a board member of the American Lebanese Chamber of Commerce and a member of the American Business Council in the UAE.

Q&A

What made you choose this career path?

I have been curious and passionate about technology for as long as I can remember. In the late 1980s, Bill Gates' technological breakthrough made headlines and I was all agog about the world of IT. Computer science was the field where my passion and vision intersected; BUC was where that junction materialized. The culture and values it stood for became instilled in my very own psyche. It was simply the right place to be.

How did your time at LAU help you become who you are today?

LAU opened the door for me to study computers and software, to work with professors who contributed to my academic repertoire, and who also shaped my social skills. The university has been a major part of my life.

What do you believe is the impact of technology on today's labor force?

Technology, in my opinion, is helping to complete tasks that can be performed by machines, so that people can focus on high-value positions. In a sense, it is replacing some jobs, but it's also creating other directorship, leadership or communication positions that would otherwise have not been available today if it weren't for technology. Let's not forget that a machine can never replace human affection; a doctor can save his patient's life using ultra-modern devices, but his words of comfort are of incalculable worth.

Where do you see the future of IT?

We have reached a time where Internet penetration is experiencing exponential growth. Cutting-edge technology is now available to millions of people, setting the stage for a whole new wave of transcontinental communication, commerce and learning, and this is only the beginning. But we cannot truly speak of the "future of IT" without making this technology available to the whole world first. Our biggest challenge is to bring this know-how to areas that do not have access to it. Only then can we envision IT's heartfelt future.



The Cost of Joblessness

LAU graduate publishes influential research on U.S. unemployment trends

By Paige Kollock



According to Rand Ghayad's research, in the U.S., individuals who have been unemployed for six months or longer have a near-impossible chance of getting back into the labor force.

For 27-year-old LAU graduate Rand Ghayad, his expertise in the U.S. unemployment system was, in part, born of his own experience. "I was still studying business at Boston University when the recession started. By the time I graduated from my M.B.A. program, it was very hard to get a job," he said. So he, like many others since the U.S. recession started in 2007, decided to go back to school.

With scholarship offers from several schools for Ph.D. programs, Ghayad landed at Northeastern University in Boston to study applied economics. It was there, under the tutelage of high-profile economists such as William Dickens, a former adviser to U.S. President Bill Clinton, that he hatched his groundbreaking research on U.S. unemployment and labor forces.

Among the most notable of his findings is that in the U.S., individuals who have been unemployed for six months or longer have a near-impossible chance of getting back into the labor force.

In a policy brief by Ghayad and Dickens for the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, which has been cited by economists, policy makers, think tanks and leading papers like the New York Times, the scholars argued that those who had been out of work for six months or more were not benefiting from a recent bout of increased hiring.

Usually, Ghayad explains, when firms post new openings, you'd expect the jobless rate to go down, "so the relationship between openings and unemployment should be negative." But around September 2009, this relationship broke down.

"We started seeing more vacancies opening up while unemployment continued to increase, so the inverse relationship of what you'd expect. A lot of people thought this was due to a skills mismatch, but through our research we realized that no, there isn't what's called a 'structural problem,' because as vacancies increased, the short-term unemployed were getting hired."

There are several possible reasons why employers steer clear of the long-term unemployed. One is that companies may believe these individuals have lost their skills, having been out of the labor force so long. Another theory is that the long-term unemployed, who benefit from monthly unemployment checks from the federal and state governments, may be less motivated to find a job, or more choosy in their search.

Regardless of the reasons, a solution must be found, Ghayad says, or this group will become a long-term drag on the economy.

"The increase in the number of long-term unemployed is unprecedented, and this is very bad for the economy because if we don't get them back to work, they're going to leave the labor force and they will never be able to get hired."

The ongoing debate about how to tackle U.S. unemployment — which now stands at 7.8% — is sharply divided along party lines, with Republicans mainly attributing the problem to a structural mismatch, while Democrats argue that the federal government should spend more money in the form of stimulus to create jobs.

Ghayad, who spent a summer teaching Macroeconomics at LAU in 2011, is continuing his research and hopes to get a position at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, where he's currently a visiting scholar. He welcomes future visits to LAU and to Lebanon.





Top of the Class



SAMIR ABU SAMRA



AREF BOUALWAN

SAMIR ABU SAMRA
M.S. Computer Science '91

As one of the first graduates of LAU's master's program in Computer Science, Samir Abu Samra has always been at the forefront of the industry. After graduation, he founded his own company with two colleagues from LAU and later began working at DigiPen Corporation, a computer simulation and animation company in Washington State that both works with computer simulations and trains students in the field. He is now Chief Technology Officer of the company, which is affiliated with the university, DigiPen Institute of Technology.

Through DigiPen, Abu Samra had the chance to partner with a range of companies such as Nintendo, Microsoft and Boeing. "It's a place that allows you to dream and fulfill your dreams," he says. His commitment to teaching others the discipline that he loves parallels his memories of LAU, where he encountered "great teachers who were passionate and professional," and whom he still keeps in touch with today.

AREF BOUALWAN
B.A. Computer Science '95

For LAU alumnus Aref Boualwan, the exchange of knowledge and ideas he first encountered at LAU has continued throughout his career. As a manager at the international firm Consolidated Contractors Company (CCC), he's worked on projects as impressive as the Dubai Mall and as immense as the gas pipeline from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean.

He is always seeking to change and improve innovation, a philosophy that he imparts to his young son. "IT is very important when it comes to construction," and Boualwan uses his IT expertise to make construction projects more efficient and less costly. In fact, he has signed an agreement with LAU to do research and development for some of CCC's latest projects.

Aref is also a speaker at many Innovation events such as "ESCWA Innovation and Commercialization for Economic Development", Google events, etc., and he is working with LinkedIn CEO Jeff Weiner on how to bring social recruitment to the Arab world and the Middle East.





MARWAN AD-DAOUD



NADA SBAITI



TAREK AYASS

MARWAN AD-DAOUD
B.S. Computer Science '84 and
M.B.A. '90

Marwan Ad-Daoud, who is Head of e-Marketing and Digital Channels at the Saudi British Bank, graduated from LAU in 1984. He worked as a programmer before returning to LAU for his masters in Business Management, and afterwards began working at the bank.

Ad-Daoud is not only managed their websites but has also worked on an initiative to raise the awareness of SABB staff and families about climate change and how to preserve the environment. Ad-Daoud has always been one to reach beyond the scope of his study. As an undergraduate at LAU, he joined the Lebanese Red Cross, which he has been involved with ever since.

He says that LAU's stature and education "paved the way" for him to embark upon his current career.

NADA SBAITI
B.S. in Business Computers '84

After Nada Sbaiti's graduation from LAU, she began working in computer programming, starting two successful ventures that led her eventually to the position of Website Services Manager at the American University of Beirut. Though her expertise is focused in computers, she says that at LAU she took classes outside the scope of her major which "sparked my interested and added a rich dimension to my character."

She also credits LAU's liberal arts education with helping her "develop the capacity for innovation, free thinking and better judgment." Its effect on her life is evidenced by her success in business and in parenthood, as she has been able to move freely from working to motherhood and back again.

TAREK AYASS
B.S. Computer Science '93 M.S.
Business Management '95

Tarek Ayass has worked across the Middle East and North Africa in various companies promoting IT since his graduation in 1995.

He developed both his technical and business acumen at LAU, majoring first in Computer Science, then attaining his master's in Business Management. Since then, he's worked for Computer Network Systems, Sun Microsystems, and now General Electric. LAU, he says, "gave me the passport to qualify for IT business roles offered by big multinationals like GE." Though GE is where he works now, he has returned to his alma mater in spirit through his role in the development of the information systems at the recently acquired UMC-RH.

He says he is "always grateful to LAU for who and what I am today."

LAU Tech Facts



8TB

data backup
for LAU server



27,000

mailboxes

for students,
faculty members,
staff and alumni



118MB

internet
bandwidth



2,700

PCs, laptops
printers, scanners

supported by IT



11,000

wireless devices

that access LAU's
wireless network
per month



895

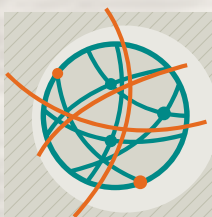
public
computers



2,000

support calls

IT helpdesk
receives per month



7,500

active network
connections



30,000

SMS sent


per month at peak time



2,000
telecom devices



19
meeting rooms
equipped with
video conference
equipment




96
classrooms
equipped with
smart technology



529,302
print volumes
at LAU libraries




121,553
electronic books
at LAU libraries



58,230
electronic
journals
at LAU libraries



10,244
media
material



725,413
hits to the library
website last year
<http://libraries.lau.edu.lb/>



4,000
libraries around
the world that
LAU can now share
resources with

The Domino Effect

Growing future leaders one dollar at a time

By Mehrnoush Shafiei



The weeklong fundraising activity aimed to support access to education and was part of a larger drive, the *Donate to Educate Campaign*.

“Making a change” and “creating a better tomorrow” are lofty, albeit worn-out phrases. Yet the LAU-Middle East Partnership Initiative’s Tomorrow’s Leaders program (MEPI-TL) is devoting considerable resources toward developing future leaders to do just that.

The program offers financial assistance in the form of scholarships to students from across the Arab world. Candidates recruited for the program must demonstrate exemplary leadership qualities as well as academic excellence and financial need.

Along with a heavy emphasis on entrepreneurship, women’s participation and civic activism, the program also boasts a strong tradition of philanthropy. It was in this spirit of generosity that a group of 25 MEPI-TL students set up a booth on the sprawling grounds of LAU’s Byblos campus and requested a \$1 donation from each member of the LAU community. The week-long fundraising activity, held in early December, raised an impressive \$1,800 to support access to education. It was part of a larger “Donate to Educate Campaign” that began last year in which MEPI-TL students pledged to donate \$5 per month from their stipends toward educating one needy student from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region at LAU.

Dr. Walid Touma is the director of the University Enterprise Office, which oversees the MEPI-TL program. He suggests that perhaps the greatest threat facing the region is a crisis of leadership, adding that “universities play a pivotal and fundamental role in remedying this.”

“The LAU MEPI-TL program is one of the most important investments we can make for the future. Today, more than ever, we need solid leaders to deal with the massive tectonic changes that are happening around us,” Touma says. “If even one of these students graduates from this program and becomes an effective leader in his or her community, we will have accomplished our mission.”

And seeing the students take initiative is the first step. “These students recognize

their own position of privilege and want to give back,” says Dr. Marwan G. Rowayheb, associate professor of political science/international affairs at LAU Byblos as well as student life coordinator of the MEPI-TL program. “This is exactly the sort of leadership attributes we want to cultivate and enhance.”

As a mentor to the students, Rowayheb was duly impressed by their initiative and modestly waved off his own role in the event: “They did everything on their own — they saw this fundraising activity through from start to finish.”

To aid them in their campaign, Nassib Nasr, assistant vice president for development, gave the group a workshop on the nuts-and-bolts of effective fundraising. “The students expressed an eager desire to give back to their community and share the gift of education that has served them so well,” he says.

Second-year business students Zeina Albatar and Barik Mahadin led the committee that spearheaded the \$1 campaign.

“Though the amount we are asking for is relatively small, it has a powerful cumulative effect — like a falling row of dominos, a creation of a powerful chain reaction that reaffirms the LAU community’s commitment to access to education,” explains Mahadin.

Albatar wholeheartedly agrees, noting that other students on campus are eager to join them in their campaign.

“Giving back is contagious,” she enthuses.



The High Note

LAU Choir is the gift that keeps on giving

By Muriel Kahwagi

The Lebanese civil war's callous belligerence left a forlorn Beirut in shambles. Battered and derelict, the streets were often desolate, and the homes orphaned. Beirut was a ghost town, cuffed into muteness. But on December 22, 1987, the beatific chants of the LAU Choir (then BUC Choir) resonated throughout Ras Beirut, like a beam of hope cutting through the city's void.

"There was a vacuum in Beirut at the time; everyone had left. We didn't know how many people — if any at all — would show up," recalls Leila Dabaghi, the choir's director. "We rented the AUB Assembly Hall and only advertised the Christmas concert by word of mouth, but the hall was packed — people were lining up against the walls."

On December 19, 2012, much like AUB assembly hall on that starry night in 1987, LAU's Irwin Hall was chockablock with children and adults alike, absorbing the choir's melodious chants, and — as often as not — singing along with the rich repertoire of songs, which included carols such as "Deck the Halls," "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" and "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

"I was very proud of the choir's performance this year," says Dabaghi. "We had more than ten new recruits in the fall, but they all sang together like they had been doing it for years."

A wistful Dabaghi recalls the choir's humble beginnings and very first recital with fondness. "It wasn't so much about what we gave as much as the fact that we gave it," she says.

Indeed, the LAU Choir is the gift that keeps on giving. Engaging members of the community and encouraging them to join, the choir aims to spread peace and harmony through its members' euphonic singing — and not just at LAU. Every year, they put on Christmas concerts at the National Evangelical Church of Beirut and Saint Mary's Greek Orthodox Church in Douma, while also performing at the Al Bustan Festival and the Beirut Chants Festival.

"Attending the LAU Christmas concert is a family tradition in our house. We come here every year," says Manal Matar, a mother of two. "The choir's singing just fills my heart with joy."

Doubtless, the driving force of the choir is Dabaghi's contagious enthusiasm. "She loves music, she loves what she does, and she makes us love it too," says Ziad Yammout, a tenor who has been part of the LAU Choir for 20 years. "She's never short on patience — she's more than a mother to us."

With a faint chuckle, Dabaghi agrees. "There are 40 members in this choir — I have 40 children. Sometimes they hate me, sometimes they love me. But what

matters the most is that their voices are improving."

Rehearsing three times a week throughout the year, the members of the chorale learn the essentials of vocal work: breathing and air support, phonation, and voice registration. Dabaghi also trains her pupils individually, preaching the discipline of the voice as the discipline of the whole person.

"Leila's kindness is exemplary," says Anna Kukko, a Finnish exchange student from Sciences Po-Menton. "I had never been in a choir before, and yet she greeted me with open arms. Everyone is so helpful and considerate. It feels like home."

"I was very proud of the choir's performance this year. We had more than ten new recruits in the fall, but they all sang together like they had been doing it for years."

—Leila Dabaghi, director of the LAU Choir





A Mouthful of Heaven

LAU students open fusion cuisine restaurant

By Muriel Kahwagi

Taking its name from the fruit itself, the restaurant incorporates *arassia* jam into most of its dishes, from *tabbouleh*, *hummus* and vine leaves to *kibbeh* and *kafta*. The dynamic duo emphasize that in addition to the food, passion and hard work are the key ingredients for success.



Arassia trees are summertime's fleeting sweethearts. They make a bold and sweeping appearance during the year's most scorching months, bearing ripe, fleshy, plum-like fruit before going into hibernation in the wintertime. *Arassia* plums are then picked, peeled, chopped, sweetened and heated to make an ambrosial purple jam, best enjoyed when smeared on top of bread and butter, or as two LAU students have learned, mixed into a variety of traditional Lebanese dishes.

Incorporating *arassia* jam into any sort of cuisine — much less Lebanese cuisine — may at first glance come across as outré. But *Arassia*, a fusion cuisine restaurant launched by LAU students Sari el Halabi and Fouad Debs in Beirut's Achrafieh, proves that the unlikely ingredient makes for mouthwatering meals.

"The concept of fusion cuisine is not new *per se*, but very few restaurants in the region have attempted to combine fusion cuisine with Lebanese cuisine," says el Halabi, managing partner of *Arassia*.

Taking its name from the fruit itself, the restaurant incorporates *arassia* jam into most of its dishes, from *tabbouleh*, *hummus* and vine leaves to *kibbeh* and *kafta*. The dynamic duo emphasize that in addition to the food, passion and hard work are the key ingredients for success.

After attending an Emirates Airlines training organized by LAU in 2011, the tourism and hospitality management students flirted with the idea of starting a business together. What began as a pipedream, however, quickly became their sole preoccupation.

Later that same year, they embarked on an eight-month entrepreneurial venture, planning the restaurant with painstaking attention to detail. Everything — from the

food served to the décor to the furniture — was designed entirely by el Halabi and Debs, with Fady Rebeiz, lecturer at the Hospitality and Tourism Management Department, acting as their consultant and financial patron.

"We chose the couches, designed the wallpaper, hung the chandeliers, bolted the wooden windows in place — all of it," says Debs, *Arassia*'s other managing partner.

Rebeiz helped with the menu planning and management, all the while providing the two entrepreneurs with the requisite training to oversee the restaurant's financial transactions and operations. "They came up to me after class one day and asked for my advice about *Arassia*. They were so refreshingly determined and eager to learn that I had to say 'yes,'" he recalls. "I have been the restaurant's consultant ever since."




















Despite an unfortunate robbery that befell *Arassia* in December, the duo remain optimistic. "A robbery is the lesser of two evils. The country's political instability is what we — and all businesses — should be on the lookout for," says el Halabi, adding that he and his partner plan to franchise their restaurant in other Arab countries.

"When you're in a crisis, you have to get back on your feet and keep going. It's no use dwelling on your misfortune," adds Debs.

The accolades for *Arassia* are pouring in. "These two young, bright men are bound to succeed," says Dr. Said Ladki, chair of LAU's Hospitality and Marketing Department. "They want to make a difference, and they are well equipped — through both education and work experience — to meet the needs of today's market. I have no doubt that they are here to stay."




Faculty Promotions

-  **Dr. Chadi Nour**
 Associate Professor (Department of Computer Science and Mathematics, School of Arts and Sciences)
-  **Dr. Sanaa Sharafeddine**
 Associate Professor (Department of Computer Science and Mathematics, School of Arts and Sciences)
-  **Dr. Rony Touma**
 Associate Professor (Department of Computer Science and Mathematics, School of Arts and Sciences)
-  **Dr. Victor Khachan**
 Associate Professor (Department of Humanities, School of Arts and Sciences)
-  **Dr. Sima Tokajian**
 Associate Professor (Department of Natural Sciences, School of Arts and Sciences)
-  **Dr. Yasmine Taan**
 Associate Professor (Department of Graphic Design, School of Architecture and Design)
-  **Dr. Wissam Fawaz**, Associate Professor (Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, School of Engineering)
-  **Dr. Hani Dimassi**, Associate Professor (Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, School of Pharmacy)
-  **Dr. Anwar Boumosleh**, Associate Professor (Department of Finance and Accounting, School of Business)
-  **Dr. Issam Kouatli**, Associate Professor (Department of Information Technology and Operation Management, School of Business)
-  **Dr. Nelly Mouawad**
 Assistant Professor (Department of Natural Sciences, School of Arts and Sciences)
-  **Dr. Chadi Abou Rjeily**
 Assistant Professor (Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, School of Engineering)
-  **Dr. Jean-Paul Arnaout**
 Assistant Professor (Department of Industrial and Mechanical Engineering, School of Engineering)
-  **Mr. Joseph Khalifeh**
 Senior Instructor (Department of Computer Science and Mathematics, School of Arts and Sciences)
-  **Ms. Paula Habre**
 Senior Instructor (Department of English Language Instruction, School of Arts and Sciences)
-  **Ms. Therese Nasrallah**
 Senior Instructor (Department of English Language Instruction, School of Arts and Sciences)
-  **Mr. Samir Obeid**
 Senior Instructor (Department of Natural Sciences, School of Arts and Sciences)
-  **Ms. Loulwa Kaloyeros**
 Senior Instructor (Department of Social Sciences, School of Arts and Sciences)
-  **Mr. Farid Jreidini**
 Senior Instructor (Department of Architecture and Interior Design, School of Architecture and Design)
-  **Mr. Bassam Lahoud**
 Senior Instructor (Department of Fine Arts and Foundation Studies, School of Architecture and Design)
-  **Mr. Hassan Naja**
 Senior Instructor (Department of Hospitality and Marketing, School of Business)
-  **Dr. George Sadaka**
 Lecturer (Department of Humanities, School of Arts and Sciences)

LAU Courses in *New York City* SUMMER 2013

This summer, the academic spirit and experience of Lebanon comes to the U.S. with the launching of the Lebanese American University's (LAU) New York campus.

for more info about course offerings:
www.lau.edu.lb/nycourses



Alumni Events

November 2012

Alumni Lecture – “The Art of Communication at the Workplace: Your Key to Success”

On November 30, 2012, the Alumni Relations Office organized a lecture entitled “The Art of Communication at the Workplace: Your Key to Success” on the Beirut campus. The discourse was delivered by LAU Beirut’s Dean of Students Dr. Raed Mohsen, an expert on human interactions, and marital and family therapy. Over 260 alumni and friends attended the lecture, which was followed by a reception.



December 2012

Bahrain Chapter – Annual Christmas Brunch

The LAU Alumni Association – Bahrain Chapter organized its annual Christmas brunch on December 7, 2012 at the Awal ballroom of the Gulf Hotel. Various alumni and their families convened at the brunch, the spirit of which was further accentuated by the holiday spirit. Santa Claus made a conveniently sweeping appearance, distributing presents to the children. Adults had their share of fun as well, and enjoyed a miscellany of games and entertainment.



Beirut Alumni Chapter – Elections

The LAU Alumni Association – Beirut Chapter held its committee elections on December 7, 2012, recruiting ten new members to their ranks. The elections took place on the Beirut campus, and engaged a large number of alumni. The newly elected members are Afaf Osseiran Saidi, Bassel Zein, Elissar Hajj Zarw, Hani Kreidieh, Joseph Kanaan, Nadim Khouri, Mahmoud Beydoun, Mazen Baydoun, Rima Tabbara Sinno, and Wafa Sheaih El Dada.



Kuwait Alumni Chapter – Annual Holiday Bazaar

The LAU Alumni Association – Kuwait Chapter participated in Kuwait’s “Annual Holiday Bazaar” which took place on December 7, 2012 at The Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmed Theater and Hall. The chapter’s inviting booth drew a large crowd of alumni and friends who enjoyed their time shopping and socializing.



BCW Alumni Chapter – Annual Get Together

More than 40 alumnae attended the LAU Alumni Association – BCW Chapter’s annual get-together on December 8, 2012 at the Beirut campus. Alumni Association President Leila Saleeby Dagher and BCW Chapter President Aida Najjar Iskandar welcomed the attendees warmly, after which the group had a chance to reflect on their fond memories their days at their alma mater.



South Lebanon Alumni Chapter – Karaoke Night

The LAU Alumni Association – South Lebanon Chapter organized a Karaoke night on December 27, 2012 at D-Lounge in Saïda. Over 100 alumni and friends attended the event, bidding the year 2012 farewell.



School of Pharmacy Alumni Chapter – Christmas Dinner

The LAU Alumni Association – School of Pharmacy Chapter organized its annual Christmas dinner on December 28, 2012 at Enab Restaurant in Gemmayze. Members of the Chapter reveled in each other's company and in the holiday season.

January 2013

Houston Alumni Chapter – Gathering

On behalf of the LAU Alumni Association – Houston Chapter, alumna Tania Shaheen and her better half Wissam Tayssoun hosted a gathering for LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara on January 8, 2013. An enthusiastic group of LAU alumni and friends attended the event — including Director of Alumni and Special Projects in North America Ed Shiner — and learned about LAU's latest developments.



New York/New Jersey Alumni Chapter – Lecture

The LAU Alumni Association – New York/New Jersey Chapter, in conjunction with Alwan for the Arts, hosted a lecture entitled "The Lebanese Language in the 21st Century: Learning Lebanese Outside Lebanon" on January 12, 2013. The lecture was delivered by LAU alumnus Antoine Faddoul and Dr. Hicham Bourjaili, both of The Lebanese Language Institute, a non-profit organization committed to developing and maintaining resources for teaching, learning and studying Lebanese language and literature. The event attracted alumni, family, friends, and Arab students in the New York City area. To learn more about Faddoul and Bourjaili's lesson plans, visit: www.abcleb.com and www.lebaneselanguage.org.



BCW Alumni Chapter – "Aish Al Saray - Part II"

The LAU Alumni Association – BCW Chapter hosted the comedy show "Aish Al Saray - Part II" featuring comedians André Jadaa and Leila Estphan at LAU Beirut campus on January 14, 2013. Over 350 alumni and friends attended the event.



Beirut Alumni Chapter – Children's Chorale

To celebrate the birth of the Prophet, the LAU Alumni Association – Beirut Chapter, in collaboration with Shifaa Junior Club, organized a children's singing chorale on the Beirut campus on January 26-27, 2013. The event was a great success.



February 2013

Geneva Alumni Chapter – Gala Dinner

The LAU Alumni Association – Geneva Chapter organized its first gala dinner at the InterContinental Hotel in Geneva on February 1, 2013, which was attended by over 120 alumni and friends. The president of the Chapter welcomed members then gave the floor to LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara who updated the guests on the university's latest developments. Dr. Daniel Rüfenacht — a neuroradiology specialist at Institute SNI Hirslanden Clinic — and Dr. Maher Kayal — a professor at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne's Institute of Electrical Engineering — also spoke at the event.



Alumni News

Salim Takieddine (B.S. '86) is celebrating twenty years with his insurance brokerage company General Line International (GLI). Through its Canadian sister company, GLI helps investors with business opportunities in countries like Canada.

Saad El Zein (B.S.'89) is president of the LAU Alumni Association Dubai and Northern Emirates Chapter. Married with three children, Saad is currently a member of the Lebanese Business Council, Emirati-Lebanese Friendship Association, and on the Board of Directors for the International Advertising Association (IAA). He is also the CEO of The Network Communication Group, a holding company.



Fatima Sharafeddine (B.A. '90) recently moved back to Lebanon with her two children and husband after living abroad for many years. She is a successful author of over 80 books for children and young adults. She is currently in the process of developing a course that will teach children's literature in Lebanon in forward-thinking ways.

Pierre Talhami (B.S. '82, M.B.A. '92) is the General Manager of life insurance company, Beirut Life sal. As part of his company's social commitment, he organizes various youth activities to encourage fitness and the arts.

Yasmine Nachabe Taan (B.A. '92) received her doctorate in Art History and Communication Studies from McGill University in June 2012. She is currently an associate professor at the School of Architecture and Design at LAU. She regularly publishes articles on a range of art and design oriented topics in a number of international magazines, among them Communication Arts, Design Graphics and the New Middle Eastern Studies journal. Her research interest focuses on gender representation in photographs of the Middle East region. She is currently editing the Al-Raida special issue on Women and Photography in the Arab World.

Samir S. Gharzeddine (B.S. '93) moved to Saudi Arabia and got married in 2002. He, his wife and two daughters recently welcomed the arrival of two twin boys, Ryan and Ralph. He is currently the IT manager for Bamarouf in Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Yemen.



Youssef Chediak (B.A. '96) has been a Biology teacher and coordinator for secondary classes at the Gebran Andrawos Tweini Public School in Beirut since 2004. This year, she received third place in the "Innovative Teachers Program," sponsored by both Microsoft and Ministry of Education and Higher Education. She was recognized for her development of the "The Warak Warak Method" which is an innovative and original teaching method.

Fadi Nabih Al Khatib (A.A.S. '92, B.S. '94, M.B.A. '98) has recently been appointed the new general manager of Al Ahlia Insurance. He was previously the manager of the Bahrain Branch at Arabia Insurance Company in the GCC and the Middle East.



Yahya Khalil (B.S. '99) currently works for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and was recently promoted to Deputy Head of the ICRC's regional delegation in Kuwait, which covers all of the GCC countries. In this position, he handles all diplomatic and humanitarian negotiations as well as communication activities. Khalil is also responsible for the protection of civilians under the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) file within the GCC countries.

Marwan Abdul Malak (B.S. '00) is currently working in Lebanon as a revenue and warehouse controller for a leading clothing, child entertainment and home décor retailer. His son is currently enrolled in Lycee Verdun MS.



Faysal Awar (B.S. '00) has been working and residing in Dubai for over nine years and has spent the last three at the Jaguar and Land Rover regional office in the MENA Region (Middle East and North Africa). He was relocated to Saudi Arabia to the position of Sales and Marketing Director. After two years in Saudi Arabia, he has returned to Dubai with his family where he travels extensively across the MENA region.

Soud Saidi (A.A.S. '00) is an artist who paints naïve art and will have her first exhibition in the near future. She is also volunteering at a local NGO and is the proud aunt of a lovely niece and nephew.

Joelle Y. Maalouf (B.S. '01) launched her own business in 2008. Along with a partner, she created "L'Atelier Blanc," which sells top-of-the-line international designer wedding dresses. She is currently working on expansion plans.

Andre Abi Chedid (M.B.A. '04) spent seven years in Saudi Arabia working in the banking sector and has now returned to Lebanon where he currently holds the position of Corporate Banking Manager at Al Mawarid Bank located in Hamra.



Dr. Rita Sayah Nehmeh (B.A. '04) went on from LAU to obtain a master's in Media Studies from Notre Dame University-Louaize in 2007 and a Ph.D. with high distinction in Information and Communication Sciences from l'Institut d'Etudes Politiques of l'Université Lumière Lyon 2 in 2011. She and her husband Henry Nehmeh live in Byblos with their eldest daughter Selina and newborn daughter Sienna, who they welcomed in August 2012.

Mohammad Badran (B.S. '04, M.S. '08) has been working at Dar Al-Handasah since 2007 as a systems engineer.

Hassan Daaboul (B.S. '00, M.B.A. '08) has relocated to the UAE due to the deteriorating situation in Syria and is running his general trading operations from Sharjah.



Bechir Hasbani (B.E. '08) is an electrical engineer at Somiral Energy sarl and has recently engaged to Maria Azar.

Samer Katenji (B.S. '08) is engaged to Helen Abou Zeid and is working as a project manager at a real estate company. In addition, he and his fiancée have launched an interior design company called Bayti w Baytak.



Jana Bou Reslan (M.B.A. '09) went on to obtain a doctorate in Educational Leadership at Notre Dame University–Louaize. She is a strong advocate of spoken-word poetry as a tool for self-expression, helping the youth voice their issues creatively and nonviolently off the streets.

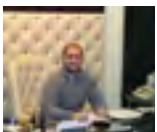
Farah Al Hashim (B.A. '09) recently graduated from New York Film Academy—Universal Studios campus with an M.F.A. in cinematography and film. She will be returning to New York early this year to continue working on her feature script and to publish a novel about her experiences in Beirut. In addition, she has recently launched a cultural and arts e-magazine called “Prelude Magazine” that will soon open offices in New York and Beirut.



Haitham Ghaddaf (B.S. '09, M.B.A. '09) got married in 2012 and he and his wife are awaiting the arrival of their first child. At present, he is a full-time business instructor and is enrolled in a Doctor of Business Administration program in the U.K.

Ziad Ghandour (B.S. '09) obtained his master's degree in economics at the American University Beirut and is looking forward to the publication of his thesis. He has currently been promoted to Senior Data Analyst at Unitech, a building and construction materials company that is part of the IKK Group of companies.

Rayan Yunis (B.S. '09) has been working as a credit controller in a reinsurance company in Beirut since 2009. He made his first skydive jump in Lebanon recently, plunging more than 10 kilometers, and is hoping to attempt solo skydiving in the near future.



Ahmad Zaarouri (B.S. '09) joined the Bafco furniture company in the UAE in November 2012 as account manager.

Ayman Abdel Malak (B.S. '10) obtained a position at the distinguished firm, PriceWaterHouseCoopers, in Abu Dhabi shortly after graduating.

Hassan Baalbaki (B.S. '11, B.A. '11) went on to Edinburgh, Scotland upon graduating to pursue a master's degree in International Law. Now back in Lebanon, he is working part-time at LAU's Office for Civic Engagement (OCE).



Jessica Mirzein (B.S. '12) is in her second semester at the École Supérieure de Gestion where she is obtaining a master's in luxury brand management. She looks forward to starting a five-month internship in South Africa in May.



LAU
الجامعة اللبنانية الأمريكية
Lebanese American University



LAU Alumni Homecoming and Reunions

June 2013

*Bookmark
these dates*

- 26 Alumni Dinner
- 27 Byblos Reunion
- 28 Beirut Reunion
- 29 Alumni Brunch
- 30 Alumni Trip

Program will follow

WHY I GIVE BACK

Hayat Mousfi (B.A. BCW '61)



*Hayat Mousfi, her daughter and granddaughter;
three generations proud to be educated at LAU*

What have you been doing since graduation?

After earning my degree from BCW (Beirut College for Women, now LAU), I spent 15 years at Lebanon's National News Agency as an editor. Back then, we used to edit stories on paper, and didn't even have microphones. Now I work with charitable organizations and serve as president of the Baakline Women's Society.

What are your fondest memories of BCW (LAU)?

I have so many wonderful memories, but I particularly loved the summer that I stayed in the dormitories. We felt so free! Another of my favorite memories is the trip my graduating class took to Europe. There were around 30 girls. We went with two teachers and stayed in hostels in a number of different cities. It was beautiful. The university gave me so much in terms of education and social awareness. The friends I made at BCW have proven to be friends for life.

How would you like to see your donation used by LAU?

To help needy students. They should be given the chance of their lives to study and pursue their ambitions. They may not know it now, but their years at LAU will shape who they become.





Fulfilling the Promise

LAU Campaign for Academic Excellence



✧ JOE AND CARMEN MAROUN ARE FULFILLING THE PROMISE.

Joe Maroun is a man known for following his passions, however divergent they may be. The former secretary of LAU's Board of Trustees was an airline pilot before his love of Lebanese bread led him to establish his own bakery products company in California. By the time he sold the Caravan Trading Company in 2010, it was one of the largest of its kind in the U.S.

Joe and his wife Carmen are dedicated philanthropists. They actively support several charities in Lebanon and in 2005, donated over 100,000 ready-to-go emergency meals to survivors of the Southeast Asian Tsunami. Joe is an executive committee member of the American Lebanese Foundation.

The Marouns recently established a scholarship endowment fund to provide financial assistance to deserving students at LAU. Because of the university's mission and diversity, Joe and Carmen say LAU will always have their support.



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