

LAU magazine

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& ALUMNI BULLETIN

The Service Driver's Guide to the City

A vignette of Beirut through the narratives of its cab drivers

The Streets are Ours

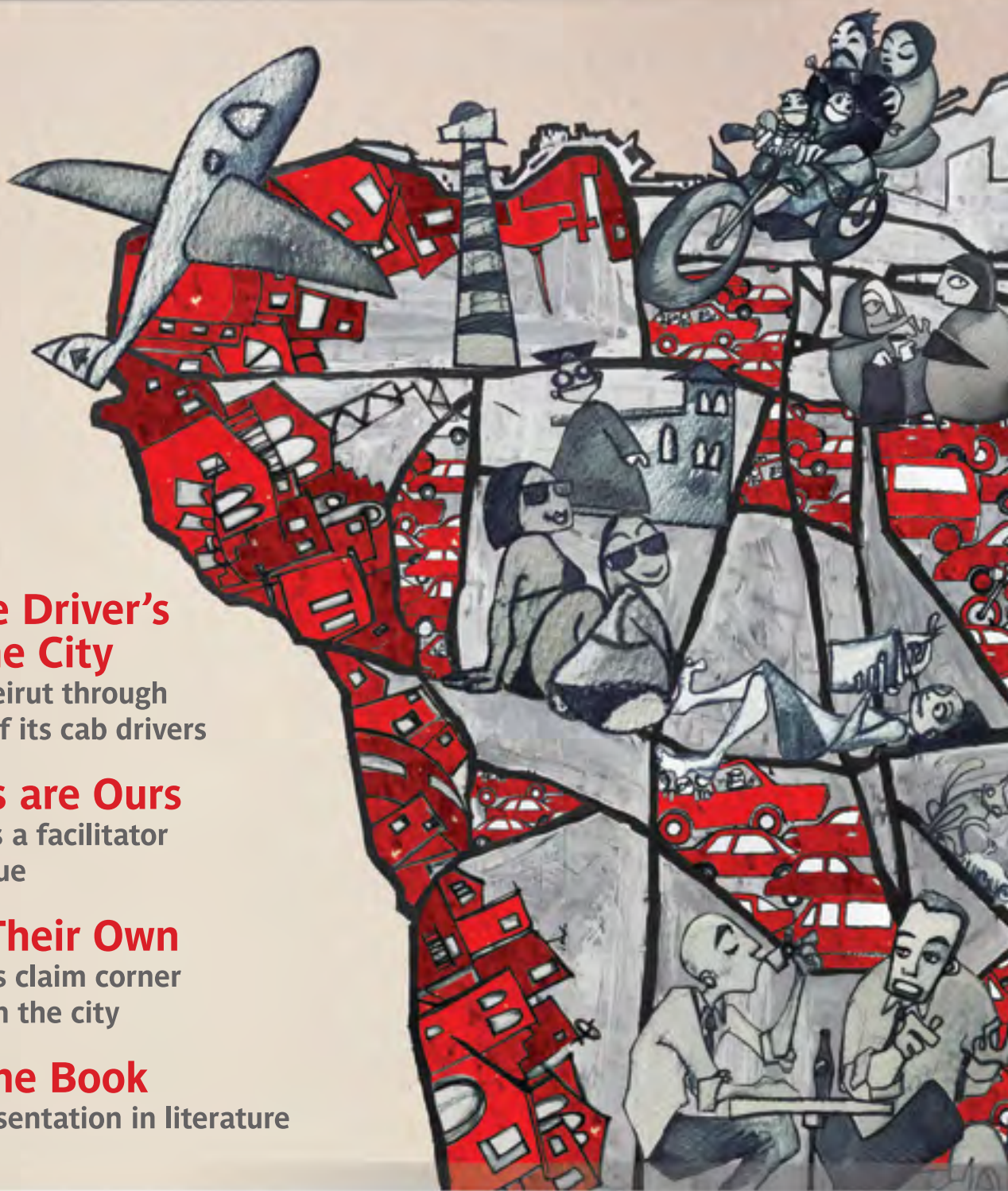
City walls act as a facilitator of public dialogue

Making it Their Own

Migrant workers claim corner of cultural life in the city

Beirut by the Book

The city's representation in literature



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

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City Pulse

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The Service Driver's Guide to the City

A vignette of Beirut through the narratives of its cab drivers

There are an estimated 30,000 service cars circulating in Beirut today, but the iconicity of the Ponton is a thing of the past, and service cars are no longer solely identifiable by their bulky Mercedes-Benz chassis and classical 180 model. Muriel Kahwagi reports on the service driver's role as historian and arbiter of public dialogue.

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City walls act as a facilitator of public dialogue

From artists to advertisers to anyone with something to express, people have covered Beirut's walls with visual symbols, both transient in nature and reflective of the city's diversity. Natalie Shooter writes about the streets as a place for the kind of questioning that doesn't exist in the public realm.



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Making it Their Own

Migrant workers claim corner of cultural life in the city

Short of adequate human rights protections, and repeatedly facing discrimination and abuse by their employers, some foreign laborers are slowly but surely making the city their own with the establishment of gathering spots, religious groups, community leaders and ethnic stores, reports Paige Kollock.

44 Beirut by the Book

The city's representation in literature

It is only fitting that a place like Beirut, so comfortable with its contradictions — its class disparity, religious and ethnic divisions — would feel so at home in literature, a rare space with the capacity to host competing narratives of the city. Mehrnoush Shafiei guides us through the city's ascendancy to literary muse.



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Letters to the Editor

"Even when I am away from Lebanon, I check the LAU website several times a day and a certain home sickness sets in. I appreciate what the MarCom staff are doing every day on the LAU website. I truly enjoy reading the articles; they are interesting, important and very well written. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your great work, which keeps me (and so many others) closely connected to the LAU community."

—Dr. Kristiaan Aercke, associate professor of cultural studies,
English and comparative literature at LAU Beirut

"I am an LAU alumna in early childhood education and I find that articles in the magazine provide something for each graduate. In particular, I would like to comment on the article entitled, "Brave New Classroom: Teacher versus Machine" published in the Spring 2013 issue. I enjoyed reading the content. What I liked the most about the article is that Ms. Shafiei did not try to simplify the issue. She explored the topic from the point of view of a school teacher, undergraduate student, and college faculty member. This diversity of representation is a witness to the widespread of technology in our lives. At the same time, how much and what is adopted from electronic sources need to be evaluated. Ms. Shafiei's article helped me take part in the discussions. I saw myself moving smoothly from one opinion to another, agreeing, disagreeing, or wanting to add something different. I realize that the debate will continue and Ms. Shafiei's article pointed to the importance of a critical evaluation of the topic. Thank you again and I wish you all the success."

—Majida Mehana '90

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The editorial team would like to extend a special
thanks to **Dr. Makram Ouais**, chair of the
Department of Social Sciences, for his guidance
and expertise with this issue.

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From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

If we conceive our urban habitats as merely an anatomy of glass and concrete facades delineated by lanes of asphalt, we fail to acknowledge the city's true lifeblood: the people who build, inhabit and better our communities. The ancient Greek word polis described the city and society as one; we cannot divorce one from the other.

Next year will mark nine decades since LAU began to embody the interaction between the city and its people, branching out from its campuses in Beirut and Byblos — one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world — to our Headquarters and Academic Center in New York City.

Yet, as many Lebanese leave our cities to become our cultural ambassadors, hundreds of thousands of migrant workers arrive on our soil to enrich our society. These phenomena form the core of our Institute for Migration Studies, which enhances public understanding of migration. Our students' volunteer activities in migrant communities help ensure that our guests enjoy the same rights we seek when we leave our own cities.

City life, however, is about expression as much as it is about work. Today, brave artists and designers have supplemented the pen with the spray can and transformed the city's surfaces into platforms of civic dialogue. Both the skills to design such expression and articulate a cogent message have long been the forte of LAU's renowned Fine Arts and Graphic Design departments.

As the first higher education institution for women in the region, LAU also stands as a beacon to the women of our cities who continue to break down age-old normative and patriarchal power structures to demonstrate the inherent equality between the genders. To truly appreciate LAU's commitment to gender equality in our region, the university now offers a master's degree in gender studies to complement the work of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World. To support the growing corpus of literature on gender and other issues, LAU's Humanities Department introduced a Bachelor of Arts in Translation Studies and a graduate program in Comparative Literature.

But for our urban spaces to thrive, they require the adaptability that only their inhabitants can offer, especially when public officials fail to provide the services cities need to excel. Thankfully, residents intervene in the ways available to them. When the trams and railroads were side-lined, "services" emerged to fill the gap and link communities across the country. Today, these and other forms of collective action shape public consciousness and become case studies for our Psychology Department and Social Work programs, documenting how we adapt the society we are today.

This issue of LAU Magazine is a reminder to everyone that we, the people of our cities, are the ones who create and guide our destiny. And if we seek a more elevated urban existence, we must first advance ourselves so that we may remake our cities in our own image.



Joseph G. Jabbra
President





FEATURE

The Service Driver's Guide to the City

A vignette of Beirut through the narratives of its cab drivers

By Muriel Kahwagi

Fadi Khairallah, one of the protagonists of "Taxi Beirut," and his service. Image courtesy of Hady Zaccak



The Mercedes-Benz Ponton was a Beirut pop icon during the 1960s. Rugged, sturdy and cavernous, it was embraced by the Lebanese shared taxi (otherwise known as *service*) trade, making it an emblem of public transit. Dubbed “the poor man’s car,” the Ponton, much like the Big Apple’s iconic yellow taxicab, was *service* drivers’ hallmark and sweetheart at one and the same time.

There are an estimated 30,000 *service* cars circulating in Beirut today, but the iconicity of the Ponton is a thing of the past, and *service* cars are no longer solely identifiable by their bulky Mercedes-Benz chassis and classical 180 model. Barring their signature red license plate, Beirut *service* vehicles have very little in common but what their drivers can only hope would be a minimal consumption of gasoline.

“It was different before [in the early 1960s],” says Ghassan Fadel, a 71-year-old chauffeur who has been operating a taxi for almost 50 years. “Not only did the majority of *service* drivers drive the same car [the Ponton], but the profession itself was more honorable.”

Fadel’s inveterate longing for prewar Beirut is entrenched in the majority of the Lebanese people’s psyche — *service* drivers most of all — even those who did not witness the city’s presumed “golden era.” While local merchants and artisans reminisce about the mercantile fever of the old souks of Beirut, *service* drivers often boast that traffic laws were better enforced, and that their dealings with the police — now notoriously virulent — were amicable.

But the Lebanese civil war’s seesawing toll on Beirut took on more tangible and equally transformative incarnations as well, bisecting the city into Eastern and Western halves along the Green — more psychogenic, less physical — Line. As Beirut’s homes and alleyways were shelled into desertion, Beirut became a nearly unrecognizable entity, even to its own populace. The only people who witnessed and remembered the city’s every transformation by heart were the *service* drivers.

Service drivers’ wartime narratives bear witness to a critical yet often trivialized part of the Lebanese civil war: the people’s stories. They often transported the injured to hospitals, knew where snipers would be stationed and what backstreets would be safe to take. Crossing the Green Line was a near-suicide mission that only the most bravehearted of *service* drivers would embark on.

In most cases, traveling from one side of the city to another was not a straight route — it was more of a zigzag line. *Service* drivers would often have to journey all the way to the Bekaa Valley in east Lebanon and back to reach the other side of the capital, a long and winding detour not without its perils, despite its relative safeness. But a handful of fearless drivers did occasionally >



Collage by designer Hiba Jaroudi

venture from East to West Beirut across the Green Line, a gamble usually reserved for a predominantly Lebanese Armenian group of *service* drivers. Shielded because of their reasonable neutrality and minimal political involvement during the war meant that Armenians crossing from one side of the city to another raised fewer eyebrows. But apart from that niche circle, *service* drivers generally limited their travels to one part of the city.

More than two decades after the conclusion of the civil war and the reunification of Beirut's halves, the Green Line is all but nonexistent. Still, more often than not, remnants of it are deep-rooted in people's minds — *service* drivers or otherwise.

"You can see it in the way people drive," says Lebanese filmmaker Hady Zaccak. "We're aggressive and hostile, we honk all the time, and we're infamous for our complete disregard for traffic laws. The way we drive is an extension of the civil war — a sort of passive continuation of it, but through cars."

Entitled "Taxi Beirut" (2011), Zaccak's award-winning documentary follows three *service* drivers over the course of one day as they drive, fight and blast their way through the city. According to Zaccak, each of the drivers represents a different facet of Beirut. Amal, whose vehicle acts as an operational tourism office-cum-bazaar, embodies the mercantile spirit of Beirut; Fadi, a former combatant, alludes to the city's wounded past and yearning for self-redemption; and Fouad, the eldest of the three, epitomizes Beirut's postcard-like "golden era," and the city's longing for its erstwhile glory.

"The taxi driver in Beirut is either a sniper or hunter," Amal says in the film — a fitting description of *service* drivers in Lebanon, and a telling one. Exemplifying the bellicose nature of driving in Beirut, the pertinent use of the noun "sniper" symbolizes the transcendent nature of the civil war, and its subsequent materialization not only through driving, but through language as well.

"Very often, *service* drivers quite literally do hunt you down,"

agrees Zaccak. "They study your demeanor when you're walking and honk incessantly to get you to ride with them. Once you're in the backseat, they keep an eye on you through the rear-view mirror to see if and when they can strike up a conversation with you, and what topics could be safely tackled."

"The way [Lebanese people] drive is an extension of the civil war — a sort of passive continuation of it, but through cars."

—Hady Zaccak, Lebanese filmmaker

Indeed, though politics remains an arguably off-limits talking point, most *service* drivers are at home with discussing whatever they please with very little or no regard to their passengers' sentiments. They set the rules of the game — captains of their own ships. Don't mind the radio? Good for you. Cigarette smoke bothering you? Tough luck. For all intents and purposes, you are a spectator in the *service* driver's moving theater and he is free to steer you (and the conversation) anyway he deems fit.

"*Service* drivers [in Beirut] often feel entitled to talk just about anything that crosses their mind," says Dr. Hassan Hammoud, associate professor of sociology at LAU. "True, some might be reluctant to bring up politics, but for the most part, nothing is really taboo. Religion, sex, money — a *service* car is never short on such heated discussions, and in that sense, is the closest thing to 'public' space in Beirut."

As postwar reconstruction entombed the last surviving residuals of public space in Beirut, the *service* car may arguably be the only remaining setting that allows people from a miscellany of backgrounds — ethnic, religious, educational, or otherwise — and socioeconomic statuses to socialize and engage in civic dialogue, with the chauffeur at the helm of the conversation.



Hammoud attributes *service* drivers' almost irrepressible volubility to Lebanon's fairly liberal viewpoint vis-à-vis freedom of speech. "There's virtually no ceiling in Lebanon, unlike many other neighboring countries in the region," he explains. "And this is what gives *service* drivers the prerogative to not only speak whatever is on their mind, but to share it with whoever rides with them regardless of whether or not they agree."

"[Service drivers] do reflect the plight of the middle class, and they're never short on voicing it."

—Dr. Hassan Hammoud, associate professor of sociology at LAU

Likewise, Zaccak believes that taxi drivers' relentless chattiness can be seen as a reflection of a discrete set of freedoms in any given country. After completing "Taxi Beirut," the filmmaker ventured across various other Arab cities in an attempt to study the *service* phenomenon in the region. "If you ride a taxi in Cairo, for instance, you'll notice that the driver opens up to you pretty quickly. They are just yearning to talk," says Zaccak. "You won't see any of this in Damascus, on the other hand. The driver will make no effort to talk to you no matter how hard you try to start a conversation with him."

Apart from being a barometer of freedom of speech, Hammoud argues that *service* drivers are also the voice of the people, that their problems mirror the proletariat's. "They do reflect the plight of the middle class, and they're never short on voicing it," he explains. "Not the political plight *per se*, but the dire need for a stronger government and more just representatives who can cater to the needs of the people — from better electricity and infrastructure, to cost control and better food quality."

While *service* drivers are a microcosm of the working classes, public transit as a whole can provide a prism through which the structure and dynamics of society — and the state — can be perused. "Public transport tends to be a reflection of the state of affairs in a certain country," says Zaccak. "The more organized it is, the more structured the government is. In the case of Lebanon, public transport can be seen as a reflection of the dysfunctionality of the state."

Zaccak argues that the failure to institute and maintain a standardized public transport system in postwar Lebanon is a manifestation of the state's fragmented disposition. "The politicization of public transport is a token of the political divisions within the state itself," notes Zaccak. "It's evident even through something as trivial as the lack of a unified *service* car, like the Ponton during the 1960s."

Though not as bulky nor as hardwearing as the Ponton, Beirut's grizzle-haired *service* drivers are equally focal points of reference in Lebanese history, and their narratives, much like Beirut's red-roofed and triple-arched houses, must be preserved. "No one knows Beirut quite like *service* drivers do, but very little attention has been given to their account of the Lebanese civil war," says Zaccak. "They are Beirut's long neglected memory, and their narratives are important to document and preserve, the same way we try to save Beirut's architectural heritage." ■



Little Syria

Neighborhood Builds Bridge Between East and West

By Paige Kollock

Just a few blocks from Ground Zero, the site of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in downtown Manhattan, is an area once bustling with immigrants from the lands known today as Lebanon and Syria.

The first Arabic-speaking community in the U.S., the neighborhood was home to dozens of Arabic-language newspapers and magazines, Eastern Christian churches, restaurants, bakeries, silk traders and tailors. Today, there is scant evidence of what has come to be called “Little Syria,” and the few buildings that remain are on the verge of being destroyed by developers.

“The way the city sees it, Little Syria hampers their plans for the re-development of downtown,” says Todd Fine, director of Save Washington Street, a campaign to protect the neighborhood. “So they basically decided to turn it into a hotel zone.”

In 2011, a collection of historic preservationists and Arab-American activists lobbied the Landmarks Preservation Commission to designate two of Little Syria’s buildings — the Downtown Community House and the tenement at 109 Washington Street — as city landmarks. Their application was rejected.

A third building, the former St. George’s Syrian Catholic Church, has received landmark status from the city for the façade only, and is now “being used as a staging ground for the building of the tallest Holiday Inn in the world,” says Fine, who fears the interior will soon be transformed into a bar/restaurant for the hotel.

Fine has worked tirelessly to get the word out about the historical importance of Little Syria, namely that it was home to Lebanese writer Ameen Rihani — who penned the first Arab-American book, “The Book of Khalid” about his impressions of the U.S. — as well as Gibran Khalil Gibran and other influential authors.

Fine visited LAU’s Beirut campus in 2011 and has given lectures to alumni chapters in Washington D.C. and San Francisco. This fall, he will also speak at LAU’s newly minted New York Headquarters and Academic Center.

“As LAU embarks on a new phase of its development, issues and causes like these will provide the university with appropriate outreach opportunities that are salient and pertinent to the New York Middle Eastern community, and will also promote the fascinating history of Lebanese immigration to the community at large,” says Ed Shiner, director of the LAU Alumni and Special Projects unit.

Highlighting the work of Rihani is essential, says Dr. Nuwar Mawlawi Diab, assistant professor of English and applied linguistics at LAU Beirut, who says the writer and activist was “ahead of his time,” and that the university should continue to promote his heritage.

“He wrote about issues we’re still fighting today, and he understood that there was a lot to be gained from interaction between Arabs and Americans,” she explains.

Meters from where America’s worst terror attack in history took place, a site that inspired as much fear and



St. George's Syrian Catholic Church at 103 Washington Street

misunderstanding as it did bravery and humanity, Rihani’s words are prescient:

“Ignorance and fear are twins whose mother is slavery and whose father is oppression,” he wrote in 1925.

“The way the city sees it, Little Syria hampers their plans for the re-development of downtown, so they basically decided to turn it into a hotel zone.”

—Todd Fine, director of Save Washington Street, a campaign to protect the Little Syria neighborhood



Syrian restaurant



The neighborhood children



Food vendor in “Little Syria”



Design by Maria Bahous, part time faculty member at the School of Architecture and Design

Building Kidizens

LAU alumni bring “edutainment” to Lebanon

By Brooke Atherton El-Amine

As they climb into the fire engine, the excitement of six school children in full fire fighter gear cannot be contained. The van, a small-scale replica of a real fire truck, drives through the mini-city, passing the bank, the police station and the Ghandour chocolate factory. The children jump out at the site of the “fire” and douse it with real firemen’s hoses. All of this after a lesson on fire safety. Nobody gets hurt, nobody gets wet, and everybody learns and has a great time.

As part of LAU’s ongoing commitment to serving the community, the university has joined hands with the educational organization KidzMondo through the development of a mini LAU campus on the premises. It is a venture that will engage young minds and turn children into budding scholars, professionals and citizens.

“We view partnering with KidzMondo as an extension of our mission to nurture the leaders of tomorrow,” says LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra.

“We view partnering with KidzMondo as an extension of our mission to nurture the leaders of tomorrow.”

—Joseph G. Jabbra, LAU president

“It is our hope that through this experience children will gain a greater appreciation of higher education and the importance of life-long learning, and perhaps we will be meeting LAU’s future students,” he adds.

KidzMondo is an indoor theme park where children act out the roles of various professionals. The venture calls its method “edutainment” (education + entertainment) and is the first of its kind in Lebanon. Its mission is to teach children the rules and values of citizenship in a fun and organic way. “Our Kidizens learn about adult life, the economy, the importance of education and the impact it has on a career,” reads the website. In the same day, a child can fly an MEA airplane, operate on a patient, deliver the mail, collect and recycle the garbage, and construct a building.

LAU alumni Ali Kazma and Hind Berri are the visionaries behind KidzMondo.

“What I hope children will carry with them from the KidzMondo experience is the lesson of self-reliance, the value of work and being proud of any job,” Berri says.

The pair wanted KidzMondo to include a university, and LAU was the natural choice.

The replica was designed by Dr. Maroun Daccache, chair of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design, while Maria Bahous, adjunct professor in the

Department of Graphic Design, created an attractive design scheme to portray a consistent and friendly LAU brand. Chairperson of the Education Department Dr. Rima Bahous helped develop the curriculum, in which “degrees” are offered in audio visual, humanities and financial management.

After completing a test, children receive a B.A., M.A. or Ph.D. that allows them to earn more when they work in different jobs.

Dr. Elie Badr, assistant to the president and strategic officer for external projects and related entities, explains, “It tells children that getting a degree is good for you, so you can get a good job and have a bright future.”

KidzMondo is also serving the community by creating hundreds of jobs. Among the employees a number of LAU graduates can be found behind the scenes and on the ground educating children, including Marc Harb, director of sponsorship and business development, and Wehbi Cheaib, establishment coordinator.

“It is the perfect combination of my experience in business management and interest in children. This is the first company I have worked for that is really committed to training its employees. And best of all, I leave work every day with a smile,” says Cheaib.

Congratulations Class of 2013

By LAU Staff





LAU held its 88th annual commencement exercises in July, conferring degrees to more than 1,700 students from a miscellany of disciplines. The ceremony held on the Byblos campus marked the graduation of the inaugural classes of the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine and the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing, making this year's commencement exercises the first ever to graduate students from the university's seven schools all at once.



"This is a dream come true," said LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra. "Both achievements constitute a milestone in the growth of LAU, which has become an academic powerhouse, taking its right place in the constellation of leading institutions of higher education in Lebanon, the MENA region and beyond."

At the graduation ceremonies, Jabbra bestowed the doctorate of humane letters, honoris causa, on four distinguished luminaries: Chafic Frem, Leila Saad, Abdallah Wahbé Tamari and May El Khalil.

"Use your knowledge and education to create and innovate, to open new horizons and to help build new institutions," Frem advised the young graduates. "This country needs you. It is your duty to give back to society by being responsible citizens."

Echoing Frem, Saad stressed the importance of joining hands and working together, stating, "Only functional teams can build worthwhile advancement in the 21st century."

Tamari and El Khalil's speeches inspired the young graduates to view obstacles as a potential source of inspiration.

After a nearly fatal accident left El Khalil — president of the Beirut Marathon Association — with both her legs crushed, the sports enthusiast thought she would never be able to run again. But it was during her recovery period that the concept for the Beirut Marathon was born.

Founder and chairman of SUCAFINA SA (Switzerland), Tamari was born and raised in Jaffa, Palestine, and was forced to migrate to Lebanon as a result of the 1948 Palestinian exodus. But just as he thought his plans for the future were forever changed, he chose the road less traveled by and decided to forge a new path for himself, studying accountancy and attending law school in the evenings.

Class valedictorians Essa Hariri, Hana Nimer and Loubna Abdallah reflected on their time at LAU and the emotional and intellectual growth they achieved during their studies.

A mother of three who recently celebrated her fifth decade of life, Nimer enrolled at LAU in 2009, more than 30 years after graduating from high school.

Addressing her colleagues, she said, "You made me feel motivated, energetic, and as one of you despite the age gap. Thank you. I hope that my story could be an example that there is no age limit to follow your dreams."

Fireworks signaled the end of the ceremony — and the beginning of a new chapter in the lives of LAU graduates.





LAU

Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury
School of Medicine

First Class

Saluting LAU's
inaugural classes
of medical doctors
and nurses

By LAU Staff

LAU celebrates its first class of medical doctors in the 2013 School of Medicine's hooding ceremony

The emotional evening of June 7 witnessed the inaugural Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine's hooding ceremony.

Amid government officials, medical school faculty and staff, parents, family and friends, Master of Ceremonies Dr. Maya Khairallah introduced the graduates with great pride.

"This is a precious and moving moment for our medical school, for its team, its faculty, for our graduating students and their families, and above all for LAU," said President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara as he recalled the school's ground breaking in July 2008 following a generous donation by Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury.

LAU constituents collaborated with partner Harvard Medical International to create a curriculum that was unique in the region and that bore a mission "To educate and train a new physician, one superbly trained in the art and science of medicine and who believes deeply that a physician is, above all, a merciful healer."

Thanking the Board of Trustees for its continuous support, Jabbara praised the indefatigable efforts of founding dean Dr. Kamal Badr in recruiting top-notch faculty and in introducing innovative, patient-centered care. He also thanked Dr. Lynn Eckhart from Harvard Medical International, who took office as interim dean in October 2010 for two years before Dr. Youssef Comair, the current dean, assumed the position.

"There was a great confluence of factors, of people who came together and had faith in what this institution was trying to do," Jabbara said. He reminded the audience of the triumphant acquisition of the majority shareholder position in the University

Medical Center-Rizk Hospital in 2009, a milestone for the medical school.

"I have been struck by your commitment to your patients and community. Your enthusiasm, desire to make a difference and drive are an example to all of us," said Comair, before adding, "Our work is far from being complete. Major challenges await us; rising to preeminence requires that we become pioneers and creators of new knowledge."

Dr. Dimitri Azar, internationally renowned ophthalmologist and dean of the College of Medicine at the University of Illinois, the largest medical school in the U.S., was a guest speaker.

"You sit here today because of the values that you and LAU represent: striving for excellence, seeking lifelong learning, and finding appropriate cures through perseverance and integrity," he said.

Students received the messages of wisdom with humility. "LAU SOM has equipped us with more than the mere knowledge of diagnosing diseases and curing them," said graduating student Rim Halaby, who delivered the valedictorian speech.

"What we have been empowered with is the ability to listen to each other when none of our ideas overlap, to think in a new perspective when our doctrines are challenged with new concepts, to control our anger and fear in a professional setting, to fail and then define our weaknesses to rise stronger, to compete with our inner-self and not with each other, and most importantly, to be humane."

Before the hooding ceremony started, Halaby was awarded the Academic Excellence Award, while her colleague Jad al Danaf received the Leadership Award.



Top: Students received the oath surrounded by LAU officials and SOM faculty, from the left: Dr. Jacques Mokhbat, Dr. Sola Bahous, Dr. Zeinat Hijazi, graduating student Michele Chemali, Dr. Youssef Comair, Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara and Dr. Georges K. Najjar

Bottom: The first class of LAU medical doctors taking their oath



The Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing's first graduating class

The School of Nursing honors its first SON graduates in recognition ceremony

The Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing held a recognition ceremony honoring the achievements of its first graduating class on July 2. The intimate and emotionally charged affair brought together friends and family members who looked on with pride as nine graduating students proudly celebrated their rite of passage into the nursing profession.

In the presence of faculty and LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara a pinning ceremony was held. Graduates proudly marched to claim their pins from Dr. Nancy Hoffart, founding dean of the school, who bestowed upon her students a symbolic reminder of the gravitas of their vocation.

"Our graduates have worked extremely hard and deserve the greatest respect as they begin their journey in the nursing profession," said Hoffart.

"Everything we experienced was that much more significant since we were the

first group of students to pave this path," said graduate Ahmad Theibich, smiling widely.

An address by a fellow alumna and pioneer in the nursing field, Selwa H. Makrem, EdD, RN, captured the moment.

Makrem graduated from LAU (then called the Beirut College for Women) in 1955, earning an associate degree. She went on to forge an exceptional career in nursing which culminated in her appointment as Director of the School of Nursing at the American University of Beirut, a post she held until 2003.

"Nurses are powerful messengers, they take determined action to help people change their futures," she told the newly minted nurses.

Awards for academic excellence were bestowed upon graduates Alaa Othman, Leila Maraqa and Chant Kazandjian.

Alaa Badran, the class representative,

beautifully captured this sense of fulfillment in a touching farewell speech and tribute video dedicated to her class.

"We had a dream to serve people in need," said Badran, "LAU helped us to achieve this dream."

The students said that their dean's leadership and visionary outlook inspired them, and Hoffart was quick to note that the feeling was mutual. "We are lucky to have had you as our first class," said a beaming Hoffart with characteristic warmth. "Your maturity and deep understanding of the value nursing brings to the medical field makes us all proud."

"The School of Nursing will always be your home," she said, reminding the students to keep connected with their alma mater as they move on to the next chapter of their lives — a chapter in which they will doubtless play a significant role in other people's lives.



The walls of the city are where all unite, from artists to activists and advertisers.



FEATURE

The Streets are Ours

City walls act as a facilitator of public dialogue

By Natalie Shooter

Outside the Électricité du Liban headquarters in Mar Mikhael, a row of light bulbs, lit by candles from within, line the wall — a tongue-in-cheek message to the government about its inability to provide steady electricity for the city. In Beirut's Armenian neighborhood there's the scrawl of political protest — the words "Eastern Turkey" crossed out in red, "Western Armenia" written above. From artists to advertisers to anyone with something to express, people have covered Beirut's walls with visual symbols, both transient in nature and reflective of the city's diversity. The streets are a place for the kind of questioning that doesn't exist in the public realm, and it's here that a real, open dialogue exists.

"My first exposure to graffiti was when we would walk to school and see the stencils of Lebanese militias," says Omar Kabbani, who, along with his twin brother Mohamed, forms the graffiti hip-hop duo Ashekman. "It's like when gangs mark their territories in the States."

The name Ashekman translates roughly into "a car's exhaust pipe," a metaphor for how they see their work: filtering the dirt out of the city. "It's an art form and a way of expression," Kabbani says. "Some people in Beirut shoot each other if they want to blow off some steam. We do it through a peaceful underground art form."

Ashekman's graffiti work consists largely of socio-political commentary and is often a direct response to happenings in the city, though usually with a positive outlook. Brightly colored Arabic font stands out in juxtaposition to its canvas of dirty, crumbling walls, with scribbles such as "The Street Is Ours." In another, Fairouz's face appears next to the title of her song "Li Beirut" (To Beirut) — a message of peace in light of Lebanon's rising sectarian tensions.

"Since I was born, I lived through seven or eight wars. Lebanon is always boiling," Kabbani says. "We consider that holding our spray can is stronger than an AK-47 or Kalashnikov. It has more impact on people."

With the state's failure to nurture any civil society in Lebanon, public discussions of every kind have moved to the street, as graffiti artists and activists call for change. With topics such as women's rights and the destruction of the city's architectural heritage, a dialogue has mushroomed in the public realm, spreading awareness on a variety of issues through the strength of visual symbols.

And for activists who might not possess the artistic inclination, stencil graffiti has proved a valuable stand-in. One stencil sprayed across the city is a rallying cry to "Fight Rape" and shows a woman standing resolute, one clenched fist in the air.

Echoes of the region's revolutions have also appeared on Beirut's streets in stencil form, like the blue bra that became a symbol of the Egyptian protests when a female protester was dragged across the ground by a group of riot police brandishing batons, her bra in full view after her top was pulled off. There is now a stencil of a bra above the words "Dod Annizam" (Against the Regime).

"It's an art form and a way of expression. Some people in Beirut shoot each other if they want to blow off some steam. We do it through a peaceful underground art form."

—Omar Kabbani, graffiti artist

Hamed Sinno, the lead singer of Lebanese alternative rock band Mashrou' Leila, has long been contributing art on topics as varied as gay activism and modern Arabic pop music.

"I was in college at AUB and someone spray painted my workplace with 'Hamed is a fag' all over," he says. "It got to me and I found it was quite effective, so I started doing it myself."

His stencils are playful and ironic, though not without a powerful message. There is one of two men kissing with the text "Chou Fiya" (So What?), one of classical Arabic singer Umm Kulthum singing a Haifa track, and one with the hand of Fatima flipping the middle finger.



Ashekman Twins



By Ashekman



By Pha2

Sinno is confident in the ability of graffiti to bring about social change: "First, it makes it common knowledge that there is a voice of dissent, shaking the stable foundations of hegemonic discourse. Secondly, it allows for debate to begin, which in a democratic community is the driving force behind social and political change."

In a society that's littered with politically loaded visual imagery, from flags to portraits of leaders, as different sects mark their territory, graffiti is a way to reclaim public space, or at least add to the diversity of voices.

Associate Professor of graphic design at LAU Dr. Yasmine Taan also points to the growth of public debate within the walls of the city.

"It doesn't have to be graffiti artists coming in with spray-paint. It's just the need of people to express themselves on the walls in a visual manner," she says. "Perhaps an explanation for it could be the taboos that we have witnessed in this rising hypocrisy," says Taan, suggesting that graffiti allows freedom of expression on sensitive topics that rarely get discussed in the public arena.

Kabbani agrees that graffiti offers a space to release grievances with society, though he points out that this desire for expression isn't new, but began "back when cavemen would scribble on cave walls."

"The city is my playground," Kabbani says. "People pay a lot of money for billboards, but I have my own billboard — the walls — 365 days a year, on which to spread my messages."

As graffiti gains acceptance and credibility in Lebanon as an art form in itself, many are beginning to recognize its ability to connect with a wide audience, both through its reach and its popularity with the younger generation. Using the Lebanese dialect rather than classical Arabic, as well as creative typography to create contemporary fonts and messages that are more relevant, graffiti has helped to reconnect younger generations with the Arabic language.

Kabbani, who studied traditional fonts such as *kufi* and *diwani* as part of his graphic design course at LAU, incorporates traditional calligraphy into his work, often combined with a modern hip-hop-style font.

"The younger generation doesn't see the Arabic language as cool," he says. "We've evolved Arabic typography into our designs to make it cool for them, mixing old school with new school. It's connecting them back to their roots."

Taan approves of this updated form of Arabic calligraphy. "I like the fact that it's being used for a popular cause," she says. "Typography shouldn't be stuck in the past or restricted purely to religious verses."



By Pha2



By Ashekman



By Ashekman

Pha2 is a Lebanese graffiti artist who recently represented Lebanon in The Open Summer Jam, a graffiti convention in Toulouse, France. He also experiments with typography in his work, playing with the flowing shapes of the Arabic alphabet in 3-D.

With the rising popularity of graffiti, the lines between art, protest and branding are now beginning to blur. What began as an underground art form is “migrating into a product itself,” Taan says.

Banksy, the poster boy for street art worldwide — whose identity still remains a mystery — has made a career out of his distinctly anti-authoritarian messages.

The England-based graffiti artist's Slave Labour piece was chiseled off a wall in London and sold at a private auction for £750,000, creating a debate about whether embracing commercialism amounts to selling out.

In Lebanon, graffiti has also turned commercial, as companies reap the benefits of an advertising form that connects with a young, trendy audience. Underneath the Nahr Bridge in Beirut, clearly visible from the highway, the 50-meter-long text “Courage is Contagious” could be mistaken for a message of hope in the midst of Lebanon's tumultuous political landscape, but rather it's the creation of award-winning ad agency Interesting Times, and

is an advert for local beer Lebanese Brew. Other companies such as event advertising portal Beirut.com have tagged their logos across the city, using the walls as a vehicle to attract followers.

While Ashekman embark on weekly graffiti sessions to create personal projects, a large part of their work is also dedicated to commercial commissions, along with works for charities and NGOs, from creating a wall of graffiti in Gemmayzeh cafe Urbanista to brandishing one of the triangles of ABC mall's logo with their designs.

“We elevated the scene and now we're getting commercial exposure. It's the part of Ashekman where I have to fill my fridge and pay my bills,” laughs Kabbani. He embraces the commercialism of graffiti as a way to reach a wider audience and spread his messages, along with his art form, further.

“I don't care if it's underground or commercial,” he says. “I don't want to do just a tag for me and my friends. No, graffiti is for everyone.” ■



LAU
School of Architecture and Design

Lifting the Skirt

Beirut Design Week previews fashion design program at LAU

By Paige Kollock

"For our students, the key will be to remember that while passion and perseverance are instrumental in forging a successful fashion design program, fashion is as much about marketing as it is about creativity."

—Dr. Yasmine Taan, coordinator of the B.A. in Fashion Design

For seven days in June, Beirut Design Week illuminated imaginative minds across Lebanon, while LAU showcased its own creative flair by hosting a series of conferences on a rich array of design topics, including food design, design in translation and design for social impact. But it was the workshop and lecture on fashion design that took center stage, offering a glimpse of the university's newly launched Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design in partnership with ELIE SAAB.

The program allows students to pursue a field that is in high demand in Lebanon within a university setting, based on a liberal arts educational framework and supported by specialized facilities. It draws on the expertise of outside institutions, such as the London College of Fashion (LCF). LAU is finalizing a partnership with LCF in which faculty will come to Lebanon to oversee the fledgling program for its initial four years. The agreement will also include summer internships for LAU students in London.

International faculty will be another draw. Design Week welcomed British contemporary artist, fashion academic and new faculty member Jason Steel to campus for a series of design workshops, during which he encouraged budding designers to "be themselves."

"It's important that students understand success really boils down to knowing one's own identity and one's customer market, and how to make those two things come together," said the award-winning designer, who has recently returned from Hanoi, Vietnam, where he served as the director of studies for the London College for Fashion Studies.

He put workshop participants through a series of exercises, including designing a modern garment inspired by an old

photograph, a dress based on the famous sculpture "Nike of Samothrace," and a menswear garment. He also gave students design challenges such as sketching with their non-dominant hand.

Steel was also part of a panel organized by the Graphic Design Department with consultant Sarah Thelwall, who spoke about fashion design as a career path.

Author of a 2011 study on the challenges and opportunities facing young designers in Lebanon, she discussed the importance of improving business processes and honing marketing and communications strategies.

"There's a greater sense of possibility here in Beirut than in Western Europe, but understanding the particularities of this market is the key to your success," she told her audience, which included industry professionals.

Fashion design hopefuls flocking to campus this fall won't be making couture gowns on the first day. First, they will learn the basics by following the one-year program common to all design majors, says Dr. Yasmine Taan, chair of the department of Graphic Design and coordinator of the B.A. in Fashion Design.

In their second year, they will dive into design research and concept development, tailoring, construction, fashion history, research and more. Taan says students will benefit from visiting professors from fashion capitals around the world, the strength of an LAU education, and, of course, the stewardship of Elie Saab, whose vision is to cultivate local talent.

"For our students," adds Taan, "the key will be to remember that while passion and perseverance are instrumental in forging a successful fashion design program, fashion is as much about marketing as it is about creativity."



In a design workshop given by Jason Steel, participants practice draping fabrics and sketching



LAU's Culture of Student Support

University increases financial aid to better assist students

By Dalila Mahdawi

With 35 percent of its student body on some kind of financial aid, LAU's commitment to making higher education accessible to all is one that it takes seriously.

"We are aware that the global economic crisis is making it more difficult for families to afford higher education, and we are determined to continue making student support a university priority," says LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara. To that end, LAU's financial aid budget has been increased from \$15 million last year to \$18.8 million this academic year. "We believe the burden of education should not be placed solely on parents or the students themselves," says Jabbara.

LAU accepts the best students that apply, irrespective of their financial situation, stresses Dr. Elise Salem, vice president for student development and enrollment management. "We are a university doing everything we can to be inclusive and to support qualified students from around Lebanon and the region who desire to come here," she says, noting that some 2,930 out of LAU's 8,138 students received some form of scholarship or other financial assistance from the university during the 2011-2012 academic year.

There are a number of different aid options available to students, says Abdo G. Ghie, assistant vice president for enrollment management. Besides merit or entrance scholarships for high achievers, LAU also provides assistance to those demonstrating financial need and/or commitment to

civic engagement. With support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), LAU runs the Middle East Partnerships Initiative—Tomorrow's Leaders program, providing full bursaries to students from across the region with exceptional leadership potential.

USAID also administers LAU's University Scholarship Program, better known as USP, which grants full scholarships to outstanding but economically disadvantaged students from Lebanese public schools. Special scholarships for specific courses, such as chemistry, education, computer science, nursing and mathematics are available. LAU also runs work-study programs and graduate assistantships which ensure "students become invested in running the university," says Ghie. Students may receive more than one type of scholarship or financial aid to support their studies.

In addition, LAU is one of the only universities in Lebanon offering athletic scholarships. Karen Chammas, a judoka champion who represented Lebanon at the 2012 London Olympic Games, is just one example of the talents LAU has helped nurture with these scholarships.

LAU's pledge to increase financial aid would not be possible without the generosity of alumni, parents and friends, says Salem. "Donors are really the life line of the university. They recognize that investing in scholarships is money well spent."

Nisreen Jaafar, who graduated this year with a political science degree and who was an active member of LAU's Model United Nations program, is one student whose life has been transformed through a scholarship. "The program paid for 60 percent of my tuition, which my family could not have met on its own," she says. "I know that alumni and friends of the university from all over the world make gifts to support students like me, and I'm grateful for the support I've received. I wish I could thank each person who has helped me study here."

To learn more about financial aid at LAU, or to apply, visit <http://aid.lau.edu.lb/>

To better support deserving students, LAU's financial aid budget has been increased from \$15 million to \$18.8 million.



Approximately, some 2,930 out of LAU's 8,138 students received some form of scholarship or other financial assistance from the university during the 2011-2012 academic year



Leading Geneticist Takes on Research Gap in Middle East

Dr. Pierre Zalloua appointed dean of graduate studies and research

LAU has appointed Dr. Pierre Zalloua dean of Graduate Studies and Research. Zalloua, who took up the role on October 1, was dean of the School of Pharmacy prior to assuming his new post. He is also professor of genetics and assistant dean for research at the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine. One of the region's most accomplished geneticists, Zalloua is the recipient of over four million dollars in competitive research funding. He was recently made a Lown Scholar at Harvard University, where he is also adjunct professor, to continue his research on coronary artery disease. LAU Magazine caught up with Zalloua to see what his plans in this new academic position include.



Dean of Research and Graduate Studies is a post that has been dormant for a number of years. Why did LAU re-establish it?

The LAU Strategic Plan 2011-2016 called for a reinvigorated position to propel our graduate studies to the next level of excellence. We want to be innovative in our outlook and make a significant impact through offering creative and interdisciplinary courses. LAU also strives to offer programs that address gaps in the market, so we undertook market research to get a better idea of what the region is in need of. Additionally, in order to have effective graduate studies, you need research infrastructure. Our goal is to have a hub for research at LAU, and the dean position will help create that.

So is LAU moving towards becoming a research-based university?

We are not a research institution but a teaching institution with major research aspirations. We pride ourselves on the student-centered way we teach and wish to maintain that. Ultimately we want research to become a trademark of LAU.

What will your position entail?

My job will be twofold. I will work to harmonize existing graduate programs and create new ones tailored to the needs of the region and to our community. We don't aim to have a large number of graduate courses but a select number of

well-developed and specialized programs of immediate benefit to the community. We will work with stakeholders across LAU to coordinate and develop innovative offerings that are multidisciplinary in nature and that build on our existing expertise.

The other aspect of the role will be to develop the necessary infrastructure to streamline research with clear objectives, phases and benchmarks.

The UN has found the Arab world produces the least amount of research in the world. How challenging is it to conduct research in the Arab world, and how can LAU help redress the shortcoming in regional research?

Most universities in the Arab world are primarily teaching universities and lack the financial support to conduct research. In many Western countries a substantial amount of the national GDP goes to research, whereas here it's trivial. That absence shows. For example, the whole Arab world combined produces dramatically fewer patents than Pakistan every year. With this dean's position, LAU is trying to shift the culture. The dean's office will assist researchers in finding funding bodies, help them apply to competitive funds and support them in writing competitive proposals. We believe that offering serious graduate programs will lead to the development of the kind of quality research we are striving for.

Op-Ed

Religion and Politics in Student Spheres

What role should Lebanon's universities play?

By Dr. Tamirace Fakhoury



A student at Boston University holds a sign during a protest demanding the university divest from companies doing business in South Africa. April 29, 1978
Image courtesy of Mark Lurie

Dr. Tamirace Fakhoury is an assistant professor in Political Sciences and International Relations in the Social Sciences Department at LAU Byblos. For the past two summers, she was appointed a visiting lecturer at University of California, Berkeley. Fakhoury is a Global Policy Migration Associate at GMPA, Geneva.

In an era abounding with discussions on secularism and post-secular spaces, Lebanon still struggles to define the basic link between religion and politics on the individual, community and national levels. The conflation of sectarian identities with the Lebanese political system has given rise to heated scholarly and policy discussions on the extent to which instrumentalizing politics in religion hinders or facilitates democratization on the one hand, and inter-communal coexistence in Lebanon on the other.

Deep divisions over the role of religion in politics permeate not only public spheres but also educational spaces. Vociferous debates have thus infiltrated both pedagogic and student spheres at schools and universities.

Debates in private and public educational institutions have gained ground in the post-war period (1990 onward). They include discussion about what role religious education should play and what a religious-education curriculum would entail.

One school of thought defends the view that educational institutions are arenas where inter-communal coexistence could be taught, and thus religious education should be integrated into the curricula. Others express fierce criticism with regard to entrenching religious values in educational institutions, claiming that since religious institutions exist, why replicate their mission in educational structures? A third, accommodationist trend calls for harmonizing between religious and civic education. Instead of teaching religion per se, general values common to all religions would be taught. The aim would be for inter-communal coexistence and citizenship to go hand-in-hand, giving rise to "intercultural citizenship."

While the debate at the school level concentrates on the role of religion

in the curriculum, the relationship between religion and politics takes a more complicated form at the university level. The uneasy relationship between sectarianism and student politics at universities since the end of the civil war has drastically shaped the ways boundaries between the political and the apolitical are drawn.

One line of thought calls for disentangling politics from student activities to ensure that the explosive potential of sectarianism does not exacerbate conflicts at the university level. Another line of thought rejects the notion of the apolitical at the university level entirely. After all, since the 19th century, universities worldwide have acted as sites of social and political transformation. Student movements, for example, were vocal in denouncing apartheid in South Africa and American military engagement in Vietnam.

Indeed, research is being conducted on ways to harmonize student public spheres and politics so that students can become agents in "democratization from below."

Against this backdrop, it is worth noting the paucity of research dedicated to student activism in Lebanon, and whether campuses could be capitalized on as sites of societal change. Predominant views recommend depoliticizing student spheres so as to make sure that religion does not acquire a politicized potential.

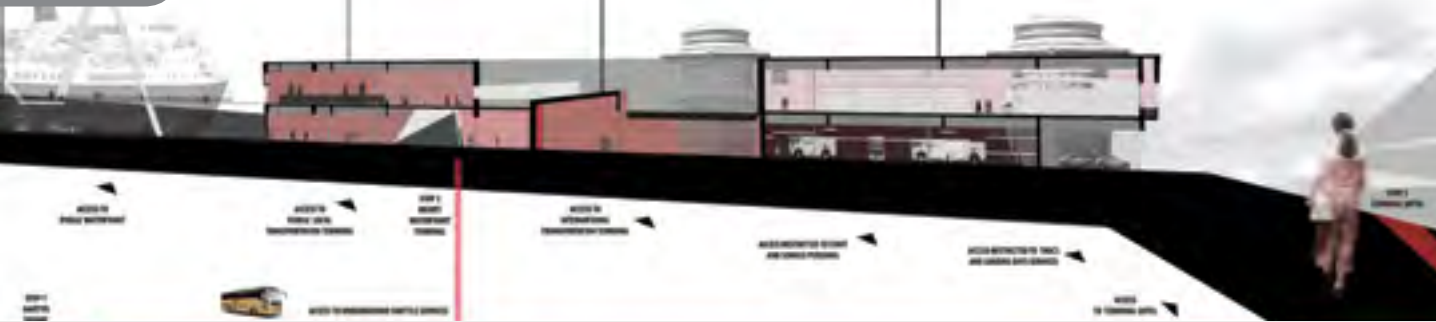
The challenging question here is how to foster links within Lebanon's mixed campuses so that the political is not forced to disguise itself as apolitical, and can instead become a constructive source of societal transformation.

Academia can capitalize on university spaces in Lebanon as laboratories for multi-confessional coexistence, and in doing so, perhaps contribute to the obliteration of political sectarianism in society at large.

ANAHID SIMITIAN



NOUR ZOGBHY



LAU
School of Architecture and Design

Social Designs SArD end-of-year architecture exhibition

By Mehrnoush Shafiei

An astute student of architecture readily recognizes that the cleverest architects are, of course, social observers who take their cues from humanity.

"Being responsive to the needs of society is an important value we cultivate in our students," says Dr. Maroun Daccache, chair of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design.

This is a value that was underscored as students from Design Studio levels III, V and VII produced their end-of-year exhibitions, which were displayed on the Byblos and Beirut campuses in July.

In an effort to involve the community in the process, LAU invited officials from local municipalities to be part of the evaluations of the final-year projects for Design V students.

Though students must work within the confines of practical considerations, Daccache is quick to point out that designing for "reality" need not be

"boring." Indeed, there has perhaps never been a more exciting time to design for reality than the present, with the backdrop of the Arab Spring creating tectonic shifts in the Middle East.

"The recent dramatic developments in the Arab world demand new thinking about public structure, about the role of architecture," explains Daccache. "Students need to be aware of the contemporary issues that society is grappling with, to think in the present tense and to take that into account in their design."

Indeed, with history revving up its engine and ushering in unpredictable new realities, the ground is fertile for LAU students to channel their creative energies into their final-year projects.

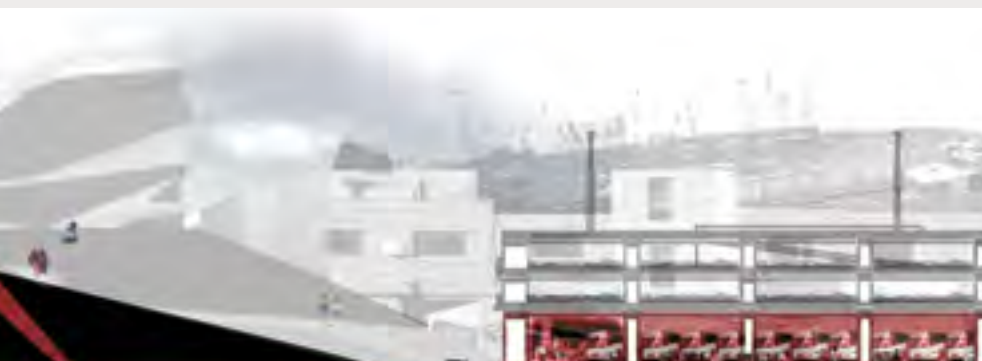
It's an all-out approach that LAU architecture student **Nour Zoghby** wholeheartedly embraced when she designed the Beirut Waterfront Terminal for Daccache's class.



WAEEL SINNO



WAEEL SINNO



NOUR ZOGBHY

"In the present state, the Beirut Central District, the old harbor of Beirut and the new developments on the waterfronts are not integrated into the city structure," says Zoghby. "The challenge is to find ways to reconnect and expand the city fabric between these points." To remedy this problem, Zoghby proposed to create a transportation hub stationed at the waterfront terminal and linked to the Charles Helou bus station. The hub is composed of three main components: a coastal boat taxi (connecting the Lebanese coast from north to south), an international cruise ship terminal, and a restaurant and commercial area.

Similarly, fifth-year LAU architecture student **Anahid Simitian** began her final-year project with a thorough study of the history and morphology of the Chiyyah district of Beirut. "Chiyyah's history has always been interconnected with the regional socio-economic and political situations of neighboring countries," explains Simitian, "making it a space of continual contestation."

To understand this tug-of-war, Simitian would frequent the neighborhood and keep an "urban diary" to chronicle and help come to terms with the tensions between various ethnic and religious groups.

The area has long housed tensions between the Maronites and Shiites, but Simitian's historical research showed that the two communities lived in harmony during a boom in silk production that made them economically interdependent. Inspired to recreate this scenario on a micro scale, Simitian designed a building located near the heart of the district where an NGO would be housed. The organization would provide opportunities for employment, job training and an area in which to display artisan products. To make the enterprise economically feasible, her plan calls for a theater and event hall that would be available to rent out for private functions. The building would also include offices, workshops, a daycare center and a gallery.

LAU architecture student **Wael Sinno** began his project by doing research on the old district of Saida. Sinno says he was

drawn to the location because the closely spaced buildings "create a strong degree of enclosure and a poetic aura." Inspired by the romanticism of the area, he proposed to create a footpath from the surrounding areas to the old district.

The path would ultimately lead to the focal point — a community center that would house a public theatre. "The functions proposed will attract people to the project and draw residents of the authentic section of Saida to explore beyond the physical boundaries set in the past."

"The recent dramatic developments in the Arab world demand new thinking about public structure, about the role of architecture"

—Dr. Maroun Daccache, chair of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design



An outing to Jeita Grotto

Making it Their Own

Migrant workers claim corner of cultural life in the city

By Paige Kollock

It's Sunday afternoon in Beirut and a group of mostly women are gathered on the seventh floor of the Near East School of Theology in Hamra rehearsing for a film about the plight of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon. The scenes come easily to them, as most are, or have been, domestic workers themselves.

"We're acting out the scene where the agency receives the workers fresh off the plane," says Rahal Zegeye, Ethiopian community leader and director of the film, which is being adapted from one of the two plays she wrote.

Since her escape from a psychologically abusive employer seven years ago, she's produced a play, "Shouting Without a Listener" that was presented at the American University of Beirut and at the Near East School of Theology. "I worked with many students from both LAU and AUB," she says as her phone rings. Her role means she is constantly getting calls from other Ethiopians in jeopardy.

While Zegeye's case is unique — her 13 years in Lebanon having provided her with the contacts and courage to speak out — stories like hers are increasingly coming to the fore.

Short of adequate human rights protections, and repeatedly facing discrimination and abuse by their employers, some foreign laborers are slowly but surely making the city their own with the establishment of gathering spots, religious groups, community leaders and ethnic stores, including African hair braiding salons run by the migrants themselves.

Social events for the migrant community — such as concerts, lectures and cultural celebration days — are becoming a regular occurrence and attract big names such as Ethiopian pop star Teddy Afro, who has twice performed in Lebanon to packed venues.

Estimates put the total number of foreign workers in Lebanon at 500,000 to a million, mostly concentrated in Beirut. The largest migrant worker groups hail from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Ethiopia and Sudan, with Syrian workers naturally making up an ever-growing number of foreign workers.

"After the civil war, the number of migrant workers increased significantly because there was a construction boom that required a lot of laborers," says Dr. Makram Ouais, assistant professor of political science and international affairs and chair of the Department of Social Sciences. "As the economic situation improved, and as more women took on full time positions, there was a need to have additional support at home."

Before the war, domestic work was most often performed by lower-class Lebanese or Syrian girls, says Assaf Dahdah, a doctoral candidate at Aix-Marseille University in France.

"The use of local labor gradually diminished, and in the 1990s, the Lebanese stopped employing Lebanese or Syrian workers altogether and started importing foreigners," he says. >

Children play outside the Migrant Community Center (MCC) in Nabaa



Some of the trend was due to the fact that local laborers no longer wanted those jobs. Workers used to be predominantly from rural parts of the country, and as the economies of those areas improved and more women started going to school, the worker stock dried up. Moreover, the civil war prompted Lebanese to seek “non political” workers in their houses, instead of rural Lebanese, Syrians or Palestinians.

Policies of foreign governments also contributed to a surge, Dahdah adds. Indeed, a 1982 executive order (#797) of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration states, “The Administration shall formulate and undertake ... a systematic program of promoting and monitoring the overseas employment of Filipino workers ...”

As the large-scale presence of migrant workers in Lebanon is still relatively new, NGOs and church groups are still forming the backbone of their cultural and social life along with newly born community spaces managed almost entirely by the migrants themselves — a sense of ownership NGOs are trying to cultivate.

Housed in a bright blue building in Nabaa, a neighborhood traditionally welcoming to migrants of all backgrounds, the Migrant Community Center (MCC) purposely stands out, and Ethiopian manager Lydia greets visitors known and unknown with a smile.

Short of adequate human rights protections, and repeatedly facing discrimination and abuse by their employers, some foreign laborers are slowly but surely making the city their own with the establishment of gathering spots, religious groups, community leaders and ethnic stores.

“They come to use the Internet, to talk with their families, to watch TV, relax and socialize,” she says over bites of pasta. “We have many NGOs here, but this place is different — many faces, ideas, languages, different stories, all coming together in one place.”

Funded by the Anti-Racism Movement, MCC opened its doors in 2011 and offers a place where migrant workers can learn valuable language skills — English, French and Arabic classes are given weekly — but more importantly, air their grievances over a cup of coffee, creating a shared community with common



On Sundays, many migrant workers flock to Bourj Hammoud for their day off. Photo by Richard Bshara.

issues. Christmas celebrations, New Years parties, painting and cooking classes offer something for all, and a stack of information pamphlets sits at the entrance, available for those who may need help but don't know where to turn.

“Some migrants go only to attend the Sunday classes. Others come because they feel safe and comfortable there, and they want to just sit and have a good time. It's a place that really builds up their independence,” says May Habib, researcher at the Institute for Migration Studies at LAU and Migrant Worker Task Force (MWTF) volunteer.

Most aid organizations that deal with migrant workers in Lebanon — Kafa, Caritas and the International Labor Organization — are primarily rights-oriented, but MWTF strives, in their words, “to provide a space for Lebanon's migrant worker communities to develop professionally.”

MWTF Coordinator and LAU student Rami Shukr says he believes migrant workers are gradually becoming empowered. “They needed some kind of a push to earn a space for themselves, or to have a reason to get together, but after that push is given, they can do wonders,” Shukr says. That push can range from marketing their cooking skills through catering services and cooking classes to celebratory events such as cultural days, where migrant workers prepare national dishes and play indigenous music.



Filipino migrant domestic workers enjoying some of their native dishes at a birthday party



A day at the beach



Migrant workers attend weekend language classes at AltCity in Hamra. Classes are given in English and French and are run by the Migrant Workers Task Force (MWTF). Courtesy MWTF.

"Lebanese came and enjoyed the dishes and socialized with them and danced. We're trying to kind of bring the two cultures to get to know each other more. Because if you know the other person, it breaks the wall of ignorance," he says.

On a recent Sunday afternoon at AltCity in Hamra, migrant workers huddled around tables, notepads in hand, repeating and scribbling down English phrases.

Volunteer teacher Logan Littlefield held up a piece of paper that read "normal," asking them to find a synonym from the text they were reading.

"We want to learn how to read, to speak correctly, and English is more international than Arabic," agreed the three female pupils in Littlefield's class, all Ethiopian.

"They're actually sad if we don't give the classes, and sometimes they offer us to pay, and we tell them no, that it's a volunteer thing," says Shukr, highlighting the fact that these classes provide migrants with a space where hierarchical relationships are wiped out.

"We're always getting new students, about ten a week, and right now we're overloaded, we can't take any more," says English class coordinator Serene Iweir.

Ethnic shops are yet another forum for gathering and socializing, and many now offer food service. Ethnic restaurants like New Kabayan in Bourj Hammoud, a Filipino joint, serves up Adobo and karaoke.

Church remains the primary organizing factor for Christian migrants. At the Church of God in Bourj Hammoud, Pastor Said Deeb preaches to a congregation of Sri Lankans, Filipinos and other nationalities, but his role goes way beyond that of God's messenger.

"I'm one of the few who has a social element to my church. Human rights organizations call me and I form a bridge between them and the migrant worker society in Lebanon, so I help them socially and spiritually," he says.

Indeed, some 12 ethnic churches are under his purview.

"The Sri Lankan church in Dora didn't have a penny when it started," he says. "I bought them chairs, and I rented the church in my name and they took over."

At the Life Center where Deeb preaches, he offers space for the fledgling congregations to pray and invites community leaders to meet with him on a monthly basis. On the social front, his church organizes the annual Kingdom Fiesta, bringing together

worshippers from 13 nations for a three-day cultural celebration that draws a cross-section of Lebanese society, including ambassadors.

Every Sunday at the Saint Francis Church in Hamra, "There's a very mixed service with Europeans, Africans and Filipinos, who all sit together," says Dahdah.

Afterwards, they play volleyball in the churchyard. Church-funded Voice of Charity radio station airs talk shows aimed at migrant communities in Lebanon, broadcasting in Tagalog, Ewe and Amharic, among others.

A fortified publicity campaign in Lebanon has helped empower and build the confidence of some migrant workers.

"Over the past five to ten years, there have been a number of groups that have galvanized rights issues in Lebanon with regard to migrant workers," says Ouais. "There were some rumblings before that, but now awareness is much higher."

The advent of services such as toll free numbers for abuse victims, translation services, shelters, psychological and legal assistance, and day care centers for migrant workers' children have provided a needed framework for securing rights, however elementary.

"I feel that we're on the right path. We're not there yet, but we're moving in the right direction," says Ouais. "There are a lot of good things happening socially for migrant workers, particularly because many Lebanese have been migrant workers themselves," he adds, referring to the 15 to 20 million-strong Lebanese diaspora.

Minority groups inevitably form in every country. A shared language, culture and cuisine helps them overcome homesickness and adversity.

Still, says Mohammed Ismael, a Bangladeshi who manages a shop in Dora featuring Bangladeshi products, for most, a semblance of a social life in Lebanon is still not possible. The majority of his compatriots scrape by on \$250 a month. Given that, "There really isn't much room for joy," he says. "The only way for them to have fun is to go back." ■

Taught to Make a Difference

LAU's B.A. in Social Work: knowledge, skills, values and care

By Linda Dahdah

In times of globalized socio-economic upheaval, social workers everywhere are being called to the front lines to alleviate the consequences of what seems to be a lingering and deepening crisis.

"In such critical times, there is an acute need for professionals who can help societies overcome hardships, mitigate their suffering and protect the community while pushing for positive change," says Dr. Hassan Hammoud, associate professor of Sociology and Social Welfare at LAU.

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment of people to enhance well-being. Using theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments.

While social care is widespread in Lebanon, like in other developing countries, it is often delivered by volunteers, a situation that concerns experts.

A 2011 article about child protection published in The Guardian newspaper stressed the importance of expertise in the field of social work. It argued that relying on volunteers has inherent problems. It subjects them to risks, both physical and emotional, but it also may place the vulnerable populations that volunteers are working with "at greater risk of harm, however good their intentions, merely by their inexperience and lack of accountability."

"Just like any other profession, social work is a discipline to be taught," says Hammoud. "A social worker learns how to take the different paradigms of the often complex context they are in into consideration, analyze them, and decide on the best structure or method to follow in the specific situation."

The B.A. in Social Work program at LAU teaches students to assess their clients' needs and determine what programs or advice will help them live full, happy lives.

The curriculum entails a mix of social welfare, sociology, psychology and liberal arts courses. Field opportunities are also provided thanks to a unique network of more than 100 institutions and NGOs LAU works with.

Unlike other universities that offer curricula primarily focused on social work in the medical field, LAU's program takes a more holistic approach, thus widening its graduates' career prospects. It also focuses on inter-professional education, allowing its students to interact with professionals from different disciplines.

"Theoretical skills aside, social work studies at LAU offers tangible extra-curricular activities that teach students to adapt to any context," says Carol Khater, junior project officer at LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, who graduated from LAU in 2005 with a degree in social studies.

"Throughout their studies, our students learn about themselves and discover that aspects of their personalities are changing in terms of attitude, preconceptions and biases as we prepare them to work with people of different ages and backgrounds in a variety of situations," says Hammoud.

"This is the uniqueness of our program — it is not only about acquiring knowledge and getting a degree, it is about educating a whole person to help them make real change."

LAU students gather with a woman after renovating her house



In times of globalized socio-economic upheaval, social workers everywhere are being called to the front lines to alleviate the consequences of what seems to be a lingering and deepening crisis.



Anna Maria Antonios ('13) will pursue a master's degree in social work and project management.

"As a social work student at LAU, one gets wide professional exposure. My studies have allowed me to participate in four inter-professional education sessions, and land internships in two respected organizations. At the Chronic Care Center, I worked with children suffering from thalassemia and diabetes, providing family counseling and support and fostering the children's personal development and social integration through both recreational and educational activities.

My second practicum was at World Vision, where I worked on a research project that focused on gender discrimination in Lebanon, which eventually translated into the drafting of a national study plan.

While the first experience allowed me to put what I learned about family and child welfare and psychology into practice, the second honed my research skills and analytical ability. But it is mainly on the personal level that I have grown, as I discovered how integral I was to the children's wellbeing, or how the advancement of the research would impact women's lives.

The Lebanese society is in dire need of social workers, and I am convinced that if we grow as a community, we will change the world for the better."

Nadine Abdul Sater ('13) works with War Child Holland, providing psychosocial assistance to Syrian children and their families in Lebanon waiting for UNHCR registration.

"There are two things you cannot learn in a classroom but that are reinforced through being a social work student at LAU: passion and dedication.

I remember back when I was president of the Social Work Club, we decided to put together a Donate and Renovate event. We organized a fundraising event on campus selling cupcakes and asking people to donate clothes, toys and canned food. The items were distributed to three orphanages around Lebanon and the money was used to renovate a poor elderly woman's house in Chiyah. We raised L.L. 1,258,000, which was used to buy furniture, decoration items and cleaning agents. It was a very long day, but the fatigue was all forgotten when the owner returned home and saw her modest house transformed.

LAU teaches us to work with people from different backgrounds, to understand their respective cultures without judgment, to acutely assess their needs with professionalism, and most importantly, to encourage them to empower themselves. My dream today is to start my own socio-medical NGO centered on children and the elderly."



Abdul Sater and fellow students renovate an elderly woman's house

Carol Khater ('05) started working at LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) as a student assistant in 2001.

"As a program officer, I am involved in several academic and development projects implemented by IWSAW. However, there is one initiative I particularly cherish, which is working on improving the prospects of women in Lebanese prisons. As inmates, these women have lost their status within the community, and we strive to restore their rights and self-confidence by equipping them with legal, social, economic and psychological assistance.

In this context, my social work background has been instrumental. It has helped develop my self-awareness, communication and social skills as well as my interpersonal, organizational and coordination skills. These are critical to my profession and to working on the development projects run by IWSAW, namely the income-generating program, the literacy program, and the basic living skills program in Lebanese prisons. My job as a social worker entails empowering women inmates and arming them with the tools needed to reconnect with their families and reintegrate themselves into the community.

It is incredibly life-affirming to see how far the women we work with have come, and to see the difference that my involvement has led to. The work I do is not easy, but it is very rewarding as you witness a real change in the lives of people."



Khater hands over personal hygiene products to female inmates



Theatre Festival Woos and Wows

LAU hosts 15th International University Theatre Festival

By Muriel Kahwagi

More than 130 young thespians from Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon converged at LAU Beirut to take part in the 15th International University Theatre Festival. The festival's opening night featured a memorable performance by Lebanese musician and composer Ziad Rahbani, accompanied by his musical troupe.

Organized by the Communication Arts Department, the annual five-day festival aims to provide a dramaturgic platform for communication arts and performing arts students to share their thoughts on theater production in a creative and academic setting.

This year's festival took place from June 19 to 23 and featured a total of 12 student theater productions, acted and directed entirely by university students. LAU students were also responsible for technical tasks crucial to the staging of the productions, including set construction and management, lighting, and sound checking.

"This festival wouldn't be what it is without all the hard work and dedication our students put into it," says Dr. Mona Knio, associate professor of theater and chairperson of the Communication Arts Department. "We owe its success to their devotion and determination."

This year's theatrical performances ranged from expressionism and absurdity to modernism and naturalism, and included a highly applauded outdoor reprise of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

"The actors used buildings, stairs, walkways, trees and benches for the setting," says LAU student Maya Anbar Aghasi. "The campus itself was the stage, and passers-by were inadvertently transformed into spectators, and became part of the performance."

Firas BouZeineddine, director of the festival's inaugural production *Mr. President*, says the audience's response to the play was unexpectedly heartening. "We got a completely different reaction this time than we did the first time we staged it, back in January," he explains. "We only had two weeks to prepare, so it was quite stressful, but the audience's feedback was very redeeming."

Though language was an occasional barrier for non-Arabic speakers, LAU Theater Coordinator Hala Masri says it was a beautifully surmounted hurdle. "The good thing about theater is that — much like music — it transcends language. It's about body language and facial expressions and voice tonality,"

she noted. "And most of all, it's about the chemistry between the actors on stage and the audience, which was palpable throughout the majority of the performances."

At the festival's opening ceremony, Interim Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences Dr. Nashat Mansour said, "Art and theater humanize us and band us together. We must never undermine their healing power, especially during the stringent times our region is going through."

This year's participants came from various universities, including the Higher Institute for the Performing Arts in Tunisia, Egypt's Academy of Arts Higher Institute for the Performing Arts and Al Mansoura University, Yeditepe University of Turkey, and Beirut Arab University and LAU in Lebanon.

"The good thing about theater is that — much like music — it transcends language."

—Hala Masri, LAU theater coordinator





The Little Prince, Revisited

Abyad production pays homage to The Little Prince

By Muriel Kahwagi



*Sweet as barazek and
winsome as the sunset,
Sikah Barazek is a lyrical
homage to Antoine de Saint-
Exupéry's The Little Prince,
transporting the audience
on a whimsical journey
of learning and discovery
alongside talking trees and
waggish animals.*

Beirutis may have been trying to claim baklava as their own for years, but barazek remains a Damascene delicacy *par excellence*. Honey-dipped and sun-kissed, barazek's cookie dough is pounded and kneaded into an amorphous, caramel-colored, clay-like mass before being molded into moon-shaped biscuits, and baked into golden brownness for 20 minutes.

Bravehearted households, however, might feel inclined to follow less conventional cooking instructions. The family that Gamal — the protagonist of *Sikah Barazek*, LAU's major spring production — grew up with is one of these households.

"You have to play Maqam Sikah on the oud for six minutes while the barazek are cooking in the oven," Gamal's grandmother says to him, "otherwise, they will just be regular barazek."

Directed by Assistant Professor of Communication Arts Dr. Lina Abyad, *Sikah Barazek* is a theatrical adaptation of *L'Origine(s) du Monde*, a novella written by Lebanese architect and author Raafat Majzoub. An allusion to French realist painter Gustave Courbet's 1866 work of the same name, the novella follows young Gamal's journey of self discovery through a series of escapades and misadventures, in which, much like Dorothy's ruby slippers in *The Wizard of Oz*, barazek are all it takes to bring him back home.

Sweet as barazek and winsome as the sunset, *Sikah Barazek* is a lyrical homage to Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, transporting the audience on a whimsical journey of learning and discovery alongside talking trees and waggish animals.

"It's a children's play, but it's a children's play for adults," says Abyad. "Everyone can watch it because everyone can relate to it. It's about friendship, life, death, family. But more importantly, it's about disseminating the idea that all human beings are connected, that we are all responsible for each other's wellbeing and that of the world we live in."

Indeed, *Sikah Barazek's* ethos is evidenced by its repeated line: "We are all made of the same cookie dough."

When, halfway through the play, Gamal's grandmother asks him to bite her arm, the young boy promptly refuses. After a great deal of playful insistence, he reluctantly obliges, only to realize that his grandmother's pain has been inflicted on him as a result.

"We are all made of the same cookie dough," she says. "When you hurt someone or something, you are only hurting yourself. And when the people or things you hurt start to feel better, so will you."

"Empathy is not an inborn quality; it's a quality we learn," explains Abyad. "It's one of the most important qualities our children should have, and we can never teach it to them too soon."

Architect Peter Matar found *Sikah Barazek's* spiritedness and unworldly wisdom both enchanting and candid. "Watching the play, I couldn't help but think of *The Little Prince*, one of my favorite books," he said. "It's very rare for a play to capture innocence and curiosity as effortlessly as Saint Exupéry does."



Against the Odds

Zakhem Family who donated land for Byblos campus honored

By Matt Nash



"This achievement proves beyond any doubt what those who dream can do, and we dreamt and we did."

—George Zakhem

Without the generosity of donors, LAU's Byblos campus simply would not exist today. And while a great many people contributed to making the campus possible, the generosity of one family in particular stands out.

LAU recently honored the family of Salim T. Zakhem for donating the land upon which the Byblos campus was founded. At a ceremony attended by ambassadors, politicians, dignitaries and LAU alumni on May 11, President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara presented Salim's son George with a shield of recognition.

Salim and Hanneh Zakhem, whom Jabbara described at the ceremony as "obsessed with education," passed their commitment to serving others on to their children. "Those values are reflected in a magnificent way in the relationship between the Zakhem family and LAU," Jabbara said.

A successful engineer and businessman, George Zakhem has a storied history with the university. In the early 1980s, while the Beirut University College (or BUC, as LAU was previously known) fought to remain open despite the violence that was engulfing much of Lebanon, Zakhem had a vision. After becoming chair of BUC's Board of Trustees in 1984, he posited that having only one campus in war-torn Beirut hindered efforts to reach all of the country's young scholars.

The early years of Zakhem's tenure were decisive for LAU, coming at a time when BUC was struggling against a tide of financial difficulties, war and a lack of strategic vision for the institution's future. He played a critical role in overseeing the college's transformation into a university. His family's donation of 100,000 square meters of land in Blat, near Byblos, was instrumental in enabling LAU to reach out to students beyond Lebanon's capital city.

It was, as Jabbara described it, "The will of a family and a university that made a difference in the lives of so many young men and women." That difference is indeed considerable: Today almost 3,000 of LAU's 8,273 students are based at the Byblos campus, which itself has grown to encompass over 160,000 square meters.

The architect of LAU's expansion, Zakhem fondly recalled the challenges the board faced in convincing the Lebanese government, the university's Board of Regents in New York, and even its own members, to embrace the idea of



having two campuses. "People said, 'It's a wonderful dream, but one that could never be realized.'"

Such pessimism was understandable: In the mid-1980s, when Zakhem was beginning his campaign for expansion, the college had a budget deficit of \$300,000, four of its professors were being held hostage by armed groups, and two board members were stringently opposed to his proposal. But approval eventually came. "In 1988," Jabbara said, "Construction on the Byblos campus began, and the rest is history."

Tears came to Zakhem's eyes as he recalled the efforts the board undertook to finance LAU's growth. "With strong will, we have turned this idea into one of the most beautiful universities in Lebanon," he beamed.

Reflecting on the enduring relationship between his family and LAU, Zakhem said of the Byblos campus: "This achievement proves beyond any doubt what those who dream can do, and we dreamt and we did."

1| LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara presenting George Zakhem with a shield of recognition

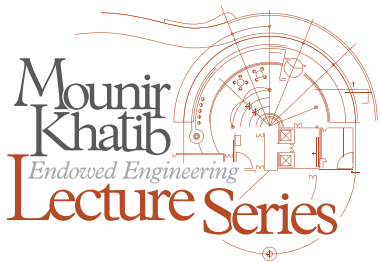
2| The Zakhem family donated 100,000 square meters of land



Leaving a Mark

Engineering panel brings unique topics to LAU

By Matt Nash



This summer, LAU hosted its inaugural Mounir Khatib Endowed Engineering Lecture Series in honor of a man who left his mark on both the university and the global world of engineering.

"It is a terrific event for us," LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara told a crowd of dignitaries, LAU officials, faculty, students and guests on June 7. "We are gathered to honor the memory of a person who contributed immensely to the learning process through being a professor, and who left his mark on society by building a major company that is serving not only Lebanon, not only the MENA region, but beyond as well."

Jabbara was referring to the world-renowned engineering firm Khatib & Alami, founded by Mounir Khatib in Beirut in 1959. A tireless worker with a passion for education and science, the family man was loved and respected by his peers.

Dr. George Nasr, dean of LAU's School of Engineering, praised Khatib for "leaving an everlasting mark on the engineering profession throughout the globe." He added that the School of Engineering was an "integral part of a dynamic university that is driving the search for truth and scientific knowledge."

Born in 1927, Khatib was the son of a railroad employee determined to give his children a better education and better opportunities than he had.

Enamored with the emerging airline industry as a young man, he wanted to be an aeronautical engineer, but his family pushed him toward civil engineering. Upon finishing his studies at the University of Michigan in the 1950s, Khatib returned to Lebanon to establish his own engineering

firm and begin a 17-year teaching career at the American University of Beirut's Faculty of Engineering and Architecture.

Khatib, a member of the LAU Board of International Advisors, always said his work as a professor was the most rewarding and fulfilling experience of his life.

After his death in 2010, Khatib's family made a sizable donation to the School of Engineering. The endowment is being used to support promising but financially disadvantaged students, and to establish a series of public lectures and seminars on topics not typically covered in regular courses.

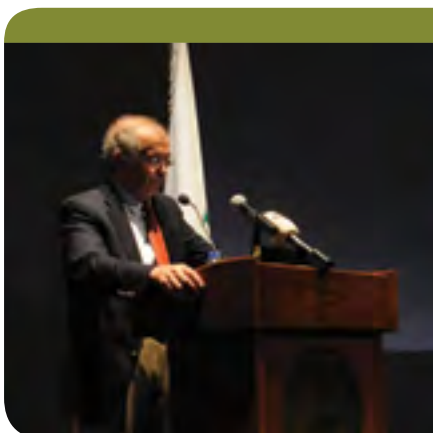
Dr. Jean Chatila, chair of the Civil Engineering Department and master of ceremonies at the lecture, described Khatib as a "humble, genuine and renowned achiever" who believed "in the education of the person as a whole and in the mission of LAU."

Those are attributes closely shared by the inaugural guest speaker of the lecture series, Dr. Charles Elachi, director of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. A former chairman of LAU's Board of Trustees. He detailed some of NASA's most recent discoveries on Mars, thanks to rover Curiosity, which landed on the red planet in August 2012.

He stressed the importance of scientific thought and discovery, noting that in his office at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, one can observe data being transmitted from 25 different spacecraft moving through various parts of our solar system.

"It's humbling to see what humanity has accomplished," he said. "If our ancestors were not explorers, we'd still be living in caves."

NASA Jet Propulsion Lab Director Dr. Charles Elachi presents the latest findings on Mars





Lessons Learned and Taught

LAU students study pharmaceutical success in Texas

By Brooke Grasberger

"[Students] return feeling like they're going to change the world... The energy they come back with can light up a room."

—Dr. Aline Saad, chair of the Department of Pharmaceutical Practice

Upon their return from rotations at the Methodist Hospital in Dallas, Texas, LAU pharmacy students appear to have undergone a metamorphosis.

"They return feeling like they're going to change the world," says Dr. Aline Saad, clinical assistant professor and chair of the Department of Pharmaceutical Practice, as she reflects on the effects of the affiliation between LAU and the American hospital. "The energy they come back with can light up a room."

For the past two years, fourth-year pharmacy students have engaged in required U.S. rotations at the Methodist Hospital, an institution renowned internationally for its focus on holistic patient care and its extensive facilities, including 515 beds, all-private rooms and a staff of more than 250 physicians.

Mike Liebl, clinical manager of the hospital's Department of Pharmacy, is the facilitator for LAU students, whom he gets to know well during their time in the States. "They are extremely intelligent," he says, "and all dedicated to both their profession and to professionalism."

At the Methodist Hospital, these qualities are necessary, as students undergo rigorous training while being held to the twin high standards of the hospital and LAU. Recent graduate Patrick Tannous participated in the fall 2012 rotation, during which he cycled through inpatient and outpatient care, studied the structure and functions of the hospital, and had the opportunity to work in a community pharmacy.

"We learned how to integrate into a medical team, how a drug is moved through the hospital to the patient, how to decide whether or not to include a drug in the hospital's roster, and much more about the mechanisms of the pharmaceutical practice," he says.

Fellow classmate Zeina Shaer was especially impressed by the hospital staff's devotion to patients. "I admired the institution's organization, atmosphere of respect, and the level of commitment we found there," she says.

Liebl points out that the learning process is not a one-way street.

"When we first started the program, we underestimated the extent of personal growth that would result from this cultural exchange."

Tannous recalls exchanges as lighthearted as showing the American pharmacists how to dance dabke, and as serious as demonstrating the importance of Lebanon's multilingualism by translating for patients who spoke Arabic, Armenian and French.

At the Methodist Hospital, LAU students learn some of the top pharmaceutical practices in the world, which they are bringing back to Lebanon to improve their country's health and patient care.

Their new expertise manifests in other areas, too, as Dean of the School of Pharmacy Dr. Pierre Zalloua proudly mentions. "Our students recently placed third in the U.S.'s most prestigious clinical skills competition," he says, referring to the 2012 American Society of Health-System Pharmacists' Clinical Skills Competition, "a clear measure of the effect this training has had on our students."

The development of the affiliation between LAU and the Methodist Hospital is, however, far from over. According to Zalloua, a faculty exchange with the hospital is currently in the works. "We're in the process of planning the first visit for this fall," he says, indicating that the trading of expertise, both cultural and pharmaceutical, will only increase in the future.



LAU School of Pharmacy students upon completion of their Spring 2013 rotations at the Methodist Hospital in Texas

Practice Makes Perfect

LAU Health Sciences students benefit from simulation training

By Dalila Mahdawi

Simulations in which real patient encounters are replaced with models, virtual reality patients, or live actors prepare students for the unpredictable pace of genuine health crises and help them translate theoretical skills into applicable practice in the real world.

A middle-aged man has just had a heart attack in his hospital bed. A nurse calls for help and soon several other health professionals rush in. Information about the patient's medical history and a number of proposals for treatment hurriedly fly around the room. As a defibrillator is brought to the bedside, a doctor performs CPR to keep the man's heart beating. The air is tense with urgent purpose, brows are furrowed, and some voices are jolting.

Luckily for all involved, the man's heart attack is fictional. The patient is actually iStan, one of the most sophisticated simulation human mannequins available in the world, and the only one of its kind in Lebanon. With a realistic skeletal structure, human-like skin and the ability to move, speak and secrete fluids, he is an important training resource for LAU's fledgling health sciences professionals.

While the scenario may not be real, students working with iStan are encouraged to view him and his symptoms in the same way they would a living person. "I panicked a little bit," says fourth-year medical student Serge Korjian as the heart attack simulation comes to an end. "I've been learning about cardiac arrest for a long time now, but when I actually saw the patient in front of me, my mind went blank."

Responses like Korjian's are precisely why simulation is so important, says Dr. Vanda Abi Raad, an associate professor at the School of Medicine and co-founder of the Simulation Center. "Knowing

something on paper and doing it in real life are two different things. Learning how to apply that knowledge through simulation is a main feature of LAU's curriculums in the health sciences."

Simulations in which real patient encounters are replaced with models, virtual reality patients, or live actors prepare students for the unpredictable pace of genuine health crises and help them translate theoretical skills into applicable practice in the real world. Such exercises are particularly important for health science majors, where human errors can cost lives, says Dr. Nadia El-Asmar, instructor at the School of Medicine and co-founder of the Simulation Center. "Simulation is on the rise in medical education because it helps students improve their crisis management, problem-solving and communication skills, as well as practice their clinical skills in a safe environment at no risk to real patients." According to the Institute of Medicine, 44,000 to 98,000 deaths caused primarily by medical mistakes during treatment are recorded annually in the U.S.

Students from the health sciences majors — medicine, nursing, pharmacy and nutrition — undertake a number of simulation exercises throughout their degree programs to improve their practical skills.

The fact that the exercises are often done in partnership with students from other health fields is "really important," says Pharm.D. student Caroline Dernigoghossian. "It allows us to engage with the other health care professionals and understand the importance and role of each within the team."

A 2007 report on health quality and safety by U.S. healthcare accreditation organization The Joint Commission found that inadequate communication between healthcare providers, or between providers and the patient and family members, was the primary cause of more than half of the serious adverse events in hospitals. Therefore, says Dernigoghossian, "effective communication and teamwork is fundamental to improving patient outcomes."

So while iStan's heart attack may be imaginary, the skills learned from the scenario are very real.



The Final Step

Nursing students prepare for real world with UMC-RH rotations

By Sinead Leach

"Our students integrate what they have learned about clinical nursing, the health care system and inter-professional collaboration and apply it to provide safe, high-quality care for patients each day they are on the hospital unit."

—Dr. Nancy Hoffart, dean of the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing

After years of studying and countless hours spent in the library in the company of their textbooks and classmates, third-year nursing students have been given a glimpse into their future. Clinical placements at University Medical Center-Rizk Hospital (UMC-RH) are enabling the up-and-coming health care professionals to learn the role of the registered nurse, one they will soon take on themselves.

The inaugural graduates of LAU's School of Nursing have engaged in 168 hours of direct clinical work under the guidance of a registered nurse (preceptor) at the hospital, allowing them to experience a typical work environment first-hand. The rotations encourage students to make informed decisions about their career goals, and their participation in the clinical reasoning process gives them a sense of empowerment.

"What makes this experience unique is that participating students have been placed in medical specialties (pediatric nursing, cardiac nursing) of their choice," explains Dr. Maha A. Habre, clinical instructor at the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing.

"They identified personal weekly objectives and then worked with the preceptor to achieve those goals. By the end of each week of the semester-long course, they were able to evaluate their own progress," continued Habre.

The ultimate aim of the clinical course is to assimilate the skills and knowledge acquired in the classroom into the clinical practice setting, where complex health issues arise and where nurse-to-patient communication skills can be developed.

"Our students integrate what they have learned about clinical nursing, the



health care system and inter-professional collaboration and apply it to provide safe, high-quality care for a group of patients each day they are on the hospital unit," said Dr. Nancy Hoffart, dean of the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing. "It is the final step in preparing them to enter the workforce as professional RNs."

Transitioning from an American-based nursing education at LAU to work in a traditionally French hospital system may seem like a difficult task, but it is a charge the students take in stride. Since their academic curriculum accounts for all social and cultural factors, with the mantra of "patients first," these students were well prepared to handle various cultural nuances.

They also found that the patients were impressed by their level of commitment.

Nursing student Ahmad Theibich highlighted the value of learning how to gain patients' trust.

"Trust is the foundation of the nurse-patient relationship. My interactions with the patients confirmed my belief that LAU students bring with them a reputation of excellence and expertise," he said.

Communication with co-workers was also a valuable skill acquired by the trainees, according to student Alaa Badran: "Communication was the vital key to a productive relationship with the patients — both verbal and nonverbal," she said. "Clear communication helps to reduce patient anxiety and enhances the overall hospital experience."

"The sense of responsibility" that a registered nurse carries was something that impressed upon Alaa Othman. It is one that she and her classmates will soon assume as newly registered nurses.



New at LAU

Peace Tactics

LAU launches a timely minor in conflict resolution

By Paige Kollock

This fall 2013, LAU will launch a much-needed minor in conflict resolution — a field that encompasses the theory, practice and skills at the core of conflict analysis and resolution.

As awareness of the costs of conflicts at the interpersonal, communal, national and international levels heightens, conflict analysis and resolution has become a growing academic field and profession.

On the global level, the role of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, as well as regional organizations and international NGOs, has increased the demand for professionals with conflict-resolution skills. A case in point is the important role of the United Nations' Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which maintains stability in the southern part of the country.

The field of conflict analysis and resolution offers the theories, techniques and skills that enable students to harness these abilities by deepening their understanding of the sources and dynamics of conflicts, while building their professional negotiation, mediation and communication skills, as well as other conflict-resolution techniques.

"It's a multi-disciplinary field that enables us to address conflicts in more systematic and scientific ways, with the aim of transforming or resolving them," says Dr. Makram Ouais, a conflict-resolution practitioner and chair of the Department of Social Sciences.

Lebanese are all too familiar with conflicts and are called upon to find the best ways of resolving them, adds Ouais, "by harnessing what can be positive about conflict, in terms of generating new opportunities and building better futures for everyone."

LAU students joining this minor will acquire a wide range of analytical and practical skills that will complement any major they pursue, and prepare them for further studies in this field. With the university's commitment to serving the community, and with the Arab world in a state of fragile transition and increased conflict, the introduction of the minor could not be better timed.



LAU's Annual Scholarship Grant Gets Generous Donation

University receives Western Union Foundation's only grant in the region this year

By Dalila Mahdawi

The Western Union Foundation (WU Foundation) has contributed \$30,000 towards LAU's Annual Scholarship Grant to help support needy and deserving students. LAU was the only university in the region to receive the grant this year.

Established by the Western Union Company in 2000, WU Foundation encourages community development by financially supporting education and disaster relief efforts. The grant to LAU was made as part of Western Union's Education for Better program, which is a three-year project to fund education and vocational training.

"We are actively supporting NGOs that are committed to expanding educational opportunities for global communities," said Patrick Gaston, WU Foundation president, in an official press release in August. LAU is the only university, and the only institution in the Middle East, to receive funding in this round of grants.

Thanking WU Foundation for its support, LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara said the grant was an important recognition of the university's commitment to providing quality education to gifted students. "LAU encourages all qualified students to apply, irrespective of their financial situation," he said, noting that students can benefit from a multitude of financial aid programs, including scholarships, work-aid programs, graduate assistantships and loans. "Because of the generosity of donors like the Western Union Foundation, the university has been able to increase its financial aid budget from \$15 million last year to \$18.8 million this academic year," Jabbara added.





Lebanon's Google Pioneer

Ten minutes with Dr. Georges Harik, Google founding engineer and friend of LAU

By Dalila Mahdawi

Dr. Georges Harik is a name that every aspiring computer scientist should know. As one of Google's first ten engineers and former director of new products, the Lebanese expatriate helped launch many of the creations we now take for granted. Since then, he's gone on to establish a nonprofit artificial intelligence lab, as well as the video-conference platform imo.im. He also provides financial backing to promising start-ups, a process known as angel investing. Harik is a generous friend to LAU, providing annual support to the Department of Computer Science. *LAU Magazine* put a few questions to him.

How did you get into your profession?

I started by playing games on my computer, an Apple II+ at the time, and soon I ran out of games to play. So I began to program my own games and play those, as would my friends. After I'd gone to college to study mathematics, my father asked me what I was going to do afterwards that was practical. I figured programming computers might be both practical and fun, so I switched to a computer engineering degree. After graduation I looked for a job where I could have the most fun and have the most impact, and ended up starting early at Google. The rest is history.

As an angel investor, you take some big gambles. How do you decide what projects are worthy of support?

I look for things that will have a big impact on the world and for projects that require a lot of new technology to be feasible, as well as the smartest people I can find.

Why do you support LAU's computer science summer programs and scholarships?

Because programming gives you leverage. It lets one person or small groups of people produce something that a billion people can use. It's also an area that's new enough to mean that many developments and breakthroughs are still ahead of us.

What do you think the next big thing after Google will be?

I'm excited about a lot of areas: opening up communications between billions of people, personalized medicine, artificial intelligence and robotics, for example. But in virtually every domain of human life, technology has changed so much that there are vast opportunities to do new things or solve existing problems in new ways.

There is currently a debate raging about whether coding should be taught at school. What do you think?

I am completely in favor of teaching children to program. I think coding is as basic a skill as the mastery of language. In fact, it is a language — one that you can use to communicate what you want to machines. It teaches logic, precision and the ability to formulate plans. These skills are vital to survival in today's society.

What advice would you give to someone who is thinking of a career in computer engineering or programming, but doesn't know the best way to go about it?

I'd say start by picking something to program and try doing it. There are lots of things you can get started on with minimal prerequisites.

How is Lebanon faring with respect to the cultivation of technological innovators?

I think we'll know when a group of people from Lebanon create a tool that billions of people use. I don't think we've seen that yet, but the possibility there is real, and the person who ends up doing it could very well be anybody in the country.



Defined by Change

The art and life of Chaouki Chamoun

By Mehrnoush Shafiei

"The mountains surrounding the Bekaa Valley were the limit of my world," is the sentiment that introduces the new book, "The Art and Life of Chaouki Chamoun."

The world grew much larger as Chamoun, a longtime LAU fine arts instructor, ascended the ranks of the art world to become one of the most renowned painters in the Middle East. His book, a memoir, reveals the treasures of his oeuvre and offers a glimpse into the often-serendipitous chain of events that conspired to propel the young boy far beyond his childhood home.

In large measure, Chamoun's life has been defined by change, but his ardor for intellectual engagement has remained constant. Early on, he developed the drive to continuously improve, even if he was short on time or money. "Becoming a university student was a dream come true for me," he enthuses. He eventually went on to obtain a Ph.D. at the Art Education Department at New York University, where he would quench his thirst for knowledge by poring over books at the library for hours on end.

Such a worldview has found a kindred spirit in LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara, whom Chamoun describes as a champion of the arts.

"Chamoun's work is a reflection of his ethereal soul," says Jabbara. The connection between the delicacy of his art and his personal character is a claim echoed by Chamoun's colleagues and students.

A drive to serve the community carries over into his LAU classrooms: "I enjoy giving back to the younger generations," he says. Life in the classroom and in the studio is closely connected, as he believes art, like teaching, is inherently an act of giving.



Chamoun's book offers a profound understanding of how his beliefs and attitudes developed. Though his path to success was marked by professional setbacks and personal tragedy, he is unafraid to share such candid details. And while the memory of his brother's disappearance during the Lebanese civil war still elicits sharp pain, he refuses to transpose his lattice of anxiety onto those around him: "I will not let anyone live off my pain," he writes, justification for a self-imposed hiatus from painting.

His optimism is pervasive; he even refers to death as "the other side of life."

"Art is not there to hide the dark side, but to remind you that joy and sorrow exist at the same time — both are present," Chamoun explains. This philosophy is captured in a 1977 piece he created entitled, "Positives and Negatives: Our Destiny."

Though he likes to be read morally, he does not steer his art toward philosophical musing; it is always about the experience, not the explanation.

"We do not look at a painting and use it as a mere vehicle to lead to ideas, be they religious, social, political or whatever," he says.

Perhaps the reason why his work is so pleasing to the eye is because it is unmistakably life affirming — a quality enhanced by Chamoun's signature motif of expansive, empty spaces that hold the promise of the unknown, the same promise that beckoned him from the valleys of the Bekaa to the summits of artistic acclaim.

His optimism is pervasive; he even refers to death as "the other side of life."

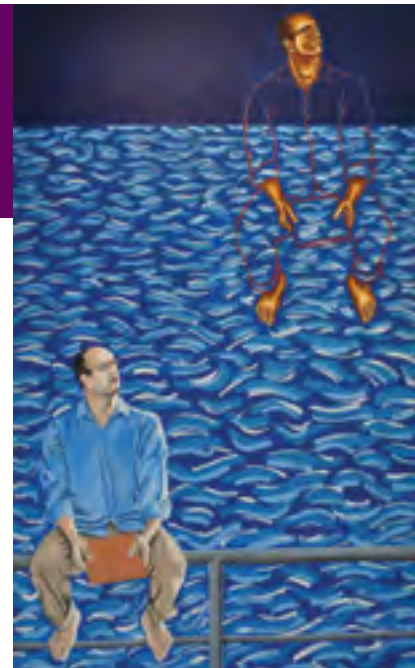




The Homecoming

LAU graduates showcase their talents in alumni art exhibit

By Paige Kollock



Beirut Sea 2008, Rim Jundi

"The alumni were so happy to include their work in the exhibit because it was the first alumni event of the Fine Arts Department in some 30 years."

—Rached Bohsali, Chair of the Fine Arts & Foundation Studies Department

When the Alumni Relations Office, in conjunction with the Fine Arts Department, asked alumni to submit their artwork for a planned exhibit, more than 200 entries flooded in. A selection committee whittled the submissions down to just 25, all of which were on display in the Sheikh Zayed Hall gallery in the Safadi Fine Arts Building on the Beirut campus in May.

"The alumni were so happy to include their work in the exhibit because it was the first alumni event of the Fine Arts Department in some 30 years," said Rached Bohsali, chairman of the Fine Arts and Foundation Studies Department.

"I didn't like to refuse people, but the space is less than 90 square meters and we had to choose works that fit together harmoniously."

The exhibit featured works from three generations of LAU graduates, all of whom are established artists. It included a cross section of media — painting, ceramics and photography — and was thematically diverse. Most of the artwork was done by graduates of the Fine Arts Department, but the departments of interior design, business management and business marketing were also represented.

"The first event we did to promote the achievements of our alumni was a book exhibit. Last year, we organized a film festival for alumni who are producers or directors, and this year we thought, why not do an art exhibition," says Abdallah Al Khal, executive director of the Alumni Relations Office.

BUC graduate and former fine arts instructor Jinan Basho, recipient of the university's prestigious Sheik Zayed Award, submitted a painting from her memoirs called *Flashback*, in which she portrays herself as a child.

"The piece tells the story of the time when my father went to the Sorbonne in Paris to get his Ph.D., leaving me behind. I was five years old and very sad — my life was upside down, so in the painting, I literally cut myself into two parts," she said. She also recalled with fondness her studies at BUC under the tutelage of Mehranguise Irani, who helped pave the way for Basho's acceptance into the Pratt Institute in New York.

Alumna Nanor Aintablian was a business management major who developed her painting talent in her free time, thanks to some lessons at Armenian General Benevolent Union and cajoling from her husband. She went on to receive awards for her works, which are mostly impressionistic and modern.

"I'm ecstatic that they accepted my painting *Khaldeh Seashore* because there were some big names in the exhibit," she said.

Lebanese Dutch visual artist Shirine Osseiran lives in London and had three of her digital prints in the exhibition.

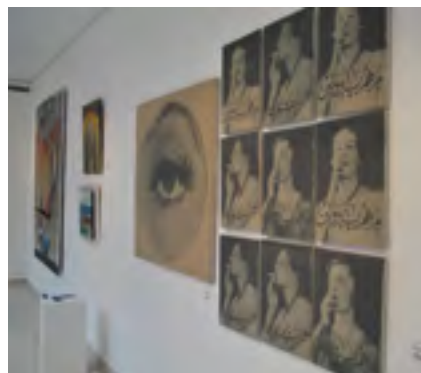
"I had just showed them in London, so it was an intuitive decision to submit them to the LAU exhibit as well," she said. "My major was interior design, but I have been painting since my childhood and aspired to become an artist. Art is my love and passion, and Mozart's words were always in my head: 'Neither a lofty degree of intelligence nor imagination nor both together go to the making of genius. Love, love, love, that is the soul of genius.'"

Many of the artists flew in from overseas to attend the opening event on May 7, during which President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra honored them, saying:

"This exhibition speaks volumes about the many talents of our graduates, the varied ways they see the world, their approach to the challenges we all face in a globalized and complex world, one in which we all need art to keep us civilized!"



Untitled, 2010, Toufic el Zein



Puffing cigarettes is fun, 2012 and Returning the gaze, 2012, Yasmine Nachabe Taan

Op-Ed

Byblos, a Laboratory of Memory

By Dr. Nada El Khoury

By invoking memory, it implies that architecture is not merely an abstract contour of the object, but comprises properties that extend to the life of a city, to the surrounding buildings and even to LAU Byblos campus.

On the coast, some 40 kilometers north of Beirut, Byblos remains one of the oldest cities in the world, with between 7,000 and 9,000 years of human presence on the same site. Today, it is a city whose main characteristic is not only tourism, as can be seen by the renovated souks and shops, but also education. As is written on the LAU website: "Our mission is to make every city a classroom!"

While its appearance may seem at first appear static, due to its continuous inhabitation and its importance as an educational hub, Byblos in fact is a quarry for successive civilizations, a dynamic site that lives and evolves with the passage of time.

Through researching Byblos and its civilizations, I've come to see it as a laboratory where teaching the history of vanished heritage sites can be made more accessible with models and context to aid in our understanding. Heritage education is a key element in the creation of an exposed museum space like Byblos, which opens onto the city.

Inhabited since Neolithic times, the foundations of single-room huts, temples, Roman colonnades, the Crusader castle

and many other vestiges attest to the variety of styles that have distinguished Byblos.

It boasts a number of lively, ancient neighborhoods, as well as an archaeological site where excavation work has unearthed a succession of abandoned cities revealing long-vanished civilizations.

The chief attraction of Byblos for visitors is the overlap in the same site of ruins spanning 7,000 years of history. The Roman theater, for example, was used as a source of stone by the Crusaders, whose origins date back to 218 A.D. Today, only the stage and the first five tiers remain.

When studying the way our ancestors built the theater, for example, you can gain a greater understanding of how they used to live. Even then, they were concerned with climate control, and designed the theater so as to avoid the heat. They also recycled stones from ancient cities, and as soon as a new civilization settled in the city, they used the stones of the previous one to build villas. This is what makes Byblos a laboratory of memory, and while students can observe samples of different civilizations and learn from them, much can also be gained from an awareness of the construction process.

Byblos has exceptional testimony to early Phoenician civilization and its direct and material association with the diffusion of the Phoenician alphabet, on which humanity is still largely dependent helped it gain recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Given all this, Byblos becomes a veritable workshop in which to foster the emergence of new approaches to enhancing the memory of a place. Architecture is not merely an abstract contour of the object, but comprises properties that extend to the life of a city, to the surrounding buildings and even to LAU Byblos campus. Therefore, the campus is situated at the crossroads of two fields: one is rich in history and memory, reflecting the know-how of ancient civilizations, and the second is a promise of an ongoing spread of knowledge to future generations through the cultivation of young minds.

Dr. Nada El Khoury is assistant professor and associate chairperson in the department of Architecture and Interior Design.



Racing Toward Empowerment

First-ever Women's Challenge brings together runners for a common cause



By Paige Kollock

LAU has a longstanding tradition of participating in the annual Beirut marathon, but this year, that relationship was taken a step further, to the first-ever Beirut Women's Challenge, a 10-kilometer race through the heart of the city.

"Since LAU is an institution that's made its mark as a pioneer in women's issues, it's only natural that we would be involved in this event," said Joseph Kanaan, project management coordinator at the LAU Outreach and Civic Engagement Office.

Encouraging participation by offering to pay entry fees, LAU succeeded in registering 58 runners.

"The idea of participating in such a race was intriguing," said electrical engineering student Iman Aziz, who ran the shorter 5k race with two of her friends. "Standing up for women is something we always feel the need to do, and being cheered on by the guys and my other LAU colleagues was really inspiring."

A noteworthy aspect of the partnership was that the Beirut Marathon Association put LL 5,000 from each LAU participant's entry fee toward a special scholarship for gender studies.

"This idea came to me on the spur of the moment, and when we met with the organizers, they applauded it," said Anita Nassar, assistant director of LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW). "It synthesizes the idea that such projects can and should be undertaken for the empowerment of women."

IWSAW also pitched in by reaching out to the army of NGOs that work with the institute, encouraging them to run or participate in some capacity.

"We have all worked hard, and it wasn't in vain," said Assistant Vice President for Development Nassib Nasr, adding, "We are really proud that the 'friends of LAU' have shown so much enthusiasm for such a noble cause."

The event was a great success, and a real testament to the power of sport in society, according to Lilliane Alame, outreach associate director at the Beirut Marathon Association. "The way we see it, education plays a very big role in empowering



women. LAU believes in education for all, and we believe in sports for all, so it was a winning partnership." She also noted the importance of instilling a sense of volunteerism in young people.

Third year political science student Alissar El Rayess says she signed up to show her support for women's rights. "I know that Lebanon is considered 'open' compared to the rest of the Middle East when it comes to women's rights, but the fact that we can't pass on our nationally to our children, can't run for office with any chance of winning, and that we encounter lots of sexual harassment shows there is a long way to go," she said.

The slogan of the race, "You are really strong," was tested by the unsettling news that two rockets hit Beirut just as the race was starting. But the resilient and fearless women took to the streets anyway, raising awareness for a number of causes, from healthcare issues to demands for new laws to give women more rights.

1/ A rocket attack that struck the southern suburbs of Beirut the morning of the race did not derail the fearless participants.

2/ Off the course, LAU hosted a vital water station situated on the Corniche, where volunteers distributed 6,000 bottles of water to a crowd of 4,500 parched joggers and volunteers.

3/ The event included three races: the 10k competitive run, as well as a 5k fun run and 1.5k run with mom.

As part of the partnership between LAU and the Beirut Marathon Association, the race organizers put LL 5,000 from each LAU participant's entry fee toward a special scholarship for gender studies.



FEATURE

Beirut by the Book

The city's representation in literature

By Mehrnoush Shafiei

لَبِيرُوتُ، مِنْ قَلْبِي سَلَامٌ لَبِيرُوتُ
وَقَبْلُ لِلْبَحْرِ وَالْبُيُوتِ
لَصَخْرَةٍ كَأَنَّهَا وَجْهٌ بَحَارٍ قَدِيمٍ
هِيَ مِنْ رُوحِ الشَّعْبِ حَمْرٌ،
هِيَ مِنْ عَرَقِهِ خُبْرٌ وَيَاسَمِينِ
فَكَيْفَ صَارَ طَعْمُهَا طَعْمَ نَارٍ وَدُخَانِ
لَبِيرُوتُ، مَجْدٌ مِنْ رَمَادٍ لَبِيرُوتُ
مَنْ دَمٍ لَوْلَدٍ حَمِلَ فَوْقَ يَدَيْهَا
أَطْفَأَتْ مَدِينَتِي قَنْدِيلَهَا أَغْلَقَتْ بَابَهَا
أَصْبَحَتْ فِي الْمَسَاءِ وَخَدَهَا، وَخَدَهَا وَاللَّيْلُ
لَبِيرُوتُ، مِنْ قَلْبِي سَلَامٌ لَبِيرُوتُ
وَقَبْلُ لِلْبَحْرِ وَالْبُيُوتِ
لَصَخْرَةٍ كَأَنَّهَا وَجْهٌ بَحَارٍ قَدِيمٍ
أَنْتَ لِي أَنْتَ لِي أَلَا عَانِقِيْنِي أَنْتَ لِي
رَأَيْتِي وَحَجَرَ الْعَدِ وَمَوْجَ سَفِيرِ
أُزْهِرَتْ جِرَاحُ شُعْبِي أُزْهِرَتْ دَمْعَةُ الْأَمْهَاتِ
أَنْتَ بِيرُوتُ لِي أَنْتَ لِي أَلَا بِيرُوتُ عَانِقِيْنِي

A greeting from my heart to Beirut
kisses to the sea and to the houses
to a rock, which is like an old sailor's face
She is made from the people's soul...from wine
She is made from his sweat...
bread and jasmine
So how does her taste become?
A taste of fire and smoke
Beirut has a glory of ashes
My city has turned out her lamp
By a child's blood, who was over her hand
She has shut her door, and become alone
in the sky
Allone with the night
You are mine, you are mine

لَبِيرُوتُ، فَيَرُوزُ — "Li Beirut", Fairouz



Top: "Al-Shamas Abdullah Zakher" founded the first Arabic printing press in Lebanon in 1734. The press is located in "Deir Mar Youhana" in "Khinshara". It operated from 1734 till 1899. It was the first Arabic script printing press in Lebanon, but it was the second printing press in general since in 1610. The first Syriac Script printing press was established in "Deir Mar Antonious" in "Quzhaya" near the valley of the saints in the North of Lebanon.

Opposite Page: The old adage: "Egypt writes, Beirut publishes and Bagdad reads" alludes to the importance of the publishing industry in Lebanon.

Fairouz's timeless love song to the city of Beirut strikes an emotional chord with many of its residents. For the renowned chanteuse, the city serves as a guiding spirit in her artistic expression. But Fairouz is not alone in claiming the city as muse. The obsession with Beirut is well-known in Arab creative circles and finds its greatest potency in contemporary Lebanese literature, in which the city often serves as both a setting and a character.

A cursory glance at a list of critically acclaimed novels from the region reveals a plethora of books with the city's name etched on the spine: "Beirut '75," "Beirut the Alleys and the Rain," "Beirut Mail," "B as in Beirut," "A Bird from the Moon: A Story about Beirut," "Beirut Blues," "Alphabet de Beirut," "Greetings from Beirut," "Beirut's Memory," and the list goes on. What is it exactly about the city that has captured the imagination of so many of the region's most prominent poets and literary giants?

The answer may lie in the evolution of literary instruction. Though often taken for granted, the idea of studying novels, poems and plays in a formal academic setting is a relatively recent trend. Literary departments took root at the end of the nineteenth century in America, and it was only after WWII that the academization of literature was fully consolidated at the university level. As such, the attractiveness of literature became very closely connected to coming to terms with the distressing realities of the war.

In a very similar vein, books about Beirut are closely linked to the Lebanese civil war. When it comes to the Beirut urban novel, there is a continuing recourse to questions of history, conflict and identity — questions that speak to the human condition. In some ways this sort of reality creates fertile ground for writers to explore what lies at the core of some universal problems.



There are countless novels with the word Beirut in the title.

"In these books, Beirut is the city of all cities," says Dr. Samira Aghacy, professor of literature at LAU and interim director of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW).

One of the reasons why the city is so compelling is because of its contradictions, insists Aghacy, referring to Beirut's almost hallucinatory contrasts in which extremes coexist and occasionally collide.

"There is not one Beirut, there are many Beiruts," she says provocatively.

Indeed, perceptive newcomers to the city realize fairly quickly that the question is not where in Beirut you live, but in which Beirut — a phenomenon more easily experienced than explained. On July 9, 2013, a car bomb exploded in Beirut's Beir el-Abed neighborhood. That evening, while some city residents took to the streets in angry protest, others began a month of reverent fasting for Ramadan, and still others stayed out reveling until dawn in high-end nightclubs, ordering \$600 bottles of vodka and posting pictures of their escapades on Facebook, utterly unfazed by the day's events.

It is only fitting that a place like Beirut, so comfortable with its contradictions — its class disparity, religious and ethnic divisions — would feel so at home in literature, a rare space with the capacity to host competing narratives of the city.

Interestingly, the urban novel has been the *modus operandi* of many female Lebanese writers, whose literary work has elevated Beirut to the status of protagonist.

Aghacy offers an explanation as to why this is the case: "The city gives women the opportunity to escape the narrow confines of home, family and stifling traditions that have relegated them to a corner and associated them with a nostalgic past." Many of the female characters in these novels about Beirut reveal a thirst for change and knowledge that they try to quench in the city.

However, despite the freedom the city affords them, their reality is often more caged. A common underlying theme present in many of these stories is a sense of disappointment, for beneath a cosmopolitan veneer lurks a strong masculine domain — patriarchy from the villages finds manifestations in the city. But despite the city's deficiencies, women continue to claim it as their own.

"In these books, Beirut is the city of all cities."

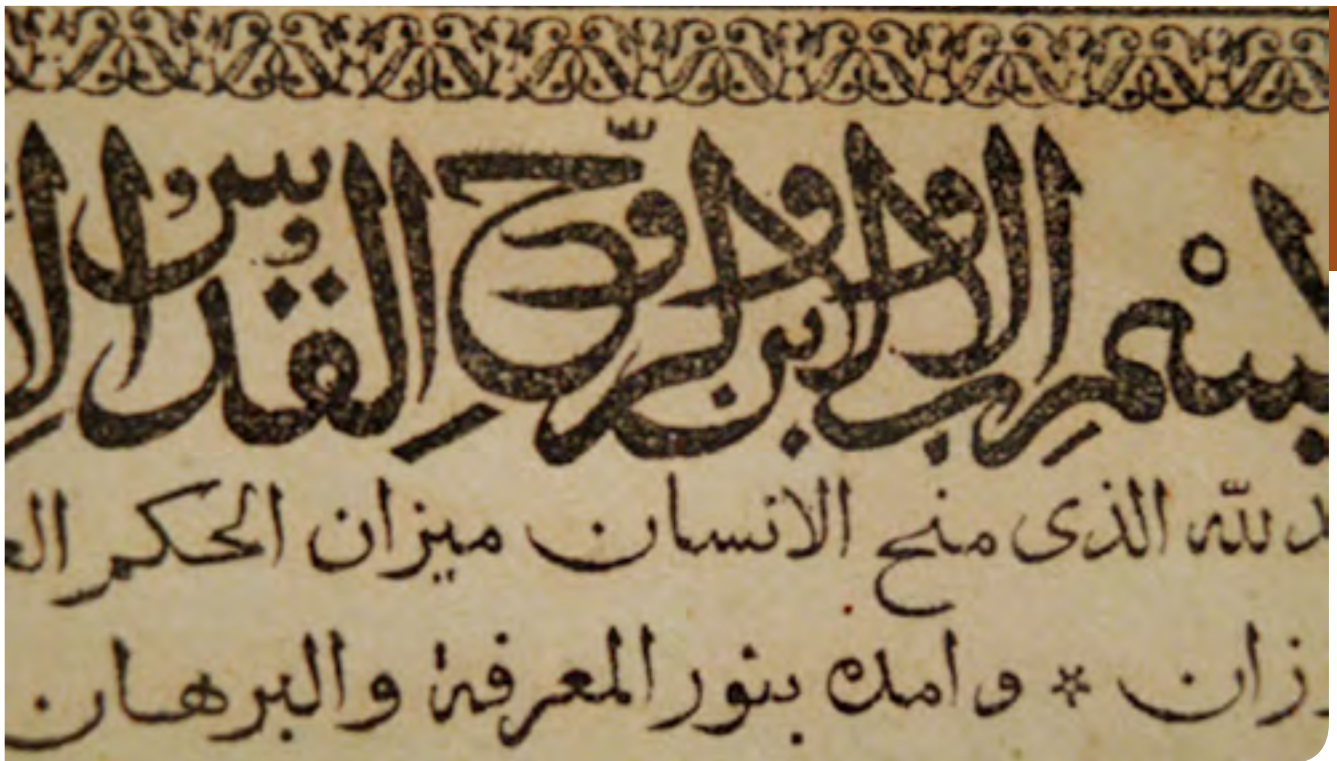
—Dr. Samira Aghacy, professor of literature at LAU and interim director of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World

For such writers, the city and the act of writing about the city has become a site of resistance in order to influence change, whether wittingly or not. Many of these novels offer a critique, to various degrees, of the status quo. However, for this message to be widely received, it has to be accessible, and the only way the Arabic urban novel is able to travel outside its own narrow borders is on the wings of translation.

Translation gives readers access to places that would otherwise be unreachable, but also shapes the way we view the culture from which the work originates, in some ways indirectly offering insight into these cultures.

"A completely faithful translation is impossible," says Dr. Michelle Hartman, associate professor at the Institute for Islamic Studies at McGill University who is also the award-winning translator of "Wild Mulberries" by Iman Humaydan Younes.

"The act of creating a nuanced translation is not a neutral act but is bound up by politics. There is no such thing as language equivalence to render meaning. A good (ethical) translator recognizes this and strives for a critical translation," she says.



An excerpt from the novel "Mizan al Zaman" (The Balance of Time)

The thorny business of respecting the underlying fidelity to the original work without forfeiting the author's intended voice is, according to Hartman, a measure of the success of the translator.

"What does faithfulness to a text mean?" asks Hartman rhetorically. "A translation always changes the original." A critical translation considers what is at stake when certain words are chosen over others to convey meanings.

Practical tips Hartman offers for budding translators are to choose a text you love and feel a connection to. And respect the text: "Translating is not the same as creative writing or composing poetry," she says. Translation is creation, but it is also interpreting someone else's creation, she explains. "This does not mean we have to adhere to an exaggerated notion of the authenticity of the original, or that we are not producing creative works — we are, but we must think about translation in ethical terms."

Translators must also face the difficult question of whether or not to "domesticate" or "foreignize" the original text; both have their advantages and disadvantages. To include a reference that an outsider reader would understand makes the work more accessible, but may lose the nuance of the meaning. On the other hand, to keep the language close to the original text might leave the reader feeling culturally distant.

To assuage such tension, much of foreign literature published in translation is accompanied by an introduction that serves to contextualize the work and allow an opportunity for the translator to signal his or her presence, rather than convey the false impression of invisibility.

Translators have been marginalized and widely perceived as those who merely relay meaning — but their role is a critical one. There is a lot at stake with the translator's interpretation of

both the form and content of the original work, the significance of which is being more widely acknowledged, particularly as the world becomes increasingly interconnected.

It is only fitting that a place like Beirut, so comfortable with its contradictions — its class disparity, religious and ethnic divisions — would feel so at home in literature, a rare space with the capacity to host competing narratives of the city.

Translating books about Beirut demands an even greater sensitivity to the importance of the translator; beyond semantic and cross-cultural issues, it is also a political (and highly subjective) act because it is tangled up in notions of representation and transfer of cultural meanings.

Dr. Vahid Behmardi, associate professor of Arabic and Persian literature and chairperson at LAU's Department of Humanities, agrees wholeheartedly. "Translation studies increase student awareness about the importance of preserving the author's voice and style," he explains, an ethos that is reflected in the recently established bachelor's degree in Translation at LAU. "A high-quality translator requires a cultivated appreciation and acute understanding for the cultural backgrounds of the source and target languages," he continues.

Armed with a critical awareness of the importance of both writing about the city and the consequences associated with translating such works, disciples of this field can counter Robert Frost's slightly disheartening dictum that "poetry is what is lost in translation." ■

Campusnotes

Edited by Linda Dahdah

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

Business



Strength in times of crisis

The School of Business's Institute for Human Resources (IHR) organized a lecture entitled "Middle East Airlines: A Success Story." The lecture was delivered by Dr. Abdo Bardawil, strategic consultant and chief administrative officer of Middle East Airlines. The presentation highlighted the importance of keeping pace with business paradigm shifts in global communities while emphasizing the role of human resources as an essential part of organizational management. Bardawil's discourse underscored the importance of maintaining an unwavering sense of shrewdness in times of crisis, and the significance of making managerial decisions with aplomb.

Business competition

To strengthen the vital link between business education and business practice, the Institute for Human Resources organized a competition in human resources and strategic planning for LAU senior business students in May. Students vied to impress judges with best overall business strategies centered on real-life case studies of Casper & Gambini's, an internationally franchised restaurant-café that was established in 1996 and has its regional headquarters in Beirut. "I was very impressed by the high caliber of proposals from each of the teams," enthused Davina Daoud, head of marketing for Ant Ventures, which oversees marketing for Casper & Gambini's in Lebanon.



A family of entrepreneurs

Under the patronage of Minister of Information Walid Daouk, LAU's Institute for Family and Entrepreneurial Business hosted the "Entrepreneurship and the Family Business" conference on May 29, bringing together prominent members of the business and academic communities. A substantial focus was put on the role of women, both as drivers of family businesses and as effective entrepreneurs. "Many successful companies have come to find that including women on decision-making boards increases the chances of success," said May Makhzoumi, president of the Makhzoumi Foundation. "They bring a unique perspective that gives them a competitive edge," she said.

Culture

Taste of Italy

An authentic Italian atmosphere swept through LAU's Beirut campus on the evening of May 10. While aromas of Italy drifted through the air and guests discovered the refinement and luxury of the products displayed — including Fiat cars and the iconic Vespa — snatches of conversations in the Romance language could be heard. Organized by the student-run LAU Hospitality Club and overseen by the Institute of Hospitality and Tourism Management Studies (IHTMS), the event enchanted participants of all ages. "Our mission is to be part of society and to give people around us the opportunity to express themselves, to live, to laugh and to enjoy life," said LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara.





Poetry without borders

The life and works of the late poet Jawdat Haydar were the subject of a day-long international conference at LAU on April 24. Scholars from as far afield as the U.S., India and Africa came together for the first annual international conference honoring his legacy. Several members of Haydar's family also attended the event, which was organized by the School of Arts and Sciences' Department of Humanities, in collaboration with the Friends of Jawdat R. Haydar Organization. Often referred to as "the prince of poets," Haydar is one of Lebanon's best-loved Anglophone poets. LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra paid tribute to a man who "wanted to be a bridge between civilizations."

Development

Partners in development

Under the patronage of the Minister of Social Affairs Wael Abou Faour, the Outreach and Civic Engagement Office (OCE) at LAU inaugurated its fourth-annual NGO fair on the Beirut campus on April 22. The event gave students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with a stellar pool of NGOs, introducing them to the importance of community service and volunteerism. With "Partners in Development" as a theme, the fair drew a total of 78 NGOs that set up informational booths on campus, briefing the students about their projects and calling for their much-needed participation.



Urban in(ter)vention

Eager students, faculty and alumni filled the Irwin Auditorium on April 22 to attend the TEDxLAU event dubbed Urban In(ter)vention. Organized by the School of Arts and Sciences, the gathering started with a screening of conductor Eric Whitacre's Cloudburst choral show. After a series of talks, organizers asked participants to work in groups to come up with creative solutions to some of Beirut's most pressing problems. Participants enthusiastically embraced the exercise — the very atmosphere TedxLAU sought to promote as a catalyst for change, intervention and innovation.

Learning emotional intelligence

With the aim to help its fourth-year pharmacy students practice and further develop their emotional intelligence skills, the School of Pharmacy organized a workshop entitled "Hands on Strategies for Building Confident and Collaborative Star Performers" on June 20 and 25. Led by LAU's Outreach and Civic Engagement Office, participants took part in exercises that mimicked real-world situations and that addressed the importance of self-awareness, self-management, interpersonal communication, teamwork, conflict resolution and building self-confidence. "It is proven that interpersonal skills and professional competencies are equally important in building a successful career," said Dr. Imad Btaiche, associate dean for academic affairs at the School of Pharmacy.



Lectures



The challenges of democratization

The Arab Spring was the focus of two lectures organized by the Social Science Department during the spring semester. A panel discussion entitled "Political Science and the Arab Spring: Lessons and Challenges," was held on April 18 in collaboration with The American Political Science Association (APSA)-Middle East and North Africa Workshop Program. On May 10, Dr. Rabab El Mahdi, an assistant professor of political science at the American University in Cairo, visited LAU Beirut to explain the challenges of democratization in the Arab world, and to talk about why Egypt's uprising is unlike any in history.



Political theories and their discontents

On May 7, the Department of Social Sciences hosted a seminar entitled “Comparing political systems in global perspectives: What about the Middle East and North African region?” in which panelists explored the predilection of political scientists to exclude the MENA region from dominant political theories. “What I really enjoyed was the open and democratic discussion, both from the faculty members and the students,” said keynote speaker Dr. Hans Illy, professor of political sciences and public management at the University of Konstanz. According to the organizers, the event served to position LAU as a platform for Euro-Mediterranean dialogue.

Dignity for all

UNRWA, in partnership with LAU-MEPI Tomorrow’s Leaders program and the Social Sciences Department, hosted a screening and discussion called “Dignity for All” on May 24 on the Byblos campus. It unveiled some of the plaguing problems facing Palestinians in Lebanon and laid out ways to tackle them. The presentation opened with a screening of “Someone Like Me,” a poignant documentary about a Palestinian boy living in the Bourj el-Barajneh Camp and the obstacles he faces trying to study, find work and fight stereotypes among Lebanese. Following the screening, a panel of experts shed light on the challenges facing Palestinians.



Science



A culture of independent learning

Hundreds of eager middle and high school students gathered at LAU Byblos to participate in the Dean of Students Office’s 15th Annual Arts and Science Fair on May 9 and 10. More than 30 competitions in sciences, engineering, computer programming and arts, involving 15 faculty members from different disciplines, took place during the two-day event. While the student exhibitions were wrapped up with a playful exterior, there was evidence of rigorous research and serious scholarship. Prior to the event, LAU volunteers visited schools and led interactive workshops as part of the university’s mission to promote a culture of learning through outreach activities.

IEEE

Some 65 competing engineering students flocked to LAU Byblos on June 29 to present their senior projects (graduation projects, capstone projects or final-year projects). The third IEEE Lebanon Communications Student Competition was jointly hosted by the Lebanese chapter of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and the LAU School of Engineering. “The large number of participants and the quality of the projects presented confirm that this annual IEEE event is becoming a central venue for engineering creativity, scientific exchange and student interaction,” said Dr. Chadi Abou Rjeily, associate professor of engineering at LAU and a member of the organizing committee.



The future stars of computing

More than 60 high school students from across Lebanon came together at LAU this summer to take part in week-long computer science summer camps held on both campuses. Students received crash courses in computer programming and coding before putting their skills to the test with final projects that were submitted to a jury. Students at Beirut's Learn_Computing@LAU, sponsored by Google, were tasked with creating a functioning website that helps solve an everyday problem. At the Computer Science Summer Institute on the Byblos campus, sponsored by pioneering ex-Google engineer Dr. Georges Harik, the challenge was to teach students how to design applications for Android. Scholarship offers and prizes were given out.



The advancement of knowledge

On April 13, medical students presented their research findings to an audience of faculty, physicians and budding researchers at the Medical Student Research Symposium of LAU Medical Student Association. Gathered at the University Medical Center-Rizk Hospital (UMC-RH), more than 20 students gave presentations and sought out advice and recommendations from established names in the field. "The role of universities is not confined to dispersing information; it is vital for generating knowledge and improving standards," said Dean of the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine Dr. Youssef G. Comair, who served as the symposium's keynote speaker.



Fashion

Beirut Design Week

As part of the annual Beirut Design Week, LAU hosted a series of conferences on a rich array of design topics, including food design, design in translation and design for social impact. But it was the workshop and lecture on fashion design, organized by the university, that took center stage. British contemporary artist and fashion academic Jason Steel gave two design workshops on June 28, during which he encouraged students, faculty and other attendees to "be themselves." The Graphic Design Department hosted a conference on June 29 that included a panel featuring Steel, as well as strategist and consultant Sarah Thelwall, who spoke about fashion design as a career path from a local and global perspective.



Career

Getting their foot on the ladder

With the goal of familiarizing students with recruitment processes, the Career Guidance Office held mock interviews on the Byblos campus in April, a first at LAU. A week before the event, four job descriptions pertaining to different fields were made public for students to apply. The Career Guidance Office sent the CVs to Aramex Human Resources executives for their review, and 12 students undertook a mock interview on campus. Students later received detailed feedback about their applications. This exercise preceded the annual career fair, held on May 8 and May 15, which gathered 47 companies in Byblos and 57 in Beirut.



A Happy Sendoff for Tomorrow's Leaders

Graduating LAU-MEPI TL students look toward a more peaceful future

By Zak Brophy



A sense of accomplishment permeated the Byblos campus at the Alumni Welcome Ceremony on May 21, when close to 50 undergraduates enrolled in LAU's Middle East Partnerships Initiative-Tomorrow's Leaders (LAU-MEPI TL) program celebrated nine of their colleagues who were officially welcomed by the Alumni Relations Office as alumni-to-be.

Jointly funded by the U.S. Department of State and the university, the program provides full scholarships for promising students from across the Arab world to study at LAU.

Representing a diverse mix of backgrounds, interests and ambitions, students are selected for their academic credentials and leadership potential. LAU's first MEPI class, comprised of six students, enrolled in 2008.

Securing a place in the program not only afforded students an excellent education, but also gave them the opportunity to be among people who challenged them, inspired them and ultimately enriched their lives."

Now that the new alumni are outfitted with the tools to change lives themselves, Associate Director of Alumni Relations Ghada Majed explained the different ways in which they can give back to their alma mater and how LAU can help them in return.

LAU-MEPI TL complements the university's ethos of harnessing academic excellence and making a commitment to serving others. Its curriculum is designed to promote civic-mindedness and critical thinking and to provide the professional experience required to contribute to positive change in the students' societies.

Students undertake community service, internships and leadership training. They also spend a semester studying in the U.S.

In addition, field trips to places like the Bourj al-Barajneh Palestinian refugee camp provide an opportunity for them to learn firsthand from LAU students who live there about a complex problem plaguing the region.

"The trip opened my eyes to the hardships many people face in life," said Dama Shamlan, 21, who has been active in civil society in her native Bahrain. "I believe it also reinforced the desire among our group to become agents of change."

The importance of playing a positive role in society was reinforced by keynote speaker Robert McGregor, chairman of business consultancy agency PRO International, and former chairman of INDEVCO Foundation. "Leadership is all about the team; it is not an 'I' thing. Be people of virtue, vision and service," he advised the graduating class.

"You will soon leave this institution, but I plead with you to go out with the values you learned here and to change the world for the better," said LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara at the graduation ceremony. He thanked the American government and people for funding a program designed to contribute to a more prosperous region.

"I've been hugely inspired by what I've seen today," said Richard Mills, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Lebanon. "I know LAU has provided an enriching educational environment and given these students the tools to make a difference in their communities."

The skills and values instilled by the LAU-MEPI TL program mean its alumni are well prepared for life after university, said Dr. Walid Touma, director of LAU's University Enterprise Office, which oversees the program. "There are revolutionary ideas among these students, and I am so proud of every single one of them."

Staff on the Move

Communicating Excellence

Dalila Mahdawi joins LAU Development Office

The Development Office recently welcomed Dalila Mahdawi to its team as campaign communications manager. She will oversee communications for LAU's upcoming four-year fundraising campaign, Fulfilling the Promise: LAU Campaign for Excellence, and develop effective written and visual strategies to publicize its progress.

"Dalila has been a valuable asset to our team, actively promoting the areas of excellence at LAU and playing a key role in highlighting the achievements of our various schools and departments," says Nassib Nasr, assistant vice president for development for the MENA region and Europe.

Mahdawi brings to the role years of experience in journalism, focused particularly on human rights reporting. Besides articles written as a staff reporter at *The Daily Star*, her work has appeared in *The Guardian*, BBC, IPS News, Channel 4, Al Jazeera English, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, IRIN, the *Pittsburg-Post Gazette* and many others. In 2010, her article on migrant worker rights in Lebanon was a finalist in the Samir Kassir Awards for Freedom of the Press. She has a B.A. with Honors from the University of Manchester and an M.Sc. in Human Rights from the London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London.

She has been involved with LAU since



2007, when she began volunteering at the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, and was later a freelance writer at the Marketing and Communications Department (MarCom). In her new role she will once again work closely with MarCom to help deliver university communications.

"Dalila's tireless work ethic and her attention to detail inspire us to strive for the best," says MarCom Acting Managing Editor Paige Kollock. "She accepts nothing short of the highest standards for LAU, and we can all learn from her diligence."

In her free time Mahdawi enjoys reading, cooking, circuit training and taking Body Pump classes.

A Walking Thesaurus

MarCom bids farewell to Muriel Kahwagi

After two years as a writer/content developer at LAU's Marketing and Communications Department, Muriel Kahwagi has left her position to pursue graduate studies in literature and film at Goldsmiths, University of London, where she has received a grant from the Philippe Jabbre Association. Her contribution to the department has been immeasurable, and her crafty ability with words will be intensely missed.

Despite an academic background in science, Kahwagi has always indulged in a passion for writing. Much like Philip Roth's E.I. Lonoff, she is a frivolous word jockey who likes to "turn sentences around."

During her time at LAU, she wrote engaging articles both for the news section of the website and for *LAU Magazine and Alumni Bulletin*, demonstrating enthusiasm while creatively promoting the university's events and success stories.

"With a strong sense of individualism, Muriel exhibited an unmatched aura of curiosity about the world that translated into her lyrical writing," says colleague Mehrnoush Shafiei. "Her sense of humor and wit contributed to the dynamism of the office." An acute observer of the human condition, Kahwagi was fearless in suggesting innovative ways of telling LAU's story.



"Muriel seamlessly and elegantly gleans the best aspects of every LAU event and weaves them into exciting prose not often found in the academic realm. She brings a novel approach to all of her assignments, and with her engaging leads dares to challenge the status quo," says Peggy Hanna, assistant vice president of MarCom.

We wish her the best of luck as she takes her fierce commitment to editorial standards and literary prowess to London, where she hopes to further her writing career.

Coming Home to LAU

Alumni take part in a week of homecoming festivities

By Sinead Leach

Alumni filled courtyards as music played softly in the background and waiters drifted through the crowds with trays full of refreshments, providing a relaxed environment ideal for reacquainting with former classmates, mixing with different generations of alumni and reconnecting with LAU.



Nostalgia filled the air as LAU alumni found themselves back on the campuses where they spent the formative years of their youth. Reunited with friends and their alma mater for the annual Alumni Homecoming Festivities, it wasn't long before old memories came flooding back.

At separate welcome receptions on both campuses, alumni filled courtyards as music played softly in the background and waiters drifted through the crowds with trays full of drinks, providing a relaxed environment ideal for reacquainting with former classmates, mixing with different generations of alumni and reconnecting with LAU.

Alumni from as far back as 1963 took part in the festivities, noting how drastically the university has changed since their days as students.

Photos of past graduating classes were on display, poignantly illustrating the transformation LAU has experienced in the past few decades, and revealing historical milestones such as the gradual enrollment of male students, a decrease in student numbers during the difficult years of the Lebanese civil war and LAU's stunning development from the early 1990s on.

LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara and Executive Director of Alumni Relations Abdallah el Khal briefed alumni on recent developments of the university, including the first graduating classes from the schools of medicine, nursing and pharmacy; the pioneering new fashion design program and the opening of a campus in New York. Jabbara was proud to present the achievements of the university, which in his words strives to be "an institution that responds to the needs of society and of its students."

But some savvy alums were already in the know, like Rajiha Mahmoud Saghir (BCW '63), who said the lecture series held by the alumni office has helped her stay in touch.

Recent graduates had the opportunity to mix with older generations and learn valuable lessons from their experiences.

"It is motivational for young LAU graduates to see the successes and achievements of earlier generations," said Mario Habr ('08), who attended the Byblos reunion.

This year's homecoming also hosted special events for certain classes, including a brunch and reception for those celebrating their 50th reunion. Despite the last-minute cancellation of their alumni dinner and trip due to the unstable political situation, the tradition of presenting awards was upheld.

The Alumni Achievement Award was bestowed upon Dr. Ghada Hijawi — the first Arab woman to be elected president of the World Crafts Council-Asia Pacific Region — for her achievements in the art world. The Alumni Recognition Award went to Yorgui Teyrouz, who overcame personal tragedy and founded Donner Sang Compter, an organization that coordinates blood donation throughout Lebanon and that has won several awards for social achievements.

Leila Dagher, president of the Alumni Association, stressed the strength of the bond between alumni and their university: "The sense of nostalgia fostered in the homecoming week is a reminder to alumni that they can help LAU, just as LAU is there for them."

"LAU's alumni are not only the past of the institution; they are part of the present and future of the university and have made LAU what it is today," Jabbara said. "They are part and parcel of this incredible family."

The Alumni Association Board, members of the Alumni Relations Office, and representatives of various chapters gather to discuss alumni advancement and participation





Alumni mix and socialize at the Beirut reunion



The annual gathering is an opportunity for LAU alumni to introduce their family members to their alma mater



An attendee of the Byblos reunion receives his commemorative pin from President Emiratus Riyad F. Nasser and president of the Alumni Association Leila Dagher



An alumni attending the Beirut reunion finds her graduation photo on display

Old friends catch up at the Byblos reunion



As part of the Beirut Reunion Program, Emad Eddine Adeeb, Egyptian Businessman and journalist, in a one-one-one conducted by alumna Rima Karaki, Lebanese Journalist and renowned TV presenter



Alumni Events



April

Washington DC Chapter hosts first ever table tennis tournament

The Washington DC Chapter organized its very first table tennis tournament on April 20 at Naji and Gisele Azar's residence.



BCW Chapter raises drug awareness

On April 23, the BCW Chapter, in collaboration with AMAR International Charitable Foundation, organized a lecture promoting drug awareness entitled "To Use or Not to Use." the lecture was presented by Psychiatrist Dr. Joseph el-Khoury, a specialist in adult and addiction psychiatry.



May

Alumni Relations Office organizes annual networking reception

The Alumni Relations Office, in collaboration with the offices of the deans of students, organized the seventh annual Alumni Business Networking Reception on May 15 at Le Gray Hotel in Beirut. The event aimed to bring recent LAU graduates and key human resources figures together to discuss the marketplace and job opportunities in the region, while allowing LAU administrators the chance to give and receive feedback on the job performance of LAU graduates. More than 250 alumni, HR Managers and LAU administrators attended the reception.



LAU bids farewell to LAU-MEPI TL graduates

The Alumni Relations Office, and the University Enterprise Office, organized the second annual Alumni Welcome Ceremony for the graduates of LAU's Middle East Partnerships Initiative's -Tomorrow's Leaders (LAU - MEPI TL) program. The event took place on May 21 on the Byblos campus.



Beirut Chapter ladies' brunch

More than 120 alumnae and friends attended the Beirut Chapter's annual ladies' brunch on May 24 at Al-Mandaloun café in Achrafieh.



Alumni compete against LAU's varsity teams

The Alumni Relations Office organized the Great Basketball Challenge: LAU Alumni vs LAU Varsity Teams on May 24 on the Beirut campus. After many a heated game, LAU's varsity teams — both men's and women's — were victorious.



Byblos Chapter alumni organize get-together

The Byblos Chapter organized its annual get-together on May 26 in the village of Arnaoun, Batroun. More than 150 alumni — along with their families and friends — attended the event.



June

BCW Chapter organizes annual lunch

The BCW Chapter organized its annual lunch on June 1 on the Beirut campus. More than 150 alumnae attended the event, which included live entertainment and a raffle draw.



Switzerland alumni attend annual lunch

The Switzerland Chapter organized its annual lunch on June 2 at Hotel President Wilson in Geneva. Attendees enjoyed each other's company and learned of LAU's latest news and achievements from Chapter President Taline Avakian.



July

LAU celebrates 50th graduation anniversary of alumnae

On July 1, the LAU Alumni Association celebrated the 50th graduation anniversary of the class of 1963. To commemorate the occasion, alumnae were presented with anniversary medals at the residence of LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara.



Alumni Association Board meeting called to order

The annual LAU Alumni Association Board meeting was called to order by the president of the board, Leila Saleeby Dagher, on July 2 at the Beirut campus. It was held in the presence of alumni chapter representatives in Lebanon and around the world.

The meeting aimed to tackle various issues related to the welfare of the LAU community and to encourage more participation from alumni.

Chapter representatives reported on their activities throughout the year and suggested ways to enhance the functions of the chapters.

The Alumni Relations Office reported on the office's activities throughout the 2012-2013 academic year, expressing its gratitude to the steering committee of the Alumni Association Board and the executive committees of alumni chapters for their hard work and dedication to the university. They promised to strengthen the relationship between the alumni and the association.



Alumni News

Taline Voskeritchian (B.A. '68) went on to pursue post-graduate studies at AUB and the University of Iowa and is now a professor at Boston University. She continues to publish work internationally and maintains a travel blog. She is currently working on a book-length project.

Henry Matthews (B.A. '80) is an editor at AUB's Office of Communications as well as a painter and a historian of Arabic comic books. Currently, he is in the process of raising capital to produce a book on the history of the first Lebanese comic book, Dunia Al-Ahdath.

Samia Abou-Zeid Khoury (B.A. '84) Lives in Plainsboro New Jersey with her husband Elie B. Khoury. She is a Financial Sales Consultant with PNC Bank where she has received her fourth excellence award. She has recently been recommended to become a financial specialist.



Saad El Zein (B.S. '89) is honored to have been elected Vice President-Area Director for the Middle East and Africa for the International Advertising Association. He is the President of Dubai and Northern Emirates Chapter.

Georges Nakhle (A.A.S. and B.S. '93) is the owner of a distribution business, JMP Middle East, and is excited to be adding a third brand to his portfolio. He has two children, a boy and a girl.



Marwan Tarraf (B.A. '93) completed an M.A. in Media Studies at The New School in New York in 2001. Since then he has returned to Beirut, where he is the owner and managing director of Harley-Davidson Lebanon. He was awarded the

Bar and Shield Award in 2012 for exceptional achievements in brand awareness.

Patrick Mattouk (B.Arch. '97) completed a master's degree in construction management at the University of Bath and is now living in Ghana with his wife Ghada Zakour, his daughters Sara and Serena, and his son Elias. He works as an architect, hotelier and contractor.

Shareef M. El-Baba (B.S. '97) is senior manager of strategy and operations for Deloitte and Touche in the Middle East.

Laetitia El Khazen El Khoury (B.S. '00) is working as a Blédina-Aptamil brand manager for Danone Baby Nutrition. After graduating from LAU she obtained an M.A. from ESA. She is married with two children.

Fares Milad Massoud (B.Pharm '00, Pharm.D. '01) went on to obtain a specialized graduate diploma in management from DESS Management at HEC Montreal, before returning to Lebanon where he now works as a sales manager for Medtronic Diabetes. He is married to Peggy Nehme and has a daughter Kaylin and a son Kris.



Maya Michel Zeidan (B.A. '01) completed post-graduate studies at the Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London and is now working as a jeweler.

Diyaa Yamout (B.S. '02) is the English coordinator for the intermediate and secondary cycle at the European Lebanese School. She is married to Nabil Alsayed and is a proud mother of two sons, ages two and four.

Mahmoud Chaaban (B.S. '03) lives in Abu Dhabi where he is a senior banker at the Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank.

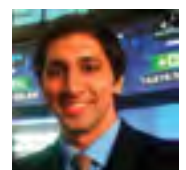
Nadene Camille Jurdy (B.A. '03) currently lives in Istanbul, where she works as an interpreter and caseworker for migration agency ICMC Istanbul. In this role, she works with primarily Iraqi refugees who are seeking resettlement in the United States.

Hussein Alie Basma (B.S. '06) has completed a master's degree at the University of Balamand and is now working as a research assistant at AUB.



Serge Achkouty (B.E. '06) completed his post-graduate degree at INSEAD business school in France and Singapore. He is presently working as an associate at Booz & Co. in Dubai.

Firas Rabih Maad (B.S. '07) is an M.B.A. candidate at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and is currently interning at the Islamic Development Bank in the group's Strategy and Planning Division.





Adnan Tarabishy (B.S. '99, M.B.A. '08) is working in marketing and advertising in Lebanon and is currently launching a new online regional business venture, Prolance.biz. He has two children: a son Nasib, 10, and a daughter Lara, 8. He is currently a member of the Damascus Chapter and was formerly the President.

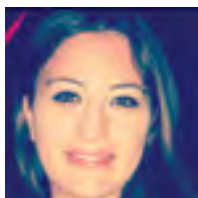
Fawzi Jaber Hyder (M.B.A. '08) has previously worked as an instructor at LAU and AUCE. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in finance at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, where he lives with his wife Rawia Assaf. They have recently welcomed a new addition to their family — a baby girl named Leya Alondra.



George Kassar (B.S. '05, M.B.A. '08) works as a performance analyst at the Branch Management Department of Fransabank. He and his wife Carla are delighted to announce the recent arrival of their second child Jürgen, a younger brother to three-year-old Anastasia.



Farah Alhashem (B.A. '09) in 2013 completed an M.F.A. in Film and Cinematography at the New York Film Academy in Manhattan and Los Angeles. She is now working as a social advisor for the United Nations and on an upcoming book.



Nisrine Salim Matta (B.Pharm '09) is a regulatory manager at Integrated Pharma Solution. She is living in her hometown of Byblos and has recently announced her engagement.

Hachem Ibrahim El Itani (M.B.A. '10) is the deputy managing director for Sukleen and Sukomi operations, based in Beirut. After graduating from LAU he went on to obtain a graduate degree from AUB. He is married with four sons.

Majd Hajali (M.A. '12) is a cultural orientation trainer at the International Organization for Migration. She is participating in a summer school course on forced migration at the Refugee Studies Center at Oxford University and may soon embark on a study of human rights policy and practice.

Mourad Hamparsoumian (B.S. '12) is a business development manager for Duravit UAE, based in Dubai.

Nader Houella (B.A. '08, M.B.A. '12) works for Project Lebanon at Lebanon Opportunities. He has published a book entitled "Green Business Handbook" as well as more than 30 articles on the topic.

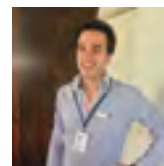
Samah Abdul Menhem (B.S. '12) is working as the assistant general manager for her family-owned business, Victoria Fire Safety and Security, located in Verdun. She is preparing to marry in the coming year.

Tamim Mohammad Osman Awaida (B.E. '12) has previously worked as a site architect in the JYM Group WLL in Doha, Qatar. He is proud to acknowledge his father, Dr. Mohammad Osman Awaida, has been honored by the Safadi Foundation for his services in the city of Tripoli.



Wafaa Youssef Moussa (B.S. '12) is currently working as an interior designer at Batico while in the process of launching her own business. She is engaged and plans to be married in October.

Akram Kheirallah (B.S. '13) has received his PMP certification and is working as an e-Channel Coordinator for the MENA region, based in Rabieh.



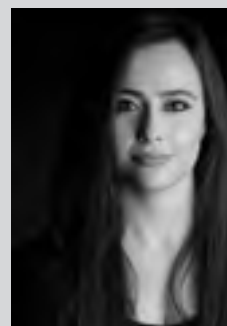
Katia Haydar (B.S. '08, Pharm.D. '13) works as a clinical pharmacist based in Beirut and is delighted to have wed a fellow LAU alum in April.

Reem Tabsh (B.A. '13) is living in Beirut and working as a graphic designer for Impact BBDO.

Tara Hermez (B.A. '13) is living in Tripoli, where she is a legal field coordinator at IRD (International Relief and Development) working with Syrian refugees.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Farah Shaer (B.A. '11) is a successful actress who recently participated in the World Actors Forum in Dublin, Ireland, where she represented Middle Eastern actresses. Only 20 actors from around the world were invited to the highly exclusive event that included prominent actors such as Academy Award winner Jeremy Irons, as well as Micheal Gambon, Penelope Wilton and Charles Dance.



WHY I GIVE BACK

Jad Dagher (B.A. '98)



What did you study at LAU?

I joined BUC as it was being renamed LAU in 1994 and graduated with a degree in Business Management.

Where do you live now?

I am based in Lebanon but spend a third of my time travelling.

What have you been doing since graduating?

I am a main shareholder in and CEO of DK Group, which has portfolios across the Middle East and Africa. We are involved in national security, governmental business, real estate, watches and precious stones, food distribution, and the entertainment sector. Prior to that I held various positions in multinationals based in Lebanon and the Arab Gulf.

Why do you give back to LAU?

My donation is part of an overall life philosophy guided by a strong belief in my religious values and the importance of helping others. Giving back brings me immense inner peace, and this is why I intend to further expand my contributions.

How would you like your donations to be used?

I have full confidence in LAU's leadership and trust the university will channel my contributions in the right direction, be it toward scholarships, financial aid or the enhancement of facilities.

What is your fondest memory of LAU?

I shared my university years with a great group of friends with whom I share countless memories. I am still in regular contact with most of them, and we are like one big family. Back then, the university was still more of a beautiful and ambitious project, transforming from BUC to LAU. But even then, we were already able to sense LAU's potential because of the unique and forward thinking spirit on campus.

What message would you like to convey to current LAU students?

Follow your dreams. Taking calculated risks is a major part of success, so I strongly advocate leaving your comfort zone, working hard and persevering.

What role do you think individual donors like yourself play in LAU's success?

Donors of all sizes play a critical role in advancing excellence at non-profit institutions like LAU. Financial contributions can also transform the lives of ambitious people who do not have the means to receive higher education. Contributions to LAU do make a difference.



Fulfilling the Promise

LAU Campaign for Academic Excellence



✧ ZAFER CHAOUI IS FULFILLING THE PROMISE.

Zafer Chaoui knows that the recipe for success involves passion, commitment and vision.

Admired for his business acumen, Chaoui sits on the Board of Directors at Banque Libano-Française SAL. He is the chairman and CEO of the Chaoui Group of companies and serves as the honorary consul general for Finland in Lebanon. As chairman and CEO of Chateau Ksara, Chaoui transformed Lebanon's second-oldest company into a market leader and a globally recognized brand.

Chaoui believes in investing in people, whether they are his own employees or tomorrow's leaders. He has been a faithful supporter of LAU, making generous donations towards education. Together with his wife, he has established the Zafer and Tonia Chaoui Endowment Scholarship Fund to support the education of needy and deserving students at LAU.



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Courtesy of Professor Johannes Martin Giesen, founding dean of the
School of Architecture & Design at the American University of Sharjah



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