


LAU magazine

VOLUME 16 | issue n° 1 | Winter 2014

& ALUMNI BULLETIN



Tying the knot

The changing nature of marriage

Through the lens

The revolution within Lebanese cinema

Culinary roots

Reconnecting to our food heritage

It's all in your head

Shifting perceptions of mental health

Caught in Time



Acquiring knowledge is not where education ends.

It's where it begins.

EDUCATION OF THE WHOLE PERSON

LAU firmly believes in the importance of moral and ethical values in the integral development of each person. Continuously available counseling and the support granted to a wide range of clubs and extracurricular activities ensure that each and every student receives the proper training to develop leadership skills, build self-assurance, and determine who they choose to be in the world. With this competence and an eagerness for active participation in intellectual discourse, professional advancement, and the building of a better society.

www.lau.edu.lb



LAU

الجامعة اللبنانية الأمريكية
Lebanese American University

Embark, explore, discover...



Caught in Time

FEATURES

6

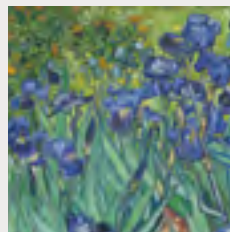


Lebanese cinema through the years

The new school of Lebanese cinema takes the industry beyond its copy-culture past, to an engaged, independent alternative, Natalie Shooter investigates.

14 It's all in your head

Significant and palpable shifts have taken place in recent years with respect to mental health awareness. However, there is still much more to be done in shifting perceptions, particularly when it comes to more serious conditions. Mehrnough Shafiei tells why it might not be all in your head.



24



Tying the knot

People believe that a marriage of convenience outlasts that of love, Leena Saidi takes a look at how society's perceptions have changed to love and divorce, and what this means to the marriage itself.

42 Reconnecting to Lebanon's culinary roots

As appetites point towards the West, small food culture movements turn back to the country's rich traditions. Natalie Shooter weighs up the possibilities.



CONTENTS

- 4 Thumbs up to the School of Nursing
- 5 Fostering future fashion industry leaders
- 10 Returning a gift to the American people
- 12 LAU gala dinner in New York illuminates success
- 13 In the heart of downtown Beirut
- 18 LAU becomes first regional university to issue tax-exempt bonds
- 19 Instilling passion and humility
- 20 Realistic dreamers
- 22 Nutrition graduates experience real-life settings
- 23 Topnotch legal advisers / Engineering an offshore future
- 28 Across the generations
- 30 Furnishing the future
- 31 Education and reconciling our differences
- 32 Stacks and the digital
- 33 Looking to the future
- 34 LAU students hit the stage at Masrah al Madina
- 35 Weaving cultural traditions together
- 36 Learning the ropes
- 38 New faculty
- 41 Faculty promotions
- 46 Campus notes
- 49 Remembering things past
- 50 Alumni events
- 52 Lift-off
- 53 Alumni news
- 56 Why I give back



Wherever You Go

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



Help Tell Our History

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

Submit to:
marcom@lau.edu.lb, or

Marketing and Communications Department
Lebanese American University
P.O. Box 13-5053/F24
Chouran, Beirut 1102-2801
Lebanon

New York Headquarters and Academic Center
Lebanese American University
211 East 46th St.
New York, NY 10017

Letter to the Editor

"I would like to thank you for your Fall 2013 issue, specially for the two interesting articles: 'A vignette of Beirut through the narratives of its cab drivers' and the one on 'Beirut by the book', although I would have wished this one to be longer. Good luck with your coming issues and all the best."

—Nazik Saba Yared, Ph.D., former professor at LAU

President

Joseph G. Jabbara

Editorial Advisory Board

Peggy Hanna, *Assistant Vice President, MarCom*
Nassib Nasr, *AVP Development, MENA and Europe*
Robert Hollback, *AVP development, North America*
Abdallah Al Khal, *Executive Director, Alumni Relations*
Edward Shiner, *Director, Alumni and Special Projects*

Managing Editor

Leena F. Saidi

Associate Editor

Zeina Abdallah

Writers

Ara Arzoumanian
Ernesto Chahoud
Linda Dahdah
Naseem Ferdowsi
Sami Halabi
Dalila Mahdawi
Selim Njeim
Mehrnoush Shafiei
Natalie Shooter

Contributors

Manwa Ghanoum
Sana Kouatly
Ghada Majed
Nayla Abou Merhi Moujaes
Matt Nash

Editorial Assistants

Maria Abou Atmi
Rafael Babikian
Nataly Hamadeh
Palig Haroutunian

Graphic Designer

Marianne Amkieh Siblini

Photographers

Richard Beshara
Nathalie Dabaghi
Khalil Fawaz
Emile Ghazal
Palig Haroutunian
Yehia Malla
Elie Mouarrek
Pro Studio

Front cover by Vinnie Volkerjik

Special thanks to Al Falamanki
for photo-shoot location

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

Direct comments can be sent to:
marcom@lau.edu.lb

CONNECT WITH LAU THROUGH:



From the President's Desk

There are instances when the gravity of time reveals itself more vividly than all the years that lead up to those very moments. Those rare occasions have shaped LAU, from our humble beginnings as the first school for women in the Ottoman Empire to the cross continental multi-campus academic institution we are today. One that not only aims to educate within its walls, but also delves into the field of higher education to discover where there is a need for its presence. We cherish these instances more than any other, for they offer us the opportunity to reflect on all we have achieved, the insight to imagine what lies ahead, and the determination to strive towards greatness.

In the past three months, we have inaugurated our Headquarters and Academic Center in New York, the LAU Executive Center@Solidere in Beirut's Central District, and a satellite of our Continuing Education Program in Zahle. This year, we have also introduced - among others - a Masters of Law in Business Studies and one in Gender Studies to reflect the array of specializations that our graduates will need to succeed in life and change our future for the better. Further afield, LAU and ELIE SAAB Liban SAL have recently signed a landmark agreement with the London College of Fashion (LCF) in support of the region's most exciting fashion design program. LAU has also become the first American university in the region to issue tax-exempt bonds in the United States.

And as we recast ourselves over time as the beacon of change and progress, society evolves alongside us. For decades, marriage and divorce in our home-country Lebanon have been defined by family arrangements and confessionary exclusion. As we witnessed this year, Lebanon's first officially registered civil marriage and the first child born to this union, we continue to examine how perceptions have changed and how society strives to adapt to the changing needs of both men and women.

Indeed, how we perceive one another comes to define our level of tolerance and understanding. In the past, those who suffered from mental disorder were branded as outcasts. Nowadays, our novel Bachelor of Social Work and Minor in Psychology, student counselors and psychoanalysts at LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital embody holistic remedies that embrace mental and physical wellbeing.

What's more, how a society thinks of itself and those in it is always reflected through its cinema. There was a time in the 1960s and 1970s when Lebanese films depicted the hubris and liberalism that defined that era. In the 1990s, we see how the civil war had a profound effect on directors and audiences who tried to make sense of the darker days of our country's recent history. Today, our renowned Bachelors in Communications Arts has helped to usher in a new era of Lebanese cinema that uses social and political commentary to bring to light the nuances of the lives we share and to build bridges of common understanding.

Looking back, we must acknowledge that LAU is the sum of all the people who contributed significantly to changing both our perceptions and our reality throughout generations. It is to them, the students, faculty, staff, alumni, and our steadfast supporters around the world that we dedicate this issue of LAU Magazine and Alumni Bulletin because, ultimately, however time has affected us, it has always done so through those who stood by our side as we have grown to become who we are.



Joseph G. Jabbara
President





Hats off to the School of Nursing

On earning accreditation from

The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education



Thumbs up to the School of Nursing

By Mehrnoush Shafiei

LAU's Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing (ARCSON) baccalaureate program is awarded well-deserved Collegiate Commission on Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation for five years until December 31, 2018.

A sense of pride in achieving the accreditation reverberated across both campuses. "I'm so proud that we have been granted accreditation. It means that we, nursing students, will be given the opportunity to have an excellent nursing education - as well as successful milestones later in life - allowing us to fulfil our mission to become individuals that give with passion and the best care to patients," said first year nursing student, Ilham Berjaoui.

For Dr. Nancy Hoffart, founding dean of the school, LAU has a tradition of academic excellence, "We are pleased to have the official recognition to go with it," she said. "Having achieved accreditation confirms that we have a curriculum that prepares nurses to be high functioning professionals in a variety of health care settings, in hospitals as well as community health settings," she added.

The unusually rapid speed, having admitted its first class in fall 2010, at which the school achieved accreditation is a result of the concerted effort of the entire university. "From day one, everyone has been working hard in preparation for this moment. We all worked together to develop the curriculum and launch the school," Hoffart explained.

Registered nurse, Khaled Salem echoed the sense of pride: "It brings me joy knowing that I was amongst the first students to have graduated from LAU with a BSN degree," he said. Adding, "I hope for continuous success

for this awesome school and its great staff and administration."

"Yes, we are very proud that ARCSON has received CCNE accreditation for its undergraduate program!" enthused nursing alumnus Chant H. Kazandjian.

CCNE sets standards for the preparation of nurses to meet the high demands for safe and effective care in an ever more sophisticated health care system. As an autonomous accrediting agency, it contributes to the improvement of public health. According to the official website, CCNE serves the public interest by assessing and identifying programs that engage in effective educational practices.

In fact, CCNE's emphasis on self-regulation sharply aligns with ARCSON's culture of continuous self-improvement. "We don't rest on our laurels. We aren't perfect, we aren't afraid of saying we can do things better. In fact, we challenge each other to keep advancing," Hoffart stressed.

According to the dean, the accreditation achievement symbolizes how far ARCSON has come in fulfilling its vision of being the pioneering school of nursing in Lebanon and the Middle East. Dedicated to raising the stature of nursing in the region the program helps the citizens of the region

understand the central role that nurses play in disease prevention, and successful management and recovery from illness.

"Dr. Hoffart and her team have succeeded in changing a culture in Lebanon. More and more prospective and current students are considering nursing as their profession of choice," declared Dr. Elise Salem, vice president for Student Development and Enrollment Management at LAU, at hearing the good news.

"This is another great success story that graces the rising star of the School of Nursing under the leadership of Dr. Nancy Hoffart, who worked very hard with her faculty, staff and students to earn this eminent achievement," said LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara.

"We aren't perfect, we aren't afraid of saying we can do things better. In fact, we challenge each other to keep advancing."

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





Fostering future fashion industry leaders

LAU and ELIE SAAB join
hands with the London
College of Fashion

By LAU Staff

*"The vision behind LAU's
fashion design program
is to offer students of
the region an education
of the highest possible
international standards."*

—Elie Saab

In response to the growth and demand for fashion designers in the Arab world, LAU, one of the few institutions of higher learning in Lebanon to pave such path at the undergraduate level, is rising to the challenge by offering a four-year Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design. The inaugural class enrolled this September, 2013.

In step with this global outlook, LAU, ELIE SAAB and London College of Fashion (LCF) have partnered in view of upholding international standards in support of the development of the region's most exciting fashion design program.

"Those of us who have the privilege of being part of the LAU family today have the opportunity to draw on celebrated international expertise," enthuses Dr. Yasmine Taan, chair of the Graphic Design Department and coordinator of the Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design.

LAU President, Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra, and Head of College of LCF, Pro Vice Chancellor, University of the Arts London, Professor Frances Corner, OBE, signed the agreement. The ceremony took place at LCF's campus in central London on November 5, in the presence of Lebanese Ambassador to the United Kingdom Inaam Osseiran, renowned fashion designer Elie Saab and Dr. Elie Haddad, Dean of the School of Architecture and Design at LAU.

"The vision behind LAU's fashion design program is to offer students of the region an education of the highest possible international standards," said Elie Saab. "I am pleased with the agreement, which is a major step toward creating a regional hub for talented designers," he added.

The LCF agreement comes on the heels of committees from both institutes conducting extensive site visits. In fact, LCF will oversee the implementation of LAU's program by delivering curriculum consultancy and quality assurance services to the university.

"LAU is honored to be partnering with two internationally recognized fashion industry leaders," said Jabbra at the signing ceremony. "Their expertise will provide our students with an even stronger academic degree in fashion design in line with international practices."

Additional advantages to be gleaned from this relationship are unique internship opportunities as well as the facilitation of student and faculty exchanges.

"Developing international relationships such as this is vital to LCF as we look to expand our own understanding of the global fashion market, as well as share our own expertise with our partners," said Corner.

In addition to the stewardship of the renowned Elie Saab, Taan says the LCF agreement will ensure that students benefit from the knowledge of prominent visiting professors and global fashion experts from around the world.

British contemporary artist and fashion academic, Jason Steel, joined LAU faculty in fall 2013. Steel is interested in helping fashion design students find their own direction on the degree. He not only encourages but also actively hunts out individualism. "If I have 40 students in the class, then I am on 40 different journeys." His ambition is in creating designers who not only compete with the region's established designers but also offer something different: leading trends rather than following them.

"We have a duty to provide our students with the best resources and teachers available so that we can retain our best and brightest in the country," stressed Jabbra. "This unwavering commitment is a value shared by both Elie Saab and LAU and this is why we have joined hands."

And now those hands have been extended all the way to London.



Assistant Professor Jason Steel during a
design workshop he gave in summer 2013.



FEATURE

Lebanese cinema through the years

From the golden age of the '60s and '70s to its political awakening, we track the transformation of Lebanese cinema

By Natalie Shooter

In an unmarked apartment block in Beirut's Manara district is collector Abboudi Abou Jaoude's publishing and distribution company, Al Furat. Behind the rows of bookshelves is a small room packed with original, hand-painted film posters, which had once lined the foyers of the region's cinema theaters. The poster collection, which stretches into the 1,000s, reveals the Arab world's rich cinematic past from the '50s, '60s and '70s – a time when theaters were full, and Lebanese, Egyptian and Syrian production was booming.

Alluding to a time of relaxed censorship in the region, the walls are lined with provocative posters, from a gun-clutching heroine standing suggestively to a scantily clad woman lying in bed in an Arab version of James Bond. "I think the posters show that society in the '60s and '70s was very open and liberal in the Arab world, now we've become much more conservative," Abou Jaoude says, whose upcoming book "A History of Lebanese Cinema Through its Movie Posters" tackles the subject. "The posters reveal a time when movies covered subjects that would easily be considered taboo today and would most likely be censored."

Racy films such as "Sayadat al Akmar As'Sawdaa" (The Lady of the Black Moons), directed by Lebanese director Samir A. Khouri in 1971, showed the lonely Aida who visits a sensual house to escape her loveless marriage. While Khouri's film found success in Lebanon and Tunisia, others such as Hussein Kamal's "Chitchat on the Nile" were too provocative. The film, based on Naguib Mahfouz' novel of the same name, follows an Egyptian government worker who smokes hash at the decadent parties of a Nile houseboat to escape the country's problems. However, it wasn't the scenes of debauchery, rather the criticism of Gamal Abdul Nasser's rule that resulted in the film's banning across Egypt.

The '60s and '70s, were not only a time when cinematic liberalism existed, it was also the golden era of Arab cinema in terms of production. Lebanese production was booming, even shouldering up to Egypt's dominating industry that had long led the region. "Films were produced here. There were studios and a lot of collaboration with Syria and Egypt, as well as international productions and co-productions coming to shoot here," explains Rabi El-Khoury, managing director of the Metropolis Association, Beirut's art house cinema that organized a Lebanese cinema retrospective last summer. "All of that was, of course, before the civil war. Although we didn't have a real industry in terms of films, production and technical facilities, it was shaping toward being one."

Lebanese film director and LAU alumna, Wafaa Halawi ('04) agrees. "Beyond content, Lebanese cinema was booming before the war. We were even competing with Egypt," she says. Adding, "During the war all the big studios were destroyed. So, obviously the film industry deteriorated drastically. And we never picked up from then."

For Hady Zaccak, a prominent Lebanese director and the author of "Lebanese Cinema: Itinerary of Cinema into the Unknown, 1929-1996", it was a question of quantity over quality. >

*Sleepless Nights**The One Man Village*

"The '60s and '70s were the golden age of production only by virtue of the number of films produced. This is why by the beginning of the '70s, before the war, cinema was already suffering. It became a synonym of mediocrity and it has taken a long time to change that image and build Lebanese films of quality."

Abou Jaoude also points to the commercially driven nature of the cinema of this era. "The cinema of Lebanon and the region in the '60s and '70s followed trends from the West," he says. "Musicals followed 'The Sound of Music', espionage films came after 'James Bond' and in the '70s there was an abundance of sensual movies. Arab directors targeted big themes that would draw in audiences."

It is perhaps only the musicals from that period that have stood the test of time, perfectly capturing the mood of an era. The films of the Rahbani brothers, such as "*Safar Barlek*" (The Exile) and "*Bint El-Hares*" (The Guardian's Daughter) directed by Henry Barakat, first recreated the tradition and identity of Lebanese village life on the screen and launched Lebanese singer, Fairouz, to regional stardom.

The fifteen-year-long civil war engulfing the country, which one still feels on today's films, was to have the most shattering impact on Lebanese cinema. With war comes creativity and from the mid '70s, directors became more politically engaged, as they began to explore the issues facing a troubled region. Maroun Baghdadi was

one of the pioneers of an engaged period of cinema – his 1975 film "*Beyrouth Ya Beyrouth*" (Beirut Oh Beirut), itself preempted the civil war – continuing with the films of Borhan Alawiye, Jocelyne Saab and Jean Chamoun.

"During the war all the big studios were destroyed. So, obviously the film industry deteriorated drastically. And we never picked up from then."

–LAU alumna and film director, Wafaa Halawi ('04)

"In the early '70s, with everything happening regionally in Egypt and Palestine, there was more of a resistance cinema" El-Khoury says. "Art is a reflection of what is happening and the many regional conflicts were ingested into the cinema here." Veteran writer, director and producer Philip Bajjaly ('86) – behind acclaimed documentary "Immortal Memory" – also sees the gravity of the work of a handful of directors in this period. "Directors such as Maroun Baghdadi and Jocelyne Saab saw the rise of the war coming. Having that view in mind they wanted to show the dangers of reaching this place. That at the time was very avant-garde and forward thinking," he points out.



For Zaccak, Lebanese cinema can be divided into two distinct periods: before and after the civil war. "Before the main trend was how to prove that we can make cinema like the others, with the war we enter more into the 'auteur' cinema. It was clear that we couldn't continue to live the lie. This was the big shift made by a couple of directors," he says.

"The civil war always acts as a backdrop in Lebanese cinema ... It's the core of post '90s cinema, which is almost always politically engaged."

—Rabih El-Khoury, managing director of the Metropolis Association

In a country where contemporary history is left out of the history books and its civil war scars are still, 23 years later, considered too fresh to explore, cinema is helping to fill in the blanks and tackle the country's collective amnesia, Zaccak suggests.

As the war ended in the '90s, Lebanese directors continued to delve into the deep scars that remained. The country's cinema had started to carve out its own identity and a new generation of directors began to push boundaries, creating intelligent, often challenging fictions and documentaries that investigate issues of collective amnesia, memory and ongoing sectarian tensions left hanging after 15 years of conflict.

"Undeniably Beirut is very often represented as a city of war in contemporary Lebanese cinema," says Halawi, noting that before Lebanon's 2006 conflict, cinema had begun to lose its civil war obsession and started to explore comedy and social issues such as Nadine Labaki's "Caramel". "We began to see Beirut in a fresh way," Halawi continues. "But then all the films made right after 2006 were obviously about war, because what stories are we going to tell, but the ones we live?" El-Khoury agrees. "The civil war always acts as a backdrop in Lebanese cinema. It really played a major role. It's the core of post '90s cinema, which is almost always politically engaged."

This can be seen in contemporary Lebanese cinema, from Ziad Doueiri's 1998 film "West Beirut", set in the midst of the civil war which follows three Beirut teens' fascination with violence that turns to tragedy, to Danielle Arbid's 2011 love story mixed up with a paranoid world of espionage and assassination in "Beirut Hotel", and Fouad Alaywan's 2013 film "Asfour", the story of a family and a city struggling to preserve its memory while striving for modernity.

Documentary cinema in Lebanon has also grown in strength over the last few years as directors probe into the complexities of the civil war on a more elaborate level. Eliane Raheb's bold, questioning documentary "Sleepless Nights" looks at memory and reconciliation. Simone El Habre's "The One Man Village" examines collective amnesia, tracking a family's return to a ghost village, abandoned during fighting in the civil war. And Hady Zaccak's oddball documentary "Mercedes" tackles Lebanon's modern history, through the viewpoint of a car. Though very different in approach, all three films in a sense, define the new wave of Lebanese cinema – bitingly independent, engaged and reflective of society.

Bajjaly has dedicated his career, almost in its entirety, to documenting conflicts in the Middle East through thought-provoking pieces for Al Jazeera's documentary channel, among others. His work covers everything from Palestinian women in development in "Visions for a Homeland" to pan Arabism, Nasserism and Islamism in "The Question of Arab Unity".

Throughout his career he's noticed the revolutionizing impact of technology on the news documentary field in Lebanon. "I've seen the transition from 16mm film, when it would take three weeks just to do a seven minute piece, through to early video and now digital," Bajjaly says. "That means that everything moves faster. The pictures you see on TV are from the same day, so, peoples' reactions to what they see are more instant and have a much more radical effect."

The increase in film-orientated academic programs and an improvement in technical expertise, combined with a new generation of creative talent that has much to say, means Lebanon's documentary field has gone from strength to strength. With numerous Lebanese documentaries achieving critical acclaim and winning awards at international film festivals in the last few years, Lebanese cinema has also found an audience abroad.

"I think a lot of people making films right now, who have overcome the effects of the 2006 conflict, are trying to tell different stories and say something new," Halawi says. Continuing, "Essentially because it's a small industry, the content will most likely remain independent and engaged." Contemporary Lebanese cinema has certainly escaped its copy-culture past to mold its own identity. In a landscape devoid of funding that in itself is a great achievement. ■





The center is designed to be a platform for global learning and cross-cultural exchange.

Returning a gift to the American people

LAU opens headquarters and an academic center in midtown Manhattan

By Dalila Mahdawi

In a historic strategic move to push the university's global reach further than ever before, LAU inaugurated its New York Headquarters and Academic Center on September 13.

"Some 177 years ago the U.S. sent a wonderful gift to Lebanon," LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara said at the ribbon cutting ceremony, which was attended by a number of international dignitaries. That gift was Sarah Huntington Smith, the American Presbyterian missionary, who founded the American School for Girls, which eventually grew into LAU. "Today LAU is returning a gift to the U.S. by opening this center in the heart of Manhattan to serve New York and the entire nation."

The center, at 211 E 46th Street, will offer courses to US-based students in a variety

of fields including Islamic banking, peace education, gender studies in the Arab world and Arabic language. The high-tech facility, which comprises approximately 2,700 square meters over three floors, features ten classrooms, business and admissions offices, a student lounge and a library. It also houses LAU's New York Advancement staff. LAU has initiated partnerships with several U.S. universities to allow students to transfer credits for courses taken at the academic center.

Located just a stone's throw from the United Nations Headquarters, the center is designed to be a platform for global learning and cross-cultural exchange. "Recent surveys by the National Geographic Society and the Asia Society point to a global decline in multicultural awareness

and show that students lack adequate understanding of different cultures,” pointed out Dr. Elie Badr, assistant provost for Academic Programs, assistant to the president and strategic officer for External Projects and Related Entities.”

“In an increasingly globalized world, LAU believes universities must play a crucial role in furthering intercultural understanding, education, and interaction. Our Headquarters and Academic Center in New York will help do just that,” Badr added. To further facilitate cultural exchange, international conferences and workshops will become a regular feature of the center’s activities. LAU will also invite leading international scholars to give public lectures on contemporary regional issues.

Kicking off activities at the center, LAU held a two-day international conference on Global Outreach and Leadership (GOAL) on September 13 and 14. It brought together over 100 leading education and policy professionals to discuss youth engagement, global education and leadership.

LAU’s New York center was being unveiled at a “very challenging time for education worldwide,” said keynote speaker Dr. Judith Eaton, president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

She explained that the field of higher education faces enormous pressures that could potentially change the academic landscape forever. To stay relevant, universities will need to reconsider their use of technological innovation, review quality assurance methods and strengthen commitments to academic freedom. “At a time when the ongoing recession is pushing more students toward low-cost online courses or degree programs, traditional universities must contemplate ways to enhance universal access and student mobility,” Eaton stressed.

On September 14, the first panel brought together four speakers to discuss online learning, study abroad programs and strategic thinking. “University priorities on research means that professors have little personal motivation to invest in their student’s intellectual development beyond the lecture hall,” said Dr. Sam Potolicchio, president of the Preparing Global Leaders Summit in a talk on how to



LAU Board of Trustees Chair Dr. Paul Boulos and LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabra unveil the plaque



One of the first panel discussions to take place at the new center

foster new understandings of leadership. “Academics are rewarded almost solely on research. If the incentive shifted, we might have different results.”

A second panel tackled youth civic engagement and international diplomacy. Half of the world’s population is under 25 years old, with 1.2 billion of those being aged 15-25, noted Ahmad El Hendawi, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon’s Envoy on Youth. He urged world bodies to mainstream youth issues, particularly youth unemployment, as a matter of “urgency.”

Partnerships between students and international organizations have demonstrated the benefits of listening to young people, said Mima Stojanovic, Innovation Unit research coordinator at the United Nations Children’s Fund. She highlighted the fund’s recent partnership with students from New York University, which resulted in a student-

designed mobile phone application that is supporting family tracing and reunification efforts in South Sudan and Uganda.

A third panel focused on civic advocacy and international non-governmental organizations, where speakers deliberated over the growing ability of civil society to influence policy makers.

The day culminated with a short ceremony to bestow Associate of the LAU Headquarters and Academic Center status to 20 international organizations and universities. “Together, we will turn the facility into a beehive of activity,” said Elie Samia, executive director of the Outreach and Civic Engagement unit (OCE). Several workshops were led by OCE from September 15-18 on civic engagement for 11 Lebanese school and civil society leaders seeking leadership certification.



LAU gala dinner in New York illuminates success

The region's oldest women's institute and Lebanese-American achievers are commended during celebratory dinner in the Big Apple

By Dalila Mahdawi

Over 250 people came together on September 13 to celebrate what has been a year of extraordinary accomplishment for LAU.

Hosted at The Pierre hotel in Manhattan, the university's Third Annual New York Gala was attended by numerous prominent figures, including former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, Lebanon's Ambassador to the United Nations Nawaf Salam, Lebanon's Consul General Majdi Ramadan and Switzerland's Consul General François Barras.

The gala was particularly special as it fell on the same day that LAU inaugurated its New York Headquarters and Academic Center. "LAU has quickly ascended the ranks to become a higher education powerhouse in the MENA region," LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara told the audience. "The New York center is a testimony to our extraordinary commitment to furthering cross-cultural education and understanding."

The facility is the crowning achievement of a year that has been colored with remarkable activity. This includes a new focus on graduate programs and research capacities, and embarking upon major infrastructural upgrades and expansion. Furthermore, the first classes from the

School of Medicine and the School of Nursing graduated this summer, while in the fall the university welcomed the first students in the B.A. in Fashion Design, in collaboration with Elie Saab.

Proceeds from the gala will benefit the university's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, the oldest institute in the Arab world devoted to academic research on women and gender relations. LAU itself evolved from the first girls' school in the Ottoman Empire: the Presbyterian missionary Sarah Huntington Smith established The American School for Girls in 1834. To honor its historical commitment to improving women's standing in society, LAU introduced a M.A. in Women's and Gender Studies this year.

The university's Sarah Huntington Smith Award was presented to three distinguished Lebanese-Americans in recognition of their contributions to society. Dr. Edgar Choueiri, a prominent plasma physicist at Princeton University, inventor and president of the Lebanese Academy of Sciences, Ray LaHood, U.S. secretary of transportation from 2009-2013, who represented Illinois' 18th congressional district in the House of Representatives from 1995-2009, and Judge Jeanine Pirro, the first female district attorney of Westchester County in New

York State and star of Fox News' reality legal television show, "Justice with Judge Jeanine."

Receiving their awards from Jabbara and LAU Board of Trustees Chair Dr. Paul Boulos, all three honorees highlighted the important role of universities in fostering peace, prosperity and innovation. "LAU is shining like a shooting star in the region," remarked Choueiri. He nevertheless lamented the low esteem with which research, particularly scientific research, was held in the Arab world, noting Arab League member states registered only 370 patents between 1980 and 2000. In the same period, South Korea alone registered around 15,000. "Without significant investment in research and doctorate programs, the Arab region would remain far from ever receiving a Nobel Prize in the sciences," he said. LaHood and Pirro both spoke of their pride in their Lebanese heritage and urged Lebanese universities to redouble their investment in young people.

As the evening drew to a close, honors were given to outgoing Board of Trustees members Ghassan Saab and Peter Tanous. The gala was emceed by Lebanese journalist and LAU alumna Shada Omar ('93), and featured performances by the Alex Donnor Orchestra.



Dr. Paul Boulos and Dr. Jabbara present Judge Jean Pirro with her award



Dr. Edgar Choueiri receives his award



Former Secretary of Transport Ray Lahood collects his award

In the heart of downtown Beirut

By Dalila Mahdawi



LAU students will now be able to take classes in the heart of downtown Beirut following a partnership between the university and Solidere, the Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District. The company has generously offered LAU a major facility to be known as The LAU Executive Center @ Solidere and located at 1301 Marfaa on Beyhum Street.

"In the darkest moments of a country's history, there is always a glimmer of hope," said LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on August 23, referring to recent unrest in Lebanon.

"What is happening at this center here today represents hope for a better future. We are part and parcel of society, and as such together with Solidere we have a responsibility to serve Lebanon, the region and the Beirut community," commented Jabbra, thanking the company for their help in turning "a dream into a reality."

The partnership gives students a unique place to study in the center of Lebanon's thriving capital.

Just a few steps from Riad al-Solh and spread across 600 square meters, the state-of-the-art Executive Center comprises several classrooms, a design studio for the School of Architecture and Design (SARd), a student lounge and faculty offices. The center is housed in the same building as Solidere's Beirut Broadband Network office and service center, so also boasts high speed Internet.

The center, whose renovation was completely financed by Solidere, will provide LAU students with an unrivalled opportunity to learn in the heart of Lebanon's financial, political and commercial decision-making district. The space will initially be used for EMBA and MBA courses, classes for Architecture and Design students,



workshops and conferences. A number of institutes or groups, such as LAU's Center for Lebanese Heritage, will also hold their meetings there.

LAU and Solidere "share identical values on the development of community," said Mounir Douaidy, general manager at Solidere, noting both institutions were committed to advancing excellence and to fostering a culture of civic engagement. "One institution takes up the challenge of investing in Lebanon's human capital and forming future leaders in a diverse world, while the other has worked to rebuild the heart of the capital and its social fabric," he said. The center is "the jewel in Solidere's crown enhancing its interaction with education, entrepreneurship and professional life," Douaidy added. Solidere is offering the facility rent-free until August 2019.

"The center's expansive and interactive spaces were designed to reflect LAU's openness to the community," said Dr.

Maroun Daccache, former chair of the Architecture and Interior Design department at SARd, who designed the new facility. He said students from SARd should find the center inspiring. "Many students choose to focus their final year projects on Beirut's urban and social complexity. Use of the LAU Executive Center in Solidere, as a laboratory, will help our students be in direct contact with society and to develop their ideas."

The opening of the center is part of a strategic decision by LAU to "outgrow the traditional campus model," said Dr. Elie Badr, assistant provost for Academic Programs, assistant to the president and strategic officer for External Projects and Related Entities. He noted the inauguration came shortly before LAU unveiled its New York Headquarters and Academic Center in the heart of Manhattan on September 13. "These openings demonstrate LAU's dedication to bringing itself closer to the communities it serves," Badr said.



FEATURE



It's all in your head

Shifting perceptions of mental health

By Mehrnoush Shafiei

"Hi, my name is Paul and I'm Bi-Paular," jokes nineteen-year-old Paul Smith, an outpatient at the Center for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Toronto, Canada. Recently diagnosed with Bipolar II disorder, Smith has stood up to introduce himself to an assembled support group within the hospital and in spite of his newly acquired diagnosis, he is in a relatively upbeat mood.

"I am relieved to finally have received medical attention after months and months of not sleeping and feeling ill," Smith says. "It's nice to know that what I was experiencing wasn't all in my head," he says acknowledging the irony of his remark with a wirily smile.

If Smith speaks with some levity about his illness it is because he is fortunate enough to belong to a generation of young people who appear to have far less trouble talking about mental health than their forebearers. As more and more celebrities and political leaders have made public their own mental health struggles, the once impenetrable taboo of mental illness is slowly being chipped away.

Unlike previous generations that often discussed psychiatric disorders in the secretive hushed tones of shame and embarrassment, Smith speaks in a direct and almost off-hand sort of way. His ability to discuss his illness on his own terms is a happy gauge of the progress that has been made with respect to confronting the stigma associated with abnormal psychology.

Though Smith may be a unique case—not everyone at the support group was so at ease with being there—such attitudes are indicative of the shifts that have been occurring in mental health discourse in recent years and are manifest not only in places like Canada but in Lebanon as well, though admittedly to a lesser degree.

Irises by Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh. This painting was created in 1889 shortly after van Gogh voluntarily checked himself into an asylum at Saint Paul-de-Mausole in France. In 1987, Irises was sold for 54 million dollars making it one of the most expensive paintings of all time.



Indeed, a cursory survey of students on LAU's campuses reveals that an increasing number of young people have sought out professional mental health services or know of someone who has. What's more, among some circles having a therapist is regarded as fashionable and viewed as a natural extension of a healthy modern lifestyle, just like exercising and dieting.

“The way I see my job, I am trying to change perceptions one person at a time.”

—Dr. Norma Moussally, counselor at LAU Beirut campus

Many of these students are quick to proselytize the merits of talking to a professional about their problems in a strikingly casual manner and according to Dr. Tima Al-Jamil, a therapist and assistant professor of clinical psychology at the American University of Beirut, it is precisely these open attitudes that have been both a result of and a contributing factor to the breakdown the residual stigmas of yesteryear.

Al-Jamil notes that while there has been an increase in the comfort level of teenagers coming to seek advice about family or academic problems, there is greater hesitancy to come to terms with more serious conditions.

“In general I think it is still difficult for adolescents and teenagers to seek help from a psychologist. For young people, it is a frightening process and they question what it may mean about them that they would need to see a therapist. Adolescents in general find their emotions intense and are often overwhelmed by the idea that they would need to discuss these experiences with a stranger,” she says.

According to Al-Jamil, for many people talking about mental illness engenders feelings of weakness, embarrassment, guilt, or shame. “Some even believe it reflects a lack of true faith in God and so prefer not to reveal their struggles,” she laments.

These are the sorts of misconceptions that many academic bodies are fighting to confront. Dr. Akl Adel, psychoanalyst at the

University Medical Center-Rizk Hospital (UMC-RH) says institutions like LAU are unique in their emphasis on mental health awareness. They provide training to staff and faculty, so they may identify the warning signs and help prevent someone suffering from an unobserved mental illness go untreated. “Many students in the university face enormous pressures—academic, family problems, development—we train our faculty and staff to identify problems before they become overwhelming,” Adel explains.

“The benefits of increasing public knowledge about mental health issues are widely accepted. And changing perceptions is essential since it may directly influence the quality of life of patients by increasing the willingness of the sufferers to seek psychiatric services,” explains Adel. Insisting, “Attitudes toward mental health are far from fixed and could change quite quickly if there is greater emphasis on mental health literacy.”

Al-Jamil agrees wholeheartedly: “While there is a movement toward mental health discourse becoming less taboo, there is still a long way to go.”

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 25 percent of the Lebanese population suffers from some sort of mental health problem, which is in line with the global statistic. Studies, by international aid agencies working in the country such as International Medical Corps (IMC), have shown that over 90 percent of those in need of help report having little access to medical treatment. WHO, also found that an estimated 350 million people worldwide are affected by the relatively common mental health issue of depression. Leading causes of disability in society, depression and anxiety, affect 10 percent of the population worldwide and the statistics for the specific case of Lebanon do not differ significantly.

According to medical professionals, antidepressant medication helps increase neurotransmitters, a group of chemicals, found in the brain. Some neurotransmitters are responsible for elevating mood—for example, serotonin and noradrenaline. Of course, such medication cannot treat the underlying psychological issues associated with the illness and that is why doctors prescribe cognitive behavioral therapy to accompany medical treatment.

"When it comes to more severe issues of mental health, the shift in perceptions has been glacial," says counselor at LAU Beirut, Dr. Norma Moussally. Having conducted her training at McGill University in Montreal, Moussally says that there tends to be far greater social support in places like Canada than in Lebanon. According to Moussally a common response Lebanese students have reported after sharing with friends and relatives that they sought help for a mental issue is: "Haram!" While in Canada, more often than not, the response will be: "Good for you!"

Sometimes the greatest force of resistance comes from the families themselves. "I have had to fight with parents who are refusing medication for their son who is bipolar and another who is schizoaffective—both are taking their meds in secret," laments Moussally.

In fact one of the main reasons students cite for not wanting to seek professional help is concern for confidentiality. "Lebanon is a small country; the fear is that everybody knows everybody. Some students may be hesitant to walk into my office because they think private information may reach the ears of their parents or relatives," she explains.

To alleviate this fear, Moussally takes great pains to emphasize to students that confidentiality is completely respected. "The way I see my job, I am trying to change perceptions one person at a time," she says, stressing the need for an increase in mental health literacy.

Sara M. is a second-year LAU student from Jordan, who knows first hand the benefits of counseling. "Moving away from home, living on my own, and trying to keep up with my studies was very hard for me during my first year at LAU," she explains. "Having someone who listened to me really helped keep things in perspective and now I know the importance of taking care of my mental health."

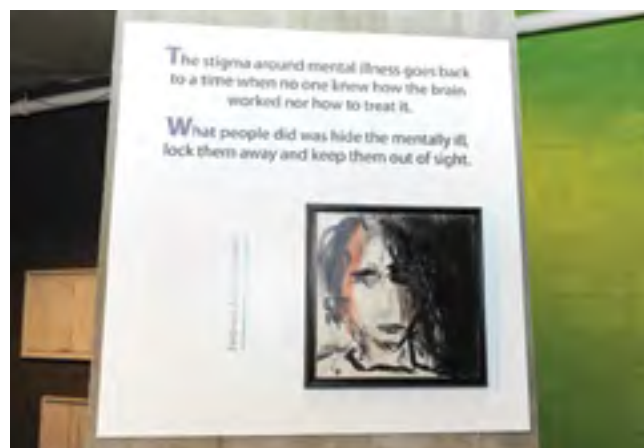
Increasing mental health literacy

Dr. Ziad Nahas, chair of psychiatry department at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) is one of the founding members of Embrace, an awareness support network for mental health in Lebanon and the Middle East. This group of medical professionals and volunteers from different backgrounds are dedicated to shifting perceptions of mental health.

And perceptions are very much linked to knowledge. "The stigma around mental illness goes back to a time when no one knew how the brain worked nor how to treat it. What people did was hide the mentally ill, lock them away and keep them out of sight," explains Nahas.

This has led to the launch of "Fikko el 3i2deh" (Untie the Knot) a mass media campaign, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, to raise awareness in Lebanon by means of public education and screening programs, to breakthrough the stigma via public awareness and to provide financial assistance to those who find it difficult to pay for treatment.

Nahas says that in Lebanon roughly two out of three individuals with a mental disorder do not seek treatment in part because of the fear of stigma. "Medical professionals are essential for easing people's minds about the importance of treatment," he explains. Nahas hopes to bring together all the key players in the medical field in the country—from varying professional affiliations—to rally for this cause and create nationwide awareness.



When Peggy Hanna, Assistant Vice President of Marketing and Communications at LAU needed medications following a major surgery that led to a series of serious complications, she found it difficult to come to terms with the stigma attached to being prescribed antidepressants even for a short-term period. "It was simply unacceptable to me—I perceived it as a sign of weakness," she explains. The turning point in her thinking occurred when her doctor explained that mental health issues are medical problems like cancer and heart disease, and need to be treated.

"Attitudes toward mental health are far from fixed and could change quite quickly if there is greater emphasis on increasing mental health literacy."

—Dr. Akl Adel, psychoanalyst at UMC-RH

"It's important to raise public awareness around mental health challenges so that people feel comfortable going to their doctor and allied health professionals and talking about personal issues that can ruin their life if left untreated," she says. "The medical and psychological treatment is often quite simple and brings about wellbeing rapidly. Today, when I remember the resistance I had accepting the medical treatment that helped me safely cross a very critical phase of my life, I always make fun of myself!"

And since one in four people, according to the World Health Organization, will suffer from a mental illness at some point in their lives, it is never too soon to begin this conversation. ■



Fikko el 3i2deh (Untie the Knot) is a mass media campaign in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health.

LAU becomes first regional university to issue tax-exempt bonds

All bonds are sold within first 120 minutes on the market

By Dalila Mahdawi



On August 7, LAU made history again when it became the first American university in the region to issue tax-exempt bonds. The university had previously hit the financial headlines in February 2008, when it became the first American university in the Arab world to successfully issue bonds. At that time, it issued USD 75 million in taxable bonds, all of which were settled in the same month.

This time, the university issued USD 15 million in tax-exempt bonds with a yield of 3.3 percent and USD 2.5 million in taxable bonds with a yield of 4 percent. All of which were sold within the first two hours of trading. The bonds were issued through the New York conduit issuer, Build NYC, while the underwriter was Wells Fargo. They will reach maturity in August 2018.

The bonds are “a very important milestone in the history of LAU,” declared Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra, LAU president. “We wanted LAU to not only have a physical presence in the U.S., but a robust financial presence there too,” he said in reference to the September inauguration of the New York Headquarters and Academic Center in midtown Manhattan.

He added: “LAU is an entrepreneurial university, taking bold but calculated decisions where others continue to be cautious. With these bonds we have succeeded in ascending a summit that many other universities in the region have yet to attempt.”

Institutions seeking to raise funds for the

construction or maintenance of facilities and infrastructure often issue municipal bonds. In LAU’s case, the bonds will be used to support the university’s significant financial undertakings in purchasing and renovating the New York facility.

Ahead of the bond issuance, Standard and Poor’s gave LAU a credit rating of AA-, indicating the university has a very strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. This extraordinary score is in spite of the political volatility of Lebanon, which has forced many investors to pull out of Beirut-based businesses in the last few years. Furthermore, and in what can only be seen as a seal of approval for LAU, the five-year bonds were all sold on the New York municipal bond markets within the first two hours.

“The rating is a testimony to the depth of investor faith in the LAU brand, and speaks directly to the operational and financial strength of the university,” said Dr. Cedar Mansour, LAU vice president, general counsel and special assistant to the president. “Since its beginnings as the first school for girls in the Ottoman Empire, LAU has always pioneered change and innovation.”

Emile Lamah, vice president for finance and chief financial officer at LAU said: “What makes the issuance of these bonds so significant is that the US financial market has indicated LAU is an institution with the same features, strengths and reliability as institutions operating in the US.”





Instilling passion and humility

Seasoned hospital CEO Joseph Otayek takes over the reigns of UMC-RH

By Leena F. Saidi

Following an intensive and inspiring stint as a volunteer with the Red Cross during Lebanon's civil war, Joseph Otayek realized that it was the health sciences and not mechanical engineering, in which he had a degree from AUB, that really captivated him. "Working with the most vulnerable people made me realize that I wanted to make a difference to their life," he recalls, "This pushed me into the bio-medical field."

Not one to wait around, he travelled to France and earned a master's degree in Biomedical Engineering from the Université de Technologie de Compiègne. Then, lured by new technology in business process engineering, Otayek was recruited by Eastman Kodak, where he worked in finance, IT, after sales, manufacturing and, even, marketing. In 1992, he consolidated his managerial skills with an M.B.A. at the prestigious INSEAD in France.

His farsightedness had paid off when in 1994 he was appointed CEO of the Hôtel-Dieu de France Hospital, where for the next 17 years he was a man on a mission. During that time he rose to the challenge of not only rebuilding an almost devastated hospital, but also overhauling its administration, processes and staff. In 2004, Hotel-Dieu's team ranked first in the national hospital accreditation system. Otayek had found his niche. His heart was and remains unequivocally in hospital management.

What do you bring to UMC-RH?

I bring my experience and my knowledge of the market and of best hospital practices, as well as my ability to engage and mobilize people. And my experience on the National Commission for the Reform of the Health Care System in Lebanon will also undoubtedly prove to be a major asset for my new position.

What is the interaction between LAU and UMC-RH?

A university teaching hospital is dedicated to treating patients but also to educating medical students and other healthcare professionals. It's tremendously important that the dean of the School of Medicine and the CEO of the hospital share the same vision and strategy for both institutions. They should have common goals with well-defined pathways and designated milestones, allowing them to move forward in the same direction. Development and empowerment of nurses is a key factor in a hospital's success but can only be achieved through close collaboration with the School of Nursing. A hospital's 150 different professions – creates a conducive environment for all of LAU's schools and faculties to develop training programs

What are your short-term and long term goals?

Rizk Hospital, one of the best community hospitals in Lebanon, was not an academic hospital. The challenge LAU must meet is

to transform it into a University Medical Center, while keeping its closeness to patients and the human relation quality of a community hospital. In the short term, we are setting a strategic plan to continue the transformation process started four years ago and are planning to implement quick fix operations during the first semester of 2014.

How do you plan to maintain the hospital's reputation for compassion without losing track of its profitability?

Although we are an academic institution we need to survive financially, and excellence is costly. The best means of financing a healthcare system in Lebanon is through maintaining an adequate mix in patient portfolio between those covered by public and those by private third party payers. The challenge remains to find the right balance that will allow UMC-RH to serve the community — especially the poorest — teach medical students, develop medical research and remain financially sustainable.

What would you like UMC-RH to be recognized for?

My short-term ambition is to have UMC-RH renowned for its excellent in healthcare, as well as its compassion and closeness to people. I see UMC-RH at the center of a national network of hospitals providing first-rate medical care, letting our medical school shine throughout Lebanon and the region.





Realistic dreamers

TEDxLAU
event dubbed
#TheCrossRoad

By Mehrnough Shafei

A number of political analysts have reported that the Arab Spring all but missed Lebanon. Yet, such thinking dismisses the significance of the quiet social movement that is occurring in the country's enlightened corners. TEDxLAU is one of the firm anchors of this movement as it brings people of different stripes together to share and exchange ideas.

Right before the official start of fall semester, over 300 eager participants descended upon LAU Beirut to take part in the highly anticipated TEDxLAU event dubbed #TheCrossRoad. The daylong affair featured 11 local and international speakers, who took to the stage and shared thought-provoking ideas, often personal and poignant. The speakers were aptly fashioned as "realistic dreamers" and a number of talks crossed the conceptual threshold between idealism and pragmatism.

Christine Arzoumanian, a founding member of the Society of Social Entrepreneurs, captured the national mood when she told the audience she harbored no illusions about the challenging socio-political situation in Lebanon. "I accept the reality of our country and I am not in denial but I choose to be an optimist," she underlined.

In a reversal of the brain drain trend, Arzoumanian made the choice to return to Lebanon after working abroad for many years—to the dismay of much of her family—a decision fueled by her desire to serve her country. For her it was small acts of kindness that are the most powerful form of resistance. "Lebanon has made me the strongest I could ever be," she declared to thunderous applause.



1



2



3

Building on the theme of optimism was Tom Fletcher, Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Lebanese Republic. "Anyone who has doubts about Lebanon's future should come to this event," he said. "Today, LAU's Beirut campus is the frontline for coexistence and for tolerance," he insisted after commending the attendees for their courageous positivity and their willingness to "fight for this Lebanon."

"I fight for my country peacefully," pointed out speaker Saeed Baayoun. "I use dance as my preferred weapon of expression," explained the LAU business student, who accompanied by the talented Syrian Dance Crew, showed that actions could speak louder than words.

The event tapped into LAU's rich vein of social activism and every aspect of the day was planned to advance the discussions instigated on stage vis-a-vis cleverly designed social spaces that encouraged participants to network and meet new people.

"The event offers a path of true discovery, where you ask the 'why' and 'how' of things," said Reine Azzi, event curator and instructor of moral reasoning. "This is where ideas are exchanged and how they become truly contagious," she enthused.

Azzi's energy and vitality were similarly contagious, as she managed to marshal the attendees and keep them captivated for the entire event. "This was one of the most engaged audiences we have ever had."

"Ted talks are one of the most powerful ways to put ideas into the world today," stressed event attendee Noelle Homsy, architect at Jo Geitani Architects.

"These talks were especially powerful because they did not gloss over the recent events that are facing the country," said event attendee Rita Haddad, an MBA student at AUB. "This demonstrates that LAU is not an ivory tower detached from society but rather a space where old verities can be challenged," she added.

Many participants, like Homsy said they left LAU's campus feeling moralized, buoyant and upbeat about the future. "A feeling definitely worth the cost of entry," she enthused.

"The event offers a path of true discovery, where you ask the 'Why' and 'How' of things."

—Reine Azzi, event curator and instructor of moral reasoning at the School of Arts and Sciences

1/ A huge group of volunteers work tirelessly to ensure the event is a success. Organizers: Abir Ward, Ali Rahal, Baraa Abou Hawili, Elsa Sade, Firas BouZeineddine, Ghida Ladki, Khalil Wana, Mia Melki, Mostafa Sakr, Nadia Asfour, Natasha Maria El Najjar, Nur Fakhoury, Sally Beydoun, Sara Ayoubi, Sarah A. Alaiwi, Sarine Bekarian, Shoug Al-Nafisi, Stephanie Farah, Tala B. Azzam, Wael K. Slika, Zayna B. Ayyad, Ziad Tannous. Designers: Hala H. Hassan, Sari Awada.

2/ TED is a nonprofit organization that began in 1984 devoted to 'Ideas Worth Spreading' bringing together people from three worlds: technology, entertainment, and design. Since then its scope has become ever broader—local, self-organized events are branded TEDx, where x= independently organized TED event.

3/ Tom Fletcher, Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Lebanese Republic



Nutrition graduates experience real-life settings

Hands-on learning enhances skills

By Naseem Ferdowsi

"What defined my internship is being part of a team that did everything possible to better the quality of life of other people."

—Shoug al Nafeesi, nutrition student

Putting knowledge to the test in a real-life setting is one of the most effective ways to learn and that is just what LAU's first class of nutrition graduates had an opportunity to experience over the past six to nine months. Thanks to the university's recently launched dietetic internship program, its graduates now have the chance to receive hands-on learning opportunities that bolster their classroom education and fulfill the internship requirement for candidates sitting for the Registration Examination for Dietitians, a test that allows graduates to become licensed dietitians in Lebanon.

"In addition to becoming extensively prepared for the exam, graduates had the opportunity to integrate academic skills and practice experience, as well as assume leadership in the fields of medical nutrition therapy, foodservice management and community health programs," commented Dr. Nadine Zeeni, assistant professor of nutrition and coordinator of the nutrition program.

With a 95 percent success rate achieved on the Registration Examination for Dietitians by LAU's first promotion, which graduated in Spring 2012, it is safe to say the nutrition undergraduate program and internship offering were extremely effective. "Despite the fact that it was our first graduating class in nutrition, its success rate was a major achievement, especially in comparison with similar, well-established programs," stated Zeeni.

The internship program relies on support from the University Medical

Center-Rizk Hospital (UMC-RH), which is able to accommodate 13 to 15 interns at a time, as well as other hospitals and agencies around the country including World Vision International, International Orthodox Christian Charities, Dialeb and the Chronic Care Center. These internship locations offer rotations in clinical nutrition, community nutrition and food service management in line with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

"It was a great experience that was very different from everything we learned theoretically. We were exposed to different real life cases and had the chance to practice what we learned, adding to our knowledge," said Iman Awada, a former nutrition intern at UMC-RH.

Another participant, Shoug Al Nafeesi, said, describing her internship experience, "I have so many memories of the nine months I spent at UMC-RH, including sitting around a table chatting with interns of other healthcare majors, which provided me with a multifocal understanding of different cases." She added, "What defined my internship is being part of a team that did everything possible to better the quality of life of other people." Highlights from her experience included having patients enthusiastically greet her as well as patients telling her how much better they felt as a result of her efforts.

Internship participants were honored for their achievements and exam success at a certificate ceremony at LAU on October 2, 2013. Faculty, staff and fellow nutrition students and graduates came together to recognize the dietetic internship accomplishments, and acknowledge the people that made it all possible. "Although the ceremony recognized the dietetic interns, it is only fair to tip our hats to the unsung heroes of the program: the teachers and coordinators. Their efforts provided me with a challenging internship where I was constantly learning," said Al Nafeesi.

Given the success of LAU's undergraduate nutrition program, there are plans to launch a graduate program in nutrition in the near future. "Offering a master's degree in nutrition will serve to carry out much needed studies on the determinants, incidence, prevention and intervention of obesity and its related chronic diseases," explained Zeeni.



Reviewing patient cases at UMC-RH with the healthcare team

New at LAU

Topnotch legal advisers

Spring 2014 to see a Masters in Business Law at LAU

By LAU staff

LAU is in the process of taking its first steps into the study of law with the launching of a Masters Degree in Business Law (LLM), which program coordinator, Dr. Elie Badr, hopes will come into fruition this coming spring 2014. Noticing the regional demand for a graduate degree in Law, LAU decided to respond to the market need. 'We hope to fill the gap for an LLM in Lebanon. It's a degree that's not very common here, particularly in the American education system,' Badr said.

LAU faculty members have been defining a comprehensive program, which will be based within the Business School. And with the help of a renowned team of local and regional consultants from the business law industry the curriculum of the LLM Degree is beginning to take shape. Through the field input of this

advisory council, the law graduates will then, themselves, be more capable to make an impact in business law.

The program is divided into two main strands: one focusing on International Law with a basis in Comparative Law and Foundation of International Law while the other tackling Business Law with a basis in Accounting, Finance and Strategy for Lawyers, and International Commercial Contracts. Students will gain theoretical and practical knowledge across a variety of fields with everything on offer from Private Public Partnerships and International Trade to International Corporate and Commercial Taxation and International Intellectual Property.

The course aims to graduate first-rate legal advisers and advocates, experienced in the practices of international law in all

its contexts, with an extensive knowledge in the technicalities of business law. For those looking to build a career in the region, electives in Islamic Banking and an Introduction to Lebanese Law are just the educational specialisms needed to get a head start in the industry.

The course aims to graduate first-rate legal advisers and advocates



Engineering an offshore future

LAU is set to launch a Bachelor of Engineering in Petroleum Studies

By LAU staff



Lebanon is poised to join the club of oil and gas producing nations. What was once thought impossible is becoming a distinct reality as surveys carried out by American and European companies in recent years confirmed that Lebanon has significant oil and gas wealth off the coast.

There has never been a better time to pursue Petroleum Studies in Lebanon, and to keep up with these developments

LAU will be launching a undergraduate degree in this field in the fall of 2014. In addition to the major, students will have an option to take up a minor in petroleum studies.

"This field will be a dominant factor in the future of Lebanon and we want to ensure that our students are well equipped to lead this growing discipline," says Dr. George Nasr, professor and dean of the School of Engineering. Adding, "The program reflects the university's commitment to excellence and innovation in education," said Nasr.

The exciting program is industrially oriented and will offer greater links between LAU's School of Engineering and the top employers in the field, as there is a growing demand on the job market for Petroleum Engineering.

"The program reflects the university's commitment to excellence and innovation in education."

—Dr. George Nasr, professor and dean of the School of Engineering

"A Petroleum Engineering graduate will have the ability to work in a variety of locations all over the world and more specifically in Lebanon and the Gulf region where large reserves exist and production is high," explained Nasr.

Indeed, for the motivated and serious students of this upcoming program, a well of opportunities awaits.



FEATURE

Tying the knot

The changing nature of marriage

By Leena F. Saidi



For over a century marriage has been eternalized through photography. Every household has that photo, the one of the bride and groom smiling at the camera and looking happy. Nowadays, there is no need to wait for photos to be developed, immediately with the use of a smartphone the image can be shared on Facebook and Instagram or sent instantaneously by WhatsApp.

“A happy marriage is a long conversation, which always seems too short.”

—French writer André Maurois (1885–1967)

Just like its images, marriage has changed dramatically over the years. Back then convenience played a major role in finding a partner, love came later, if at all. The black and white formal wedding photographs of the '30s and '40s usually show the couple standing straight and looking at the camera, not even holding hands.

This was the case of Zeinab Osseiran. It was 1946. She had graduated from Teacher Training College and was working in a school in Tabaris, when one day she was summoned to her aunt's. An elegant gentleman of a certain age was there. He spoke with enthusiasm of his life abroad. He was elegant, courteous and witty, a man of the world.

The next day her aunt told her that he wanted to see her again. Fifteen days later, the gentleman was set to buy the ring, but Zeinab was not ready to get married. “However, I accepted,” she said. Adding, “We were married within a fortnight and off I went to a country whose culture and language I knew nothing of.”

The marriage of convenience turned into one of love. Zeinab was one of the lucky ones, for many women at that time had the marriages arranged by matchmakers. “These were older ladies that would take prospective husbands to visit families, where there were girls of a marriageable age,” she recounted. “The groom and matchmaker would sit with the parents while the girl would enter to offer tea to the guests. If all went well, an arrangement was struck.”

These girls were even considered lucky by those who didn't get a chance to meet their future partners until the wedding, having been introduced through photographs. Normally pictures of potential brides would be sent to the man to choose from, after which his photo would be sent to the girl's parents. It was often the parents that brokered the deal.

>



Apart from convenience, an aspect of traditional marriage prevalent in the region is relationship by blood prior to marriage. In fact, the whole of the Middle East is termed a kinship culture. One of the reasons this tradition has been such a ubiquitous feature is that relatives tend to be well informed about each other's character, temperament, tastes and general reputation in the community. By marrying a cousin, there is continuity between the relationships of children and adulthood.

"As a paternal cousin, the daughter-in-law tends to reduce tension between father and son, and between brothers, noticeably after the retirement of the father and the marriage of his sons," Dr. Fuad I. Khuri, a former social scientist at the American University of Beirut, writes in a '70s paper in *Royal Anthropological Journal* of Great Britain and Ireland. He explains that a woman who marries outside the family is considered a "stranger."

With the advancement of industrialization, science and technology, new characteristics for a modern-day family gained favor: one being romantic love between husband and wife and the marriage is not for property or social status. The other being the idea that women are born with a motherly instinct to love and care for their children and the belief that relationships within the family are always more binding than those outside. "There are many links between socio-economic development and the modern family," says Dean of Students at LAU, Dr. Raed Mohsen.

One of the forces driving contemporary marriage around the world has been the increased emphasis on emotional bonds between husband and wife. Looks and physical attraction play a major part in bringing couples together. From being secondary emotions are now the primary force in play. Nowadays, one can meet their future spouse at university, the work place, a dinner party, the gym, on a plane and even on social media. Maya Chebli met her French husband after he asked her to befriend him on

Facebook. Again the image played an essential role. However, through "chatting" via the Internet they got to know each other and decided to meet. "A year and a number of encounters later, we got married and I moved to France to live with my husband," explains Chebli.

"People come into marriage thinking it will all be rosy and perfect then are surprised to learn that you have to work at it."

—Dr. Raed Mohsen, dean of students at LAU

Another consequence of modernization that is influencing traditional marriage is the postponement of marriage—people are getting married later in life. "Many people put off getting married due to financial insecurity, they want to establish themselves before they make such a commitment," explains Mohsen.

Many women have high-powered careers or simply wish to follow their dream and its lucky a number of jobs can these days be done remotely, allowing men to work from home. Tamer Habre is such a man. His wife is a journalist who travels the region extensively. He, a web designer, works from home and looks after their three-year-old son.

In traditional marriages, the wife looks upon her husband as the head of the household. These days the current attitude is that they have an equal say in all decisions. Since most women work, there is more expectation that husbands will help out at home. "The notion of stay-at-home husbands, like myself, is taking root in many countries, including the US and UK," says Habre.

Other than marrying outside their family's circle, people are also getting married at an older age, as their careers become a priority. This has led toward the breakdown of the traditional

Lebanese extended family—young people are moving out, going abroad and living on their own. Nowadays, couples don't even get married anymore, they date and date and date, for decades.

Modern marriage in Lebanon had a watershed moment in 2012, with the first couple ever to be wed in a civil marriage on Lebanese soil. Lebanon, a country with more than 18 officially recognized religious sects, has no institutional civil marriage. Religious authorities perform all marriages. Those wishing to have a civil marriage must marry outside the country.

Traditionally, Cyprus is the most popular destination for a civil marriage. However, the Civic Center for the National Initiative (*al-Markaz al-Madani li-al-Mubadara al-Wataniyya*) in Beirut, had allegedly received assurances from both the Ministries of Justice and Interior for Nidal Darwish to marry his bride. The Lebanese government rejected it. Finding themselves in the middle of a national dilemma, Nidal, a Shi'a and Khulud Sukkariyyeh, a Sunni, went ahead if only to prove a point, times were changing and so should the law. "We had no idea that our marriage would attract so much attention," admits Darwish.

Marrying an individual who is outside the kinship circle is, in contemporary times, very popular, but this also means that there is much stress on the ability of such relationships to last.

I do...until I don't

Indeed, today's 'modern' formula reads: go to school, get a job, get married, buy a house, have kids, get a divorce. Perhaps the most noteworthy trend of modern times has been the incipient shift toward a willingness to file for divorce.

"There has certainly been an increase in the number of couples seeking divorce," says Mohsen. To be sure, what was once a taboo phenomenon whispered amongst gossiping circles has become a relatively common occurrence. Many experts have offered explanations as to why divorce may be on the rise.

Jackline Smith knows first hand the pressures of marrying into a family as an outsider. "At first you are so in love during the courtship period that you do not really notice all the family politics," she says ruefully. "By the time the wedding bells started to ring I realized that I wasn't marrying just my husband-to-be, but his whole family," Smith says with a regretful shrug. After twenty years and two children, Smith, an American expat living in Beirut and her husband decided to call it quits. How does this sort of estrangement occur?

"It has to do with expectations," explains Mohsen. "People come into marriage thinking that it will all be rosy and perfect and they are surprised to learn that marriage is something you have to work at." He continues: "When problems are left unresolved they accumulate and can then cause a major explosion which is difficult to fix." One of the forces of modernity is that women are financially independent and Mohsen says that this can be a source of discomfort—"When women make money they are less likely to be tolerant for abuse and neglect," points out Mohsen.

This is something Mohsen certainly has a lot of experience with, in addition to his duties at LAU, he runs a counseling clinic where he sees people of all different stripes come in to try to attempt to save their marriage. "There has been an increase in the number of people who are willing to seek counseling for their marital problems," he says.

Many of the forces that have unwittingly eroded the traditional concept of marriage tend to be modernization forces. Thus



traditionally patriarchal norms cannot be maintained in modern marriage and need to be addressed. According to Mohsen the only way to keep a marriage healthy is to keep the lines of communication open—"if you don't speak up when there is a small problem, eventually everything will explode."

Modernization forces have ushered in social realities that have contributed to the rise of 'stranger marriages', and a side effect of that is that there has been an increased emphasis on emotional bonds between the husband and wife. In other words, when individuals marry outside kinship circles there is this assumption that the marriage is not for property or social status—there is a heightened emphasis on romantic love. "Romantic love doesn't always sustain itself, eventually it will disappear and some couples will run into problems," he stresses.

For American statesman, scientist and philosopher, Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), it was best to, "Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, and half-shut afterwards. ■



Across the generations

Forming firm relationships and discovering unwavering loyalty

By Selim Njeim & Linda Dahdah



Established in Beirut in 1835, the American School for Girls (ASG), was founded by American Presbyterian missionaries as the first edifice for a girl's school built in the Ottoman Empire. Nearly a century later, in 1927, the American Junior College for Women (AJCW) came into being. As the AJCW continued to develop, in 1948-49 it became the Beirut College for Women (BCW). Subsequent to accepting men into some programs, BCW became the Beirut University College (BUC) in 1973. It was not until 1994 that this institution took its current name of the Lebanese American University (LAU).

LAU's ancestors have gone beyond the academic services they so generously offered their students. They molded their personalities in a way nothing else could, and left indelible marks, still present until the present day.

"It's important that people stay connected to their university and give back to the institution that molded them."

—Roula Daoud Douaidy ('78)



Like mother, like daughter... and her daughter

A couple of simple questions about her time at the Beirut University College (BUC) were enough to start Roula Daoud Douaidy (A.A.S., '78) recounting stories her mother, Amal Khartabil Douaidy (A.A., '53), had told her of her days attending the then Beirut College for Women (BCW). The family's progressive attachment to the institution first started with Douaidy's grandmother, Wadiha Kaddoura Khartabil. "My grandmother broke all the established 'rules'. Back in the day, the role of a female in society was mainly limited to staying at home and cooking," reminisces Douaidy. "But my grandma went to college instead."

Wadiha Kaddoura Khartabil came from an erudite family, where pursuing – and furthering – one's education was highly encouraged. "We have always been known as an avant-gardist family. There were many challenges, of course, but when one's determined to become the person they want to be, both education and practical life skills are necessary, and that's exactly what this institution has been giving its students," says Douaidy with a smile.

She talks about how proud her mother and grandmother were when she first joined BUC. "I think they might have been just a

little bit more excited than I was, actually," she comments, jokingly. "My mother is so emotionally attached to this establishment that she used to help fundraise all the way from Geneva."

For Douaidy, the campus was a stark reflection of Lebanon's coexistence. "The University was a safe haven for us students. We were from different religions and political affiliations, but it didn't matter. We were all good friends," she says.



They want their city back

In Douaidy's book, people's bright futures are shaped, for the most part, by the education they get. She owes the person she has become to her academic experience and the practical skills she has

acquired while learning. Roula Douaidy, now a successful and very active event organizer, is committed to her cause: never to leave the oasis that is Beirut to dry.

Despite the bad economy and the ubiquitous corruption in the country, she has never given up on her independent projects and events. "We want Beirut back. We want all the youth that are abroad to come back to this beautiful city," she adds, emotionally.

Still loyal to their alma mater, the Douaidy's now make a point to attend most of the events organized by LAU, such as various fundraisers and gala dinners. "It's important that people stay connected to their university and give back to the institution that molded them," points out Douaidy. She also stresses that her loyalty to LAU is such that her daughter, Tala, a recent graduate, is the fourth generation of the family to have attended the university.



Nostalgia, unbound by space

Sylvia Damiani Haddad (B.A., '59), former BCW student, is the proud daughter of Alice Asaad Damiani (A.A., '27), former student at the American Junior College for the Women. Damiani came from an educated family that placed much value upon learning. Her father, a cultured pastor, and her mother, proficient in four languages, always managed to find the means to tear down whatever obstacle stood in their daughter's way. The target was a diploma, and she had to get it, come hell or high water.

Haddad's daughter, Rula Haddad Norregaard, was the third generation of her family to attend BUC, where she completed 54 credits. Unfortunately, as she had to relocate to the United States, she could not graduate from her beloved university. She still recalls her experience,



although relatively brief, but evidently a memorable one, fondly. "In the Sates, I went to a university with 400 students per class, a campus so huge that a bus was required to transport us between classes and where very few had heard of a tiny country called Lebanon," shares Norregaard. "Unlike BUC's intimate and friendly campus, where my education had begun."

"I decided to apply to BUC because it offered creative fields of study. And that it did, very well."

—Rula Haddad Norregaard, former student

All the way from the U.S., she continues to feel nostalgic for BUC. Her decision to study at BUC was not the direct result of the numerous stories she had heard from friends and family, and of those there were plenty. Norregaard's choice was heavily based on conviction.

"I decided to apply to BUC because it offered creative fields of study. And that it did, very well," she says. "I loved that I could choose which class to take, and at the time and day that suited me. From my Social Studies class to Drafting for Interior Design, I enjoyed every moment. Each class meant meeting new friends... each class meant freedom to discuss and think creatively."

In the winter of 1985, the trifecta Alice, Sylvia and Rula, went together to a reception celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of BUC.

An Evocative Visit

Aida Hamadeh Younes (A.A., '49) had the experience of a lifetime at American Junior College for Women (AJCW) formerly ASG, so much so that she fervently encouraged her children Kamil (A.A.S., '78) and Lina Younes (E.C.D., '72) to apply to BUC and BCW, respectively. They are not the only ones

from Younes' immediate family to have frequented the establishment, though. Four of her grandchildren have already gotten their diplomas from LAU.

Maha Talih Sayegh (B.S., '97) was her first grandchild to study at the university, as we know it today. With her 86-year-old grandmother, she visited the Beirut campus, where Younes insisted on having her picture taken before Sage Hall, a spot very close to her heart. "I loved AJCW and I still love LAU. All my grandchildren have studied here," she says proudly, adding that excitement would wash over her every time a new grandchild enrolled at the university.

"I remember my days here when I listen to my grandchildren relate day-to-day episodes at LAU. I feel as if I'm still here on campus, with them, through them," recounts Younes. "I feel like I have left footprints."

"I thank my grandma for making us fall in love with education and, by extension, with this institution," says Sayegh as she looked around, taking in her surroundings. "Look at how happy she is – this is a very special day for her."

Sayegh describes her journey at university as "liberating." She, as a French-educated high school student, had not had the freedom to choose her classes, nor take subjects that interested her. At LAU, she could do all of that. She is now contemplating returning to LAU to study fine arts.

"I remember my days here when I listen to my grandchildren relate day-to-day episodes at LAU."

—Aida Younes ('49)

Kazuo Ishiguro, acclaimed author of "Never Let me Go", says in his book, "The memories I value most, I don't ever see them fading." Memory, a large-scale concept, has countless quirks that could sometimes be difficult to interpret. The act of remembering might, at times, play tricks on the person who is trying to evoke past happenings, causing disorientation and slight confusion. It is clear that it is not the case for LAU alumni, who, through a sharp flashbulb memory, use their respective pasts as intangible mementos they carry around, for a clearer understanding of their present.



Furnishing the future

ASHA grants provide LAU with equipment and furniture to enhance student life

By LAU Staff



LAU is always looking for ways to enhance the student experience. Besides delivering innovative and challenging degree programs, the university seeks to ensure that its facilities and physical surroundings help nurture student talent. With technology evolving on an almost daily basis, however, the needs of the LAU community are constantly changing.

Alumni and donors play an essential part in helping the university keep pace with these evolving needs. Its benefactors believe in the university's commitment to academic excellence, student centeredness, the education of the whole person, and the formation of leaders in a diverse world.

American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA), a department within the United States Agency for International Development (more commonly known as USAID), has been a faithful supporter of LAU's teaching and research facilities for many years. As its name indicates, ASHA supports American education institutions and hospitals outside the United States. Its longstanding support for LAU has empowered the university to better serve student and faculty needs with the latest technology and equipment.

"LAU's relationship with ASHA is one built on trust and partnership," said Dr. Sonia Hajjar, assistant vice president for Finance – Budget and Grants. "Their support not only enables LAU to provide state-of-the-art facilities, but also supports the university's commitment to ongoing distinction in teaching and research."

As the intellectual hub of the Beirut campus, the Riyadh Nassar Library is intended to inspire and perpetuate academic curiosity. Through ASHA, the library has become an even more user-friendly space with modern furniture including swivel chairs, photocopiers, compact shelving units and workstations. ASHA grants have enabled LAU to create 63 smart classrooms as well, making it a national leader in high-tech classroom education.

The university's health science majors have greatly benefitted too. "Through the ASHA grant, LAU has been able to provide students with the best simulation models," said Dr. Sola Aoun, associate professor and assistant dean for clinical affairs. With the grant, LAU acquired iStan, one of the most advanced simulation human mannequins in the world. One of a kind in Lebanon, the iStan mannequin is a crucial training tool for LAU's medical, nursing nutrition and pharmacy students.

"Simulation is central to education in the health sciences and enables students to bridge the gap between theory and practice," said Aoun. Pharmacy student Caroline Dernigoghossian concurred, "Simulation exercises allow us to manage the patient case on our own. It is very beneficial training since it encourages students to start using their own clinical judgment from early on in their degree programs."

Over the course of many years, ASHA grants have also provided equipment for everything from 3D printers to sophisticated engineering machinery and wireless technology. "Facilities at LAU, such as the labs, machines and equipment, have been extremely valuable in helping me pursue my engineering degree," said student Carlyn Khoury.

LAU is currently halfway through a two-year ASHA grant worth USD 900,000, which will be used to purchase equipment such as laboratory equipment for the School of Engineering and School of Arts and Science, as well as computers, lecterns and projectors. "LAU is proud of the facilities it has been able to offer students through the generosity of the American people," said Dr. Elie Badr, assistant to the president, and strategy officer for External Projects and Related Entities.

Op-Ed

Education and reconciling our differences

By Dr. Bassel F. Salloukh

What is the role of education in a country and a region living through a period of great transformations? What role does the classroom play, as we try to create an ethos of negotiating, peacefully and democratically, conflicts that may appear to be rooted in ostensibly immutable religious, ethnic, or sectarian animosities? These are not mere theoretical questions.

Today's classroom is perhaps the last democratic space in a world laden with all kinds of fabricated atavisms. It is the site where multiple battles of ideas are fought, as we shape not only the future of this country but also the Arab world. One of the most enduring values of a liberal arts education is that it offers a liberating counterpoint to the reductionist narrative advanced by proponents of artificially-constructed binaries: the 'us' versus 'them' opposites Edward Said spent a lifetime battling.

Take the case of Lebanon for example, where politicians, so-called experts, and ordinary people often reminded us that its sectarian problems are part of a visceral hatreds deeply rooted in a time-honored sectarian culture. There is, however, a very powerful critique to this kind of historicist view of Lebanon's ordeals. On this latter view, sectarianism in Lebanon is neither immemorial, nor is it part of a static Lebanese culture. Rather, sectarian politics in contemporary Lebanon is historically the product of overlapping local and external material, and ideational struggles that transpired around the middle of the nineteenth century in Ottoman Mount Lebanon, later institutionalized in *Grand Liban* (Greater Lebanon) and the independent republic, and perpetually reproduced in the postwar era via a complex institutional and clientelistic ensemble.

To make the case for this kind of contrapuntal historicist reading of sectarianism is deeply liberating and rewarding. It allows you to imagine, borrowing from Michel Foucault, a very different 'history of the present' than the

one imposed upon us by the proponents of the myth of perpetual sectarian sentiments and conflict.

Where but in the dialogical dynamics of the classroom can one undertake this kind of genealogical analysis of the present to open up possibilities for a different kind of future. It is there that one can begin the difficult process of exposing students to alternative truths and cultivating a new critical consciousness. Invariably, the starting point for this new consciousness, as the great Italian intellectual Antonio Gramsci reminds us in his *Prison Notebooks*, is recognizing that we are all 'a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in [us] ... an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory.... therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory.'

A critical and dialogical education is perhaps the best preparation for this kind of personal stocktaking. It is critical because it embraces an ethos of deep historicism suspicious of all kinds of presumed essences. It is dialogical because it is committed to everyone's right to express her or his opinion, democratically, in, as James Tully insists, 'a dialogue governed by the conventions of mutual recognition, continuity and consent.'

The death and destruction that followed the popular uprisings in the Arab world, and the failure hitherto to engineer an enduring postwar peace in Lebanon, are proof of how far we are from resolving in practice our multiple and overlapping differences peacefully and democratically. Yet this should not be cause for despair. Great transformations entail great sacrifices. Instead, we should go back, literally, to the drawing boards of our classes. We should take an inventory of our modern but historically constructed identities, and subject our inherited dogmas to profound critical scrutiny. Only then can we cultivate a new ethos that may help us reconcile our differences peacefully and democratically.



Dr. Bassel F. Salloukh is associate dean of the School of Arts and Sciences and associate professor of Political Science at the Lebanese American University.



Stacks and the digital

LAU's vast library collections honor both the past and the present

By Selim Njeim

With a little over half a million print volumes between the Riyad Nassar Library in Beirut and the Byblos Library, the Lebanese American University (LAU) is a repository for wealthy, multidisciplinary collections, not only pertaining to academic research purposes, but also to general culture and leisure. Loyal to international standards, LAU libraries have taken upon themselves to optimize the quality of the various services offered, in the hope of maximizing student satisfaction and academic excellence. How is the university keeping up with modern times and all ensuing changes, though?

In a time where physical books are being taken over by, *entre autres*, computers, phones, tablets and electronic readers, our libraries have been trying to keep up with contemporary trends while staying loyal to tradition. "We will never stop ordering print books, but 50 percent of the journals have already been converted to electronic versions," says university librarian Cendrella Habre. However, for those who still enjoy leafing through magazines, Habre left those on art and fashion in their physical form.

In a survey of 75 LAU students conducted by the LAU Magazine & Alumni Bulletin, 56 percent said they would rather study using a physical book, while the remaining 44 percent preferred to read off their phones and tablets.

she is able to order them through the interlibrary loan system.

Habre added that although the library is still, somehow, traditional, this is not true of the services it offers. Although the classification system might still fall under "the old category style", LAU has been exerting effort to turn its libraries into attractive and comfortable venues with out of the norm experiences. "Our libraries are not just spaces where students come to study. They are cultural sites exhibiting rare items and reproductions of renowned paintings, too," says Habre. With completely separate quiet and group work areas, every student can choose where best to complete their tasks.

"Our libraries are not just where students come to study. They are cultural sites, too."

—Cendrella Habre, university librarian

Abir Ward, instructor of English communication skills and literature at LAU, vouches for the helpfulness of the online databases, which help researchers find any book, document or manuscript from around the world, from the comfort of their seats. As a literature major, Ward enjoys reading physical books, too. "I find that the open stacks at LAU provide the perfect setting for traditional researchers; as if the weight of the books translates into the seriousness of the project at hand, hardcover enthusiasts find an unexplained thrill in physically holding and reading a book," she commented.

The pursuit of knowledge is now less challenging than it used to be, knowing that the barriers have been broken down by the internet and easy accessibility to information. LAU has indeed followed suit. With more than 100,000 e-books and 57,000 full text academic journals free to be accessed by students and faculty, as well as the interlibrary loan system, research is not only encouraged, but also made easier.

With the number of computers and scanners increasing yearly, book fairs on both campuses at the beginning of each semester, and a full-fledged public relations and marketing effort to reach out to the community, the LAU Libraries are trying to keep up with the 'screen generation' and offer the best services possible," concluded Habre.



For Rita Maroun, senior psychology student at LAU and avid reader, the Library is perfect in the sense that it offers traditional and novel services. "There have been times when I've laid out 7-10 books and just dug into them for the information needed," said Maroun. Now in the process of writing a research proposal to affix to her graduate school applications, she sometimes needs volumes unavailable at the LAU Libraries. With a couple of clicks,



Looking to the future

Dr. Haidar Harmanani stays one step ahead

By Leena F. Saidi



"We need to be producers of technology, not just consumers."

—Dr. Haidar Harmanani,
professor of computer science

Two decades on, providing students with the opportunity to perfect their computer skills, foster creativity and think outside the box is what keeps Dr. Haidar Harmanani continuously striving for innovative incentives. Harmanani is professor of computer science at LAU's Department of Computer Science and Mathematics. "For almost 20 years, I have witnessed LAU's liberally progressive and supportive environment promote excellence," he says, proudly adding, "And it is because of this that my students were recruited by multinational giants such as Intel, Microsoft and Google."

Having completed his doctorate at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, Harmanani returned to Lebanon in 1994. He immediately took up the post of assistant professor in computer engineering and science at the university's Byblos campus. "When I first started, we had two buildings and no Internet. We used to share computers," he recalls with a smile. From there his career thrived as he steadily ascended the academic ranks. Today he is also associate dean of the School of Arts and Sciences.

"I believe that students should be encouraged to go into a discipline where they can gain the expertise to become entrepreneurs rather than employees," he stresses. It was Harmanani's entrepreneurial spirit and remarkable ability to mobilize resources that made him one of the forces behind LAU's Computer Science Summer Institute at the Byblos campus, aimed at enhancing high-school students' computer skills.

"Creating opportunities for young people to learn about technology and to be creative is fundamental to achieving the ultimate goal of transforming our society into one where we are producers of technology, not just consumers," he explains. "We know for a fact that some of our summer camp students are now enrolled at the University. It is great to see them and to watch how they have grown."

However, in order to provide a first-rate education Harmanani is adamant about the importance of accreditation. He was the principal coordinator for the accreditation in 2010 of the University's

Bachelor of Science degree program in computer science, making it the first and still the only such program in Lebanon to be ABET-accredited.

In recognition for his outstanding performance, Harmanani became an ABET evaluator in 2009. On a yearly basis since then, he has been visiting universities in the US to evaluate their computer science and, since 2013, computer engineering programs. "ABET is the stamp of quality for academic programs," he says.

It was Harmanani's capacity for strategic thinking and willingness to break down barriers that made him an ideal expert for the consulting arm of the university: the University Enterprise Office (UEO), which recently signed an agreement with Princess Nora Bint Abdul Rahman University (PNU) in Saudi Arabia. He currently leads the team that is assisting with the structural review and curricular overhaul of the College of Social Work.

To this rich professional background, Harmanani adds many influential scholarly publications and numerous prestigious international honors, awards and committee chairmanships. He is a senior member of IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) and ACM (Association of Computing Machinery), among others.

As for the future, Harmanani hopes to see LAU concentrate more on graduate programs, another cause close to his heart. "The future of computer science lies in convergence and affiliates," he says. "This will involve working with other schools to create new programs that will cross boundaries. The future is vertical rather than horizontal."

With research interests including electronic design automation, high-level synthesis, and cluster parallel programming, Harmanani is pleased to see the medical field tending more towards technology such as body sensors that detect health issues or the lab-on-a-chip for instant analysis of a drop of blood. "This is the direction I want us to go in as we move forward," he confides.

LAU students hit the stage at *Masrah al Madina*

By Linda Dahdah

*Successful play Majnoun
Yehki directed by LAU
Theater Instructor Lina
Khoury gave the university's
promising talents the
opportunity to work with
Lebanon's drama figures.*



Ten months after staging "Mathhab" at LAU, Stage Director and Theater Instructor Lina Khoury's "Majnoun Yehki" became the talk of the town as crowds steadily flocked to a packed *Masrah al-Madina* from October 3 to November 17, 2013.

Both plays are adapted from the 1977 Tom Stoppard's "Every Good Boy Deserves Favour", about two men – one insane and one political dissident – who share a cell in a Russian psychiatric hospital. "Mathhab" and "Majnoun Yehki" show how ignorance, intolerance, sectarianism, gender inequality and religion control archaic Arab societies, paralyzing their people by stemming freedom of expression and freedom of thought.

While "Mathhab" was part of the academic curriculum, as one of the university's two annual major productions mainly involving LAU students (see *LAU Magazine & Alumni Bulletin Volume 15, issue no 2, Spring 2013*), the second went public with a prestigious cast including renowned actors Nada Abou Farhat, Gabriel Yammine and famous composer Ziad Rahbani among others.

"I simply fell in love with the play. The topic is so relevant to what is currently happening in the region that I immediately started thinking of adapting it for a wider audience engaging professional actors," said Khoury.

When the director told Aline Salloum that she would keep her role in the play – as the dissident's daughter – the recent graduate was overwhelmed with excitement. "This was the most touching thing I had ever heard. I felt so honored and proud," she said. "I have learnt so much from this experience, both on a

professional and personal level. While the acting was demanding and intense, I was working with my idols, talking to them, laughing with them and sharing emotions with them. This is a time that I will never forget," she added.

For Dr. Mona Knio, head of the Department of Communication Arts, students couldn't dream of a better opportunity. "This is the best internship and professional experience ever," she declared.

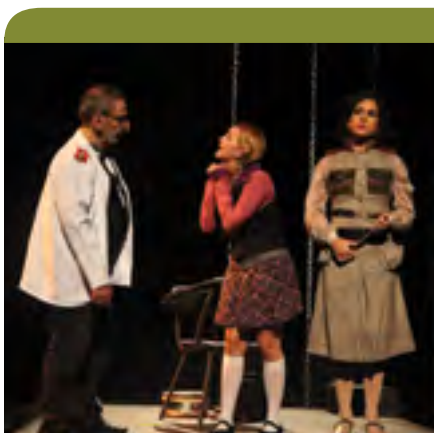
In fact, from acting and singing to production management, costume design and lighting, around 30 LAU students and 10 graduates worked on "Majnoun Yehki".

Khoury says that she loves providing students with such occasions. "When students excel at what they do, why replace them? It was only normal for me to keep them. I wished someone had given me a similar chance when I was starting!"

A member of the make-up crew, education student, Naila Al Hares, has been involved in plays and productions at LAU for around three years now. "I deeply appreciate Khoury's faith in us. This simply pushes me to pursue my career in theater," she said. "People always discourage communication arts students, saying that there are no work opportunities for them in the country unless they are rich or famous, but what happened with us proves otherwise."

*"This is the best internship
and professional experience
ever."*

—Dr. Mona Knio, associate professor
of theater in the Department of
Communication Arts



Weaving cultural traditions together

By Natalie Shooter

“The credit really goes to those who stitched these pieces. They work for so little money yet make the most beautiful things.”

—Dr. Yasmine Dabbous is an assistant professor of journalism and media studies

By day, Dr. Yasmine Dabbous is an assistant professor of journalism and media studies at LAU, as well as the director of the university's Institute of Media Training and Research. A serious scholar, she has written extensively on the role of media in the Middle East. Out of academia though, the media professor is known for her talent as a jewelry artist, a passion that reveals another side to her and brings a creative cultural vision to her university career.

Dabbous' own style might be said to be unorthodox. She embraces the traditional and its modern variation, as well as wearing a colorful veil she also sports a number of piercings. Often, pinned to her shirt is one of her own vibrant creations. This time it was a brooch made from the embroidered fabric of a Palestinian hat decorated with a silver Yemeni earring that belonged to her grandmother.

Her apartment reveals a fascination with the past – it's filled with unusual, vintage furniture, mostly collected from weekend trips to the antique shops of Basta. In the corner a Singer sewing machine sits next to an elegant 1950s orange sofa. Close by is a low retro pencil-legged coffee table with a decorative iron *Ashura* flag.

Dabbous' experimentation with fabric ironically began during a course in fashion design, which she failed miserably, at The Art Workshop in Hamra. “I found it so difficult. You need to be able to use a sewing machine and be very exact. I'm very clumsy, so it didn't work at all,” she laughs. Drawn to the imperfections that came with sewing by hand, the artist began

to experiment with a handmade brooch technique learned on the course. She took scissors to bags, wall hangings and clothes she had collected on her travels, reusing fabric for her own jewelry collection.

She brings out a pile of her handmade brooches and necklaces, reeling through the countries – Uzbekistan, Guatemala, Palestine, Mexico, Afghanistan, Yemen – that the materials came from. Now, when attending academic conferences, whether in Amman or Rabat, any free moment she spends in pursuit of the latest treasure. Avoiding the often mainstream, cheap or modern fabrics of the souk, Dabbous has found her fabrics everywhere from hidden basement shops to people's homes.

Her brooches are awash with color, cobalt blues sit next to dusty reds and vintage fabrics gathered in rose shapes are decorated with delicate beads or an elaborate embroidered square pendant with hanging tassels, akin to a badge of honor. Her necklaces are part tribal, part delicate – a fabric rope lined with tassels and beads or leather threads hung with eccentric lucky charms. Each piece intertwines cultural traditions through fabric.

The media professor turned jewelry designer's work promotes the region's colorful craft traditions. She brings out an impressive floor-length rural Palestinian dress from the early twentieth century, which she soon plans to work with. The delicate hand stitched pattern in fluorescent greens and pinks is truly impressive. “The credit really goes to those who stitched these pieces. They work for so little money yet make the most beautiful things,” she says clutching the dress. “Through my jewelry I feel like I am celebrating their work.”

For Dabbous, creating her hand-made jewelry has become a release. “My work at LAU is very academic,” she says. “This is so different. It's a tremendous escape.” Her jewelry pieces are a way of reviving craft traditions that stretch back into the depths of history. It feels like a kind of rebellion against the contemporary, mass produced product that defines our age. Here, speed is not of the essence.

www.ethnictree.com





Learning the ropes

Future democracy leaders developing full throttle

By Ara Arzoumanian

After three months of learning about leadership, it was time for members of the Leaders for Democracy (LFD) Fellowship Arabic Program to take their talents back home.

At a closing ceremony on December 10, 22 participants from 11 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries came together a final time to reflect on their new skills.

"If there ever was a time in the history of the Arab world when strong leaders are needed, it is now," said Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara, LAU president. "The change will begin as soon as you return to your respective countries and implement everything that you have learned and experienced here at LAU and in Lebanon."

Funded by the U.S. State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), the program provides courses in leadership, democracy, communication and conflict resolution. Fellows then put their knowledge to the test with a work placement at an organization in Lebanon.

Egyptian national, Mary Ebrahim, worked on a project to combat sexual abuse and

exploitation of Syrian refugee children in the Western Bekaa with Lebanon Family Planning Association. "The placement allowed me to build on my experience working with victims of sexual abuse," she said. "Despite the happenings and turmoil in Egypt, I have come to realize that we are still better off than most."

U.S. Embassy Second Secretary MEPI Coordinator, Erik Ryan, spoke as the fellows received their certificates of participation. "A key leadership quality is to know when to follow and when to lead," he said. "Make changes for the better as you become the leaders of your home countries, making them inclusive of all people and of all ideas."

"There is a fantastic vibe this year and it is great to see the incredible interaction of participants and management," Julia Ganson, MENA program manager at Maxwell School of Syracuse University had pointed out when the course began. "The participants need to know about leadership, as well as how to establish think tanks and NGOs, and learn about negotiation, communication and conflict resolution," she pointed out.

Before the Arab Spring, the programs focused on how to bring about more democracy, but currently the emphasis has shifted to what to do after these regimes have fallen, with special focus on democracy building, constitution writing, and civil society development.

University Enterprise Office Director, Walid Touma, told the fellows they could help strengthen the culture of democracy in their native countries. "It is up to each nation to define the shape, extent and nature of their democratic system." He highlighted the challenges of working with people from different cultures but noted how successfully the LDF fellows came together through teamwork and nonviolent communication. Emphasizing the transformational effect of the program, Touma added: "You are not the same people today as you were when you first arrived."

"The program keeps getting better and better, and its strength lies in the high qualification and experience of the lecturers and trainers," said Montasser Adaili who hails from Tunis. "This training is a golden opportunity for me to develop my leadership techniques and broaden my knowledge of politics and civil society. It has provided me invaluable tools on how

to launch a democracy project back in my own country."

The training lectures and seminars include a host of LAU professors, US Embassy personnel and key Lebanese figures, among them former interior minister Ziad Baroud, who is lecturing on 'The Role of Leadership in Political Transitions'. "The time is ripe for such undertakings and LAU's role is primordial in furthering this initiative," said Baroud. "Interacting with participants, some of whom were very active in their respective countries, will widen my outlook on the region, as I hope my experience will broaden their horizon and skills."

"What I have learned will allow me to translate my ideas into concrete projects on the ground for a better future for Lebanon and my countrymen," said Miriam Al Zahabi from Beirut.

"The participants are highly engaged," commented Dr. Makram Ouais, assistant professor of Political Science and International Affairs at the university's Department of Social Sciences, as well as academic and review coordinator of the program. "We are hopeful that this program will enable them to make a significant contribution and impact in good governance in their respective countries."

Started seven years ago, LDF programs in English were hosted at Maxwell School of Syracuse University in the US. In addition, for the past three years, Arabic versions of the course have been held in the MENA region, with the last two taking place at AUB.

The current participants are soon to meet with alumni that took part in the previous programs. Every year a reunion is organized in the region. Istanbul is the chosen location for this year's get together in December 2013. Aside from workshops and seminars, these gatherings are about connecting, re-connecting, and networking, and often result in the development of common projects.

"There is a fantastic vibe this year and it is great to see the incredible interaction of participants and management."

—Julia Ganson, MENA program manager at Maxwell School of Syracuse University



New Faculty

Edited by Natalie Shooter



HANI ASFOUR

Architect, Hani Asfour recently joined the School of Architecture and Design as adjunct faculty of foundation studies. Asfour received his undergraduate degree in Architecture Design at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and later a master's in architecture from Harvard University. Combining design expertise with entrepreneurship, he has founded projects as varied as Polypod, a multi-disciplinary collaborative design studio, Beirut Creative Cluster, an association promoting media services, research and development and Visualizing Palestine, a factual rights-based narrative through creative visuals. "LAU's liberal, supportive environment allows me to challenge myself to do new things," he says. Adding, "I hope to help students become more attuned to the beauty in the world and thus better designers."



DR. DIA BANDALY

Dr. Dia Bandaly recently joined the School of Business as assistant professor of operations management. In 2012, he was granted his Ph.D. in operations management from the John Molson School of Business at Concordia University in Canada. During which time he taught and continued to do so at McGill University for a further year. With over eleven years of industrial experience, his areas of research interests lie in supply chain risk management and supply chain network design, as well as product and process design. His publications have appeared in a number of peer-reviewed journals.



VANESSA DAMMOUS

Practicing architect and LAU B.Arch. alumni, Vanessa Dammous, recently joined as a part-time faculty member to teach architecture and interior architecture studios. Her educational background brings together a wealth of multidisciplinary creative studies from a degree in Fine Arts from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts de Lyon in France, to an Erasmus Program in stage design at Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma in Italy and a master's in product design from the Domus Academy in Milan, also in Italy. She brings years of experience as a practicing interior architect and creative director through working within film and video clip set design to window dressing for Rectangle Jaune. She also works as an independent furniture designer.



MAHMOUD GHOUZAIL

Mahmoud Ghouzail joined LAU Byblos campus in October 2012 and this summer became a full-time faculty member in the School of Nursing. After graduating with a master's in nursing from AUB, during which he received various awards for excellence, Ghouzail worked as a care coordinator at the university's Medical Center. As part of his master's degree, he took up a short residency at the John Hopkins Institute in Baltimore, in the US, where he trained in nursing recruitment and retention, as well as health information systems management. Ghouzail brings together the academic training and practical hands-on experience to enrich the coaching of a new generation of nurses.



PIERRE HAGE-BOUTROS

Pierre Hage-Boutros graduated in interior architecture at the Institute of Fine Arts at the Lebanese University. Before joining as a lecturer in the School of Architecture and Design, Hage-Boutros taught at AUB, ALBA and USEK, where he became the department chair of the latter. In 2006, he co-founded with architect Rana Haddad, DBLU, a design and architecture practice-workshop, which takes an interdisciplinary approach to design, varying from remodeling interiors to urban installations. Hage Boutros is an active interior architect who has had installations and performance works in cities such as Geneva and Algiers. "LAU has become an important academic institution, especially within the architecture and design fields," he says. "Working at LAU is an opportunity to interact creatively with talented faculty and motivated students."



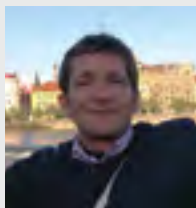
DR. HUSSEIN HASSAN

Dr. Hussein Hassan recently joined as assistant professor of nutrition. He received his Ph.D. in food process engineering from McGill University in Canada and has won numerous awards for his work, such as the George Stewart International Competition Award from the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) and the Stumbo Paper Competition Award (2010 and 2011) from the Institute of Food Thermal Processing Specialists (IFTPS, USA). Hassan's research interests include identifying and preventing the occurrence of toxic residues and improving the shelf life of foods. Outside of academia, Hassan is involved in Lebanese community projects with NGOs, lecturing in villages on the best food storage and hygiene practices. "My main goal is to positively contribute, through my research, to the health of the Lebanese population," he says.



DR. MOHAMMAD JIZI

After graduating from the University of Durham in the UK with a Ph.D. in accounting and finance, Dr. Mohammad Jizi returns to LAU as assistant professor of accounting, having previously obtained both his bachelor and master's in business administration from the university. Jizi's professional career began as an internal auditor in the banking sector, where he gained extensive experience in developing strategic audit plans. Jizi later joined the Advisory and Internal Audit Services at PricewaterhouseCoopers, where he had a leading role in several consultative and business process re-engineering projects in Lebanon and the region. As well as being published in renowned academic journals, his research work on corporate governance and financial reporting has also been presented at international academic conferences.



DR. MARK KANNING

Dr. Mark Kanning recently joined the Hospitality and Marketing Department as assistant professor. Since earning his Ph.D. from Clemson University in South Carolina, in the US, Kanning has taught over 135 higher education courses. He also brings a varied background of industry experience having worked within tourism and hospitality, community tourism development and NGOs. "I wanted to become part of a community, in which I can contribute to the globally focused preparation of students to work in the world's largest industry, tourism," he says.



ALIREZA KHATAMI

Visiting instructor, Alireza Khatami is an award-winning Iranian filmmaker and artist whose work focuses on the questions of memory and trauma. Back in his home country Khatami began his career in advertising and cinema, working with prominent Iranian directors such as Oscar-winner, Asghar Farhadi. After earning a B.A. honors in creative multimedia in Malaysia, Khatami was awarded a Dean's Fellowship to study for a master's in film and TV production at the Savannah College in the US. "It always bothers me to see a deformed image of the Middle East in the media," Khatami says. "I saw joining LAU as an opportunity to contribute to educating a new generation, who can use cinema meaningfully to heal the wounds of the region."



DR. RONY S. KHNAYZER

Dr. Rony S. Khnayzer recently joined the Natural Sciences Department as assistant professor in chemistry, following post-doctorate research at North Carolina State University. After completing his undergraduate degree at AUB, Khnayzer went on to earn his Ph.D. at the Department of Chemistry and Center for Photochemical Sciences at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. His main research focus is in the area of chromophore design, synthesis and characterization for application in the photodynamic therapy of cancer, as well as solar fuel production. He has won several awards for his work, such as the Shanklin Award and the American Chemical Society Travel Award.

New Faculty



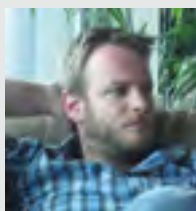
DR. JOSÉ MANUEL PAGÉS Y MADRIGAL

Spanish architect and academic, Dr. José Madrigal recently joined as chair of the Department of Architecture and Design. Completing his Ph.D. in urbanism, in 1995, at ETSA University in Spain, Madrigal spent eighteen years building a solid academic basis of experience, teaching in institutions across Europe. He was nominated as a member of the National Academy of Fine Arts in Portugal and has written over 20 books within the architectural field. "Teaching is never finished. It is a dynamic process, where we always have new opportunities to improve new perspectives," he says. "Lebanon is a meeting point, a space where so many feelings, thoughts and experiences were crossed in the past. I hope to take the best outputs of these crossing networks."



DR. ARMOND MANASSIAN

Dr. Armond Manassian recently joined as associate professor in accounting. He was motivated to do so because of the university's reputation "as a prestigious institution of higher learning, shaping the academic landscape of the Middle East region." After completing his Ph.D. at the University of Calgary in Canada, his research interests have varied from the influence of cultural issues on accounting systems to intellectual capital. He brings a wealth of teaching experience, having previously taught undergraduate and executive M.B.A. courses at LAU in financial and management accounting and analysis, as well as management accounting workshops across the Gulf. "I would like to instill in my students an appreciation of the philosophical underpinnings affecting the generation of accounting numbers and a critical stance on how accounting numbers influence the daily lives of humans," he says.



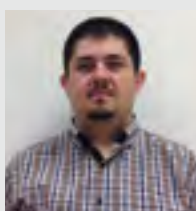
DR. FABIANO MICOCCI

Architect and researcher, Dr. Fabiano Micocci, was drawn to join the School of Architecture and Design, by its reputation as "a dynamic university on the Mediterranean shoreline", where he hopes to "experience, network and form future collaborations." His work focuses on the evolution of the Mediterranean, combining landscapes and history with public spaces and geography. Micocci graduated with a Ph.D. from the University of Florence in 2010, since then he's made a successful career as both an academic and practicing architect. He co-founded NEAR Architecture, a network of architects working on design and theoretical research and is an associate at Urban Transcripts, a network of researchers – who organize events, workshops and exhibitions.



DR. RABIH NEHME

Dr. Rabih Nehme graduated with a B.S. and M.B.A. in accounting from Lebanese University, later earning a certified public accountant qualification from New Hampshire Board of Accountancy in the US and a Ph.D. in accounting from the University of Durham in England. Nehme also has over eight years of audit experience at KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers. "I am looking forward to adding value and knowledge to LAU students," he says. He hopes to excel his field of research at the university within audit quality, auditors' professional practice and international accounting standards, to improve academic standards and methodological arguments.



DR. JIMMY ROMANOS

Dr. Jimmy Romanos recently joined as assistant professor of physics, having recently returned from working in the Texan oil and gas industry leading a team of researchers at Oscomp Systems Inc. Romanos has a solid educational background that includes an M.S. in physics, an M.S. in mechanical and aerospace engineering, and a Ph.D. in physics from the University of Missouri, specializing in hydrogen and natural gas storage in carbon-based nanomaterial. His research has been patented and published in renowned peer-reviewed journals, and presented at international conferences. "Being in the midst of LAU's vibrant community, marked by a very diverse student body, faculty and staff, I look forward to opportunities to contribute to the advancement of scientific education and research in Lebanon and the region," he says.

New Faculty



JASON STEEL

Contemporary artist and fashion academic, Jason Steel, recently joined the School of Architecture and Design to lead its new fashion design degree. Graduating with an M.A. in menswear at the renowned Royal College of Art in London, Steel's final collection was awarded the RCA/Thames and Hudson Prize for excellence and craftsmanship. As academic he's taught around the world from Northumbria University and Glasgow School of Art, in the UK, to institutions in China and Singapore. In 2011 and 2012, he was also the director of studies at the London College for Fashion Studies in Hanoi. "I want to give students from Beirut and the region a completely different way of seeing the world," Steel says. "Beirut is an incredible place and on the brink of a great design shift. With that in mind I had to be here."



DR. JOE TEKLI

Computer science academic, Dr. Joe Tekli, recently joined the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department as assistant professor. After graduating, in 2009, from the University of Bourgogne in France with a Ph.D. in computer science, Tekli continued postdoctoral research in renowned institutions in Italy, Japan and Brazil. His research interests lay in XML, MM data semantics, data-mining and information retrieval. He is an active academic and member of various research institutes. His work has been published in over 25 prestigious publications in the field. Tekli was motivated to join LAU because "it highly encourages academic research, which I personally love doing," he says. "In addition it's an indispensable bloodline for developing my teaching materials and experience, so as to provide students with state-of-the-art knowledge."



AYMAN WEHBEH

Ayman Wehbeh recently joined the School of Architecture and Design as adjunct faculty in interior design and architecture. Graduating with a degree in architecture at USEK in 1991, Wehbeh brings to the department 20 years of practical experience working within the field of architecture, landscaping, interior design, furniture design and lighting design. A part time faculty member, his specialty lies in computer graphics and animation. "I hope students will benefit from my wide background in the field and my years of teaching experience," he says.

Faculty Promotions

Awarded Emeritus Professor by the LAU Board

- **Dr. Abdallah Sfeir**
Professor emeritus of mechanical engineering

From Assistant to Associate Professor with Tenure

- **Randa Abdel Baki**
Associate professor of graphic design
- **Dr. Lina Abyad**
Associate professor of communication arts (theater) and fundamentals of oral communication
- **Dr. Barbar Akle**
Associate professor in the Industrial and Mechanical Engineering Department

- **Dr. Dany Badran**
Associate professor of English and critical linguistics

- **Dr. Bernard BenSita**
Associate professor of finance

- **Dr. Abdallah Kahil**
Associate professor in the Architecture and Interior Design Department

- **Dr. Brigitte Wex**
Associate professor of chemistry.

Promotion to Senior Instructor

- **Silia Abou Arbid**
Senior instructor within the School of Architecture and Design

- **Tony Farjallah**
Senior instructor of communication arts

- **Sami A Garabedian**
Senior instructor of physical education

- **Nermine Hage**
Senior instructor of English

- **Joseph Khalife**
Senior instructor of music

- **Ghada Naous**
Senior instructor of chemistry

- **Brian Prescott-Decie**
Senior instructor of English and cultural studies



FEATURE

Reconnecting to Lebanon's culinary roots

In a landscape where fast food culture rules, can Lebanon ever return to its food heritage?

By Natalie Shooter

Lebanese food culture has deep roots. From the traditional Sunday family meal of *kibbeh nayyeh* to seasonal vegetables grown in the mountains, homemade pickles and mom's *tabbouleh*, it's a country whose cuisine is an integral part of its identity. But over the last twenty years, as globalization has settled in, the Lebanese dining landscape has become increasingly dotted with quick fix, cheap Western alternatives and as a result eating habits are changing. Local homegrown casual dining chains, popular with the younger generation are luring them away from traditional home cooked meals, as a modern identity becomes connected to Western concepts of food.

"Over the last 15 years, our diets have really shifted with the opening of all these various chains," says Nadine Zeeni, assistant professor and coordinator of LAU's nutrition department. "We are moving away from traditional and healthy Mediterranean diets towards fast food, which is not good for one's health."

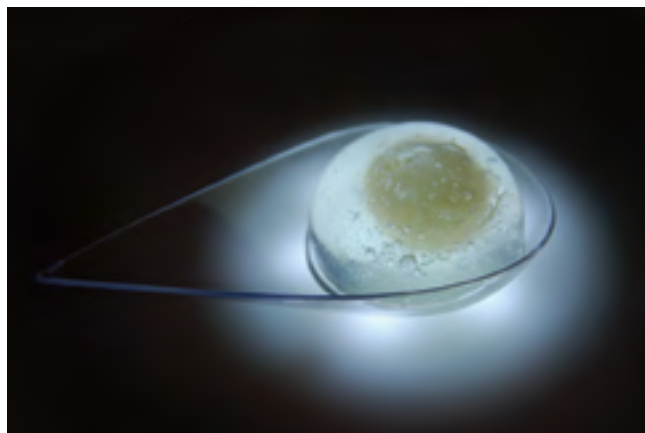
With a wide choice of fast food chains appearing on every corner, at cheaper prices to the healthier alternative, and with the ease of delivery, it's no surprise that Lebanon's eating habits are changing. "You can supersize a fast food meal for just an extra 1,000 LL," Zeeni continues. "So, budget and convenience wise we are being pushed towards unhealthy options."

As the popularity of fast food spirals, health implications are beginning to appear in Lebanon and the Arab world. GCC countries are already catching up with US obesity levels. "Although, in Lebanon, research is still pretty slow, we are already seeing the consequences of the change in our diet," Zeeni says. "There's a rise in obesity because of the shift in food quality. Type two diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer, all very much related to quality of food, are amongst the most common causes of death here."

However, all is not lost. In an environment dominated by fast food, new initiatives are beginning to fight back. Restaurants such as Souk El Tayeb's Tawlet (www.soukeltayeb.com) have sparked a return to the traditional, reviving an awareness of the country's culinary heritage and creating new markets for local producers and farmers from rural areas across the country.

"I grew up between gardens and kitchens, and know what it is to produce from the land and transform it into a meal," says Kamal Mouzawak, the founder of Souk El Tayeb, as he sits in the Mar Mikhael restaurant during a weekday lunchtime rush. "I've always been passionate about food. For me it is a wonderful expression of land and of tradition."

Mouzawak's first experimentation within local produce began in 2004 with Souk El Tayeb, a farmer's market that promotes small-scale farmers and producers, as well as their fresh, organic produce from Lebanon's rural regions. "Wherever I go, for me it's the farmer's market that best conveys a place. Nobody can speak better of a potato than the person who planted it," he says. >



The initiative has expanded to include two restaurants Tawlet and Tawlet Ammiq, each offering a platform for local women to share their own home-cooked recipes. The endeavor has now evolved into a full-scale human development project ensuring fair prices for farmers, connecting Beirutis to the countryside through a series of eco-events such as Cherry Day in Hammana, and preserving food heritage and sustainable agriculture. "Quality production and traditional products were disappearing fast," Mouzawak says. "We don't become modern by throwing away the treasures and traditions we have. There was a need to react to save what we have that is old but good. And that's what we are doing."

As people become more food conscious in Lebanon, an entire new movement of food bloggers and authors have appeared, promoting home-cooked food and updated takes on traditional cuisine. Lebanese-American food blogger and author of "The Jewelled Kitchen", Bethany Kehdy, shares Middle Eastern recipes on her blog, *dirtykitchensecrets*. "During the Lebanese civil war, we retreated into the mountains where my father set up an eclectic farm on ancestral land," Kehdy says. "This influenced and encouraged me to learn and understand more about the culture and history behind food."

Kehdy also set up Taste Lebanon (www.tastelebanon.co.uk), which organizes culinary journeys across the country, offering travellers and locals a place at the same table in the homes of villagers. Other food writers are also leading the return to local, rural and traditional cuisines with books such as Barbara Massaad's "Mouneh: Preserving Foods for the Lebanese Pantry", Cherine Yazbek's "La Cuisine Libanaise du Terroir: La Mémoire du Goût" and "Jasmine and Fire: A Bittersweet Year in Beirut" by Salma Abdelnour, a former copy-editor of LAU Magazine.

And if any magazine perfectly captures the growing fascination with food that defines the region, it's The Carton (www.artandthensome.com), an independent quarterly print magazine that sheds light on Middle Eastern culture through its food. With a focus on Middle Eastern food heritage and the creative people who are shaping new food trends, articles have covered everything from Lebanese-Australian haute couture designer Joe Challita's connection to his food culture roots to photographer Arek Dakessian's journey through the cuisine of Lebanon's 'little Armenia' - Anjar.

"In Lebanon that whole organic movement and mixing local ingredients with dishes that are very international has become a thing now," cofounder of the Carton, Jade George says. "When Kamal started Souk el Tayeb, it was hard to imagine the Achrafieh crowd

walking down to a food market and buying things. Now, it's the cool thing to do. And that is great, because it not only encourages local farmers and producers, but also general well-being."

The closeness of the village, in Lebanon, means many city dwellers still return to the countryside on a weekend, thus fresh quality products are within reach. There's also the Lebanese family structure that has kept a connection going. "Food here has a very emotional component," Mouzawak says. "It's how mothers share their love."

George also points to the availability of quality fruit and vegetables across the city. "In our culture, we still shop at the little neighborhood fruit and vegetable store. We're primitive in that way. It would be so easy for a country like us to really go fully organic."

In the West, a health conscious customer base has created a demand for local organic produce. A similar movement has gained a strong foothold in Lebanon, as people become more food aware. "In general, people are more and more interested to understand what quality and clean food is – whether it's organic or not. And, how bad certain chemicals are for themselves and the land," Mouzawak says.

"By encouraging Lebanese production and consumption of local foods, you're promoting healthy diets."

—Nadine Zeeni, assistant professor and coordinator of LAU's nutrition department

But with the competitive price of unhealthy food and the high price of organic produce, will organic ever grow beyond its limited customer-base to be enjoyed on a mass consumption scale? Zeeni doesn't think so. "In my opinion, organic foods are a niche and, honestly, I think they're a waste of money," she says. "If you have regular foods, produced in a safe way, you really don't have to go organic. It's not for the general population. You're talking four or five times the price of ordinary products."

Mouzawak believes the high price of organic food is fair, as it involves giving something back to the environment, but for those buying on a budget he believes there are always better options. "You don't need to buy organic. You should buy frozen over canned, week-old-fresh over frozen and freshly picked rather than



“We don’t become modern by throwing away the treasures and traditions we have. There was a need to react to save what we have that is old but good.”

—Kamal Mouzawak, the founder of Souk El Tayeb

week-old, with organic topping the list. The main point is to buy local and seasonal, the freshest possible and from local producers whenever possible,” he says.

It’s up to the dominating forces in the market or government-supported initiatives to really raise food awareness on a mass scale. “If the government helped even 20 percent more, it would make a big difference,” George says. Most of Lebanon’s local supermarket chains stock an organic fruit and vegetable section in the store itself. One supermarket has even brought a weekly producer and farmer’s market to the front of its store through a recent collaboration with Souk el Tayeb.

However, in order to keep traditional foods alive, new, attractive and innovative means of doing so need to be established. LAU Alumni Federico Rodriguez is a food consultant based in Lebanon with a specialism in molecular gastronomy. He takes traditional ingredients and transforms them into new forms, flavors, and shapes such as arak spaghetti, honey caviar and mini falafel bites with tahini inside. “Caterers are always struggling to come up with ideas but they get stuck in the creativity and the visual side of it. Molecular cuisine is about the whole thing – the molecular structure – changing shapes, textures and tastes,” he says.

By revolutionizing the way we see our food, molecular gastronomy can bring new excitement to dishes that have long been the country’s staple. “It’s a way of reviving traditional food,” Rodriguez says. “It’s the gimmick of reinventing what we’re used to eating into something else.”

Though food culture in Lebanon is beginning to re-establish its identity, it is unlikely that Rodriguez’s modern experimentation with tradition or Mouzawak’s small-scale return to tradition can compete alone against the big advertising budgets of fast food chains. “Going back to traditional foods and creating campaigns to support these initiative is really important,” Zeeni says. “By encouraging Lebanese production and consumption of local foods, you’re promoting healthy diets. I hope the trend will be strong enough to counter all these other foods and push people back to what’s healthier.”



Campusnotes

Edited by Linda Dahdah

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

Campus news



Another accomplishment for BOT Chairman Dr. Paul F. Boulos

In September, Innovyze, a leading global innovator of wet infrastructure modeling and simulation software and technologies, announced that its president and chief operating officer, Dr. Paul F. Boulos, has been elected to the Board of Trustees of the Academy of Coastal, Ocean, Port & Navigation Engineers (ACOPNE) of the American Society of Civil Engineers. "I am proud to be a part of the noble ACOPNE profession and to be able to contribute to its advancement," he said. Boulos was elected chairman of LAU Board of Trustees in October 2012, after holding key leadership roles as a member of the Board since 2009. He also served as chair of the LAU Board of International Advisors from 2006 to 2009.

Dr. George Nasr, SOE Dean, elected to GEDC executive committee

Dr. George Nasr, dean of LAU's School of Engineering, has been elected to serve a three-year term on the executive committee of the Global Engineering Deans Council (GEDC), effective October 1, 2013. He is one of a total of six members that serve on the GEDC's executive committee. An affiliate of the International Federation of Engineering Education Societies (IFEES) — which includes the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) and the European Society for Engineering Education (SEFI), among others — the GEDC is a global network of engineering deans that aims to enhance their capabilities to transform schools in support of societies in a global economy.



FROM THE BOARDROOM



A salute to Dr. Abdallah Sfeir, professor emeritus

My family's happy association with Lebanon began in 1919, and with LAU (then BCW) in 1937. As a result, when it comes to matters relating to Lebanese American University, I tend to take the "long view". We have been blessed with an abundance of talented faculty, administrators and leaders that has enabled our University to grow into the major institution of higher education that it is today.

However, within this galaxy of talent there are a handful of especially bright stars that enable us to make out that pattern, that particular constellation, by which we can define and understand our University. Dr. Abdallah Sfeir is one of these bright stars. We all know of his outstanding work as Provost during a time when LAU genuinely raised its game as an academic institution under the leadership of Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara, achieving accreditation for key departments as well as from NEASC for the University as a whole, strengthening the faculty, and broadening the curriculum.

But to me he is one of those caretakers of the original mission of the founders of our University, a twin mission of education and service to the community, undertaken with integrity and a genuine commitment to inclusiveness. First and foremost, he is a teacher, and having learned so much from him myself, I am delighted for our students that he is back in the classroom. A rare individual, and a worthy Professor Emeritus.

Dr. Philip Stoltzfus, LAU Broad of Trustees member

Science



Lighting up the future

In August, twenty high school students (grades 11 and 12) took part in an intensive two-day workshop dedicated to Organic Light-Emitting Diodes (OLEDs) technology. Hosted by the Department of Natural Sciences at LAU Byblos, the event went beyond theoretical concerns, as it presented the participants with the opportunity to produce and illuminate an actual OLED device on their own. For Dr. Brigitte Wex, assistant professor of chemistry, "This is the essence of what lies at the core of such projects: empowering students to use technology to improve their surroundings." This was the first half of a two-part project sponsored by an outreach grant from the International Society for Optics and Photonics.

SOM looks toward the future of graduate medical education

Over forty distinguished international, regional and local medical experts converged at LAU Byblos this summer to take part in the first graduate medical education (GME) summit hosted at the Gilbert and Rose-Mary Chagoury School of Medicine. The purpose of the event was to devise solutions for the impending challenges that GME faces in many parts of the world, especially in Lebanon and the region. This meeting was considered the laying of a cornerstone for a sustained and progressive process based on teamwork and interaction between stakeholders, who will identify the general goals to be worked toward, with an emphasis on standardization.



How to deal with eating disorders

This September, the Department of Natural Sciences hosted its first lecture, "Ten Things to Know About Eating Disorders." Students, faculty and specialists in the field gathered to listen to psychologist Deanne Jade, the principal and founder of the National Center for Eating Disorders in the UK, give a breakdown of the various challenges faced by health professionals when dealing with patients that have eating disorders (ED). According to Jade, ED is the result of interactions between genes, physiology, emotional experiences and upbringing. And although Lebanon has seen a rise in the disorder, awareness of it remains poor. Assistant Professor Nadine Zeeni, LAU's nutrition program coordinator, stressed that encouraging people to seek help before they reach a severe stage is paramount.

Scholarships

U.S. ambassador meets USP scholars

This October, over 100 new University Scholarship Program (USP) students attended a welcome reception hosted at LAU Beirut. During the event, the beneficiaries were able to mingle and converse with US Ambassador to Lebanon David Hale and LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra. USP, which is made possible with the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), provides LAU with funding to offer full scholarships to outstanding but economically disadvantaged students from Lebanese public schools. The scholarship, covers tuition fees, leadership and civic engagement training, medical insurance, housing, book costs and a monthly stipend.



Students in the spotlight

LAU students' water conservation video triumphs at global competition

Last spring, three architecture students received first prize at the iChange Competition for their short video about tackling climate change titled "What's More Precious?". The short film was submitted for entry at the 26th GrandPrix Advertising Strategies in Milan, Italy, in a competition open to students from around the globe to create forceful 30-second video messages about climate change. The students received a €5,000 scholarship and won the opportunity to have their video featured at international film festivals in Cannes, New York and Beijing. They will also have the opportunity to intern with a media company in New York City, as part of the art direction team.



LAU student wins at Murex d'Or

This summer LAU pharmacy student Sara Abi Kanaan took home the prestigious Best Promising Actress Award for her work in the new film "24 Hours of Love" at the Murex d'Or. This award is for a newly established category in the competition and the selection of the winner is conducted through a combination of jury evaluations and fan votes on the Murex d'Or official website. Though acting and pharmacy may seem like an unlikely coupling, Kanaan said that the former helps the latter, particularly with respect to communication skills. "Being involved in acting as an extracurricular activity has helped me increase my personal confidence and manage my time," she explained.

Careers

Job opportunities in Germany

In collaboration with the German embassy in Beirut, the Office of the Dean of students-Career Guidance at LAU Byblos, organized an information session about job opportunities and internships in the German job market. Over 88 students attended the presentation given in October by the head of the embassy's education and culture department, Sebastian Damm. The talk focused on the wide range of career opportunities that Germany's job market offers for medical doctors and graduates in the field of engineering. The presentation included statistics about wages in Germany, the employment rate in Europe and all administrative steps that allow those interested to search for a job in Germany.



Culture



Communication arts set the scene

This July, LAU Beirut came to life when a group of its communication arts students recreated shots from their publicly screened films on campus. Family, friends and TV stars cheered the five budding directors, whose productions were shortlisted by a panel of jurors composed of faculty members and prominent alumni in the field. A previous screening originally showcased twelve student productions. The winners are already planning to submit their films to various art and film festivals. With a notable legacy of its student films being shortlisted in internationally renowned festivals, such as Cannes and even as far as South Korea, LAU has high expectations.

IWSAW and CLH screen *Girl Rising*

Marking International Day of the Girl in October, the Center for Lebanese Heritage and the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) joined forces to organize the screening of internationally acclaimed documentary, "Girl Rising". It tells the real-life stories of nine young girls from underprivileged parts of the world that have fallen prey to different ills including a lack of education and arranged marriages, among others. More than simply a film, "Girl Rising" is a global movement for girl's education. "We want to encourage other NGOs and international organizations to screen the film and contribute to the Girl Rising Fund to educate girls in third world countries," said Myriam Sfeir, managing editor of IWSAW's Al-Raida journal.



Remembering things past

LAU alumni evoke their experiences at university, now even more vivid than ever before

By Selim Njeim

Avid readers of 20th century French literature must know that 2013 is being referred to as the year of reading Marcel Proust, famed writer and author of the legendary masterpiece "In Search of Lost Time". An invaluable addition to the literary canon, his oeuvre examines the concept of autobiographical and involuntary human memory, two widely researched concepts, arguably coined by the *littérateur* himself.

In honor of Proust's genius, as well as LAU's relentless support of the humanities, two alumni called to mind events of the past: their days at Beirut University College (BUC) - LAU's name between 1973 and 1994.

Dunking a biscuit in a cup of hot tea was all it took for memories to come flooding back into Mr. Proust's mind. For Roula Ajouz Sidani (B.A., T.D. '89), it is the smell of the Gulbenkian Theater and its backstage that act as recollection cues. "I loved university so much. It was our escape from street war and sectarian skirmishes on the streets, which most of us hated. We would gather together in the theater, the studio, on the stairs," recalled Sidani emotionally.

BUC was not only a safe haven for the proud graduate; it was also a hub where durable friendships are born. "Some friendships are so strong that we go as far as travelling regularly to meet," commented Sidani. She also fails to forget the taste of the coffee served by Abu Ibrahim at the upper gate. "He was such a kind man; loving to all the students. I still remember one time, when I was the editor of the college newspaper, I collaborated with him and sat on the street wearing rags to write about the experience of a pauper at BUC's upper gate."

For Michel Douaihy (B.S. '97), the date nineteen ninety-four was when he first set foot on campus to begin his studies in business administration. Nerve-wracking and daunting for some, Douaihy's "first-day experience" was different. "If memory serves me well, I remember



being eager to start the academic year," he reminisced. Later, he recalls, being pleasantly surprised he had met nice people that day. After getting two M.A. degrees in the United Kingdom, he came back to his alma mater, where he now teaches political science.

What made the experience all the more "refreshing and exciting", as Douaihy described it, was that matriculating at LAU had marked his first official encounter with the American education system, having gotten his high school instruction in French. "People are lucky to have a chance to study here at LAU, where commitment to excellence has been perfectly upheld and the students have the ability to choose for themselves," he added.

LAU feels just as strongly about its

alumni. The establishment values its human capital and puts effort into staying in touch with its students. "The Alumni Relations Office at LAU provides alumni with opportunities for social interaction, networking, and active involvement in the community, as well as philanthropic support. We strive to enhance lifelong relationships between LAU and its graduates," said Abdallah R. Al-Khal, executive director of Alumni Relations.

It is understandable if a big chunk of the Lebanese society might want to expunge heinous scenes of war and violence from their bygone days, leave those behind and never look back. Nevertheless, we at LAU are proud every time we witness remembrances of perhaps brief, but most certainly intense and unforgettable experiences, unbound by time or space.



Alumni Events

August

Reunion over lunch for engineering alumni

LAU's School of Engineering Chapter reunited familiar faces, for its yearly reunion this August 11. Bringing together an impressive 80 plus alumni and friends, the lunch at Faqra's Le 1700, which lasted late into the afternoon, showed the strong connection the School of Engineering Alumni have maintained.



NY/NJ alumni chapter gathering at the MET

On August 13, as the sun went down on the NYC skyline, the renowned Metropolitan Museum of Art was the setting chosen by the New York and New Jersey Alumni Chapter to get together for an evening filled with culture and memories.



Toronto alumni chapter picnic with the family

On August 25, the LAU Alumni Association's Toronto Chapter continued its yearly family picnic tradition bringing together over 200 alumni and friends in the tranquil surroundings of Adams Park. The food, of course, was Lebanese - an extensive mezze spread enjoyed by all - while fun packed activities kept both the children and adults on their toes.



September

New England chapter gathering

LAU graduates Robert and Varsenig Shafie nee Yapoudjian hosted the LAU Boston Day at their Newton, Massachusetts home, bringing together 30 alumni on September 22. A dabke group and belly dancer gave the scrumptious lunch by the pool an Oriental twist.





North American tour

During September, Executive Director of Alumni Relations, Abdallah Al-Khal and Director of Alumni and Other Projects in North America, Ed Shiner toured Washington DC, New York and New Jersey, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal and meet their alumni chapters. The gatherings touched base on alumni matters and underlined support of the Alumni Offices in both Beirut and New York.



October

New alumni association board vice president

Having successfully commanded the position of Vice President of the Alumni Association Board (AAB) for two consecutive terms, October 25 was the deadline for nominations of Doha El-Zein Halawi's successor. With no competing submissions, Majdi Awkal took over the position as of November 1 for a three-year period.



A lesson in time management

At LAU with its Alumni Relations Office *Keep Learning* lecture program, education doesn't end upon graduation. On October 25, university instructor and alumnus, Hassan Chaker, gave the first lecture of the 2013-14 academic year, Time Management – Part 1. The lecture at the Beirut campus' Business Building was a huge success, attracting over 170 alumni and friends looking to improve their time management skills. The talk was followed by a networking reception.



Moving beyond borders in Southern California

The Alumni Association's Southern California Chapter, in partnership with San Diego's House of Lebanon Organization and the House of Lebanese Artists Group hosted the art exhibition Beyond Borders, on October 19. The exhibition of works around the theme of new beginnings, followed by a reception, also marked the official opening of the House of Lebanon's new location.

Lift-off

LAU instructor launches a leadership initiative for teachers

By Mehrnoush Shafiei

Mahmoud Natout, an instructor in the Humanities and Social Sciences Department at LAU Beirut, has brought together a group of dedicated teachers, academics, activists and students, who share a passion about developing and improving teaching in Lebanon.

At its core, LIFT (Leadership Initiative for Teachers) aims to develop teaching by innovating professional growth and fostering collaborative networks. "Education concerns us all. Whether we are students, teachers, educators, parents, activists or policy-makers, we have a vested interest in education," said Natout.

available for free to the public. The project reached its fundraising goals due to the generous contributions of ordinary citizens, whose values are sharply aligned with the mission of the cause.

The main objectives of the project are to give a voice to teachers, who have innovated effective and creative ways for teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Natout, who is currently a Doctoral candidate in Educational studies at the University of Oxford, was inspired to launch this project while doing research on teachers' motivations and career aspirations, as well as his own experience as a teacher. This insider perspective encouraged him to explore ways to empower teachers in Lebanon to develop their practice.

LAU alumna, Sara Sibai, is part of Natout's four-member team and has done extensive research on the politics of recognition in education, which spurred her to be part of creating a platform for teachers to voice their experiences and connect with the community. "Based on real-life, home-grown teacher stories and experiences, we will strive to provide a rich, interactive resource for teacher education and teacher professional development in Lebanon," explained Sibai.

Another LAU alumna, Moataz Tayara, is also part of the LIFT team. "My deep involvement in social work for the past five years, as an activist and as a professional working with several key NGOs in Lebanon, has lead me to believe that teachers can play a crucial role, as learners, leaders and activists in transforming education in the country. Networking and facilitating dialogue among teachers and other education stakeholders (including parents and students) is an important aim of the project," said Tayara.

The fourth member of the team Maysa Mourad holds an Ed.M. in International Education Policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a B.A. in Peace and Justice Studies from Wellesley College. "My research interests are peace education, civic education and active citizenship," she revealed.

"Ultimately our group seeks to empower teachers in shaping the future of teaching as a profession in Lebanon," enthused Mourad.



"Education concerns us all. Whether we are students, teachers, educators, parents, activists or policy-makers, we have a vested interest in education."

—Mahmoud Natout, instructor in the Humanities and Social Sciences Department

Most of us can think of, at least, one or two exceptional teachers that have genuinely made a difference or left their mark on our personal or professional journeys. Yet, such stories tend to remain personal and those teachers seldom have the opportunity to be recognized, never mind share their experiences, inspire others and contribute to developing teaching as a practice in Lebanon.

As a result, according to Natout, LIFT seeks to develop a platform that facilitates a collaborative network of resources and activities aiming to capture those stories about teachers and making them available for teachers (new and experienced), teacher educators, schools, administrators and educational leaders in Lebanon.

The group used social media to bring attention to their cause and raised USD 6,000 to purchase video equipment necessary to start capturing, documenting and compiling these stories, experiences and breakthroughs, as well as to develop an online service that makes these resources

Alumni News

Amal Ayoub Freiji (A.A. '54) completed graduate studies in education at AUB. She conducted research on children's educational development formed by the psychological and socio-cultural peculiarities of local communities. She has also authored twenty-two educational thematic picture books for children. She and her husband, Musa Freiji are blessed with five children and fourteen grandchildren.



Beverly Anne Hamlin (B.A. '69) completed her master's degree in education from Lesley University in 2001. Retired from teaching in public schools after thirteen years of service, Hamlin lives in Medford, with her husband Bryan Hamlin and they recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. They have two children and became grandparents for the first time in August.

Dr. Ghada Hijjawi-Qaddumi (B.A. '76) completed her Ph.D. at Harvard University in the history of Islamic art and architecture. She resides in Kuwait, where she is the president of the World Crafts Council for the Asia Pacific Region. She also teaches courses on the history of Islamic art and architecture.



Henry Matthews (B.A. '80) is undertaking a project to establish an Arabic comics and children's bookstore to raise awareness about the importance of comics and children's publications.

Mustafa Bahij Ghrayeb (B.S. '85) went on to pursue graduate studies at the University of the State of New York and at the Makassed School in Lebanon. Ghrayeb is currently the branch manager at BBAC in Beirut and prior to that he worked at HSBC for twenty-six years. He is married to Lina Bahri and they have three children.



Nouhad A. Daou (B.S. '86) lives in Accra, Ghana, where he is a technical manager for Mabani Holdings Ghana Ltd. He has three children, and his family relocated to Lebanon from West Africa.

Mona Abouassi (B.A. '90) works at ISC Choueifat and is the proud mother of three. Adham is a medical student at AUB, Dana is studying engineering and her youngest child Tarek, is an ISC seventh grader.

Fatima Mustafa Farouk Al Yaman (B.S. '90) currently works at the Sidon branch of the Arab Bank. An employee since 1988, she holds the position of senior customer service officer.

Ibrahim Zeitoun (B.S. '91) lives in Australia, where he is a registered tax agent with the Australian Taxation Office. He is married with a sixteen-year-old son and thirteen-year-old daughter.

Zeina Abboud Maktabi (B.A. '92) is heading the interior design department of her husband's contracting company: K.Abboud.

Rana Naaman Abou Ayash (B.A. '96) is an Arabic coordinator

and teacher in Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia. She recently completed professional development training for Arabic speaking teachers in New York City.

Dania Jamaledine Sharaf (B.A. '96) currently resides in Beirut and works as an executive program assistant at the Ministry of Social Affairs and the World Bank—National Poverty Targeting Program (NPTP).

Dory Gebara (B.E. '98) went on to complete graduate studies at AUB and currently works at an electrical contracting company, POTE sarl. He is married to Shirley Abi Jaoude and they have three young daughters.

Firas Abouzaki (B.E. '99) completed his master's degree in project management and went on to earn a Ph.D. in engineering management from George Washington University. He has been recognized as an official Mensa certified member (a society for those with exceptional IQ) and was selected by the Committee of Association for the Advancement of Cost Engineering International (AACEI) in Washington, DC as the 2013 recipient of the AACE Charles V. Keane Distinguished Service Award. He is the director of Altus Group, a project management consultancy in Alberta Canada.

Wassim Al Boss (B.S. '99) resides in Dubai and is currently a project manager. He is married to Farah Makkawi.

Fadi Al Halabi (B.S. '00) went on to obtain his master's in strategic marketing from the University of Wollongong in Dubai, UAE. He has just been promoted to director of Arabian Media Services—Choueiri Group. He and his fiancé Diana will wed in December 2013.



Lena Naoum Edde (B.S. '00) completed post-graduate studies in Switzerland and is currently an FMCG sales manager in Beirut.



Bushra Ezzeddine (B.S. '00) is currently pursuing a diploma certification in event management and innovative marketing from City & Guilds in the United Kingdom. After working at the Dubai International Financial Center, she has launched a new company called "Boutique Events." She is married to Abbas Al Ossman and they have two children, Yara and Fadl.

Raef Hachache (R.C.D. '00, A.A. '01) is married to fellow alumna Nadine Marashli (B.S. '00) and they have two children, Sima and Salim.

Minas Missirian (R.C.D. '00) owner of MILCAR automotive consultancy, which was launched in 2000 and that has recently expanded its showroom on the Jdeideh highway.

Majed Zuhair Hosneddine (B.S. '01, M.B.A. '08) is a professional working in IT, supplies and finance. He and his wife Natalie Alameh are the parents of a two-year-old son and seven-month-old daughter.

Alumni News

Bilal El Sayyed Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah (B.S. '02, M.B.A. '05) is married to Layla Fadlallah and is a tutor for an entrepreneurship course at Arab Open University. He recently launched his own photographic business, Laila Events, and is looking to expand into television production.

Rayya Morcos (B.S. '03) went on to study fashion design at ESMOD. And, after five years of working as a senior designer at Rabih Kayrouz, she launched her own ready-to-wear and jewelry brand called Bird on a Wire. She has been selected as a finalist at the ITS jewelry Awards and is currently working on her fifth collection.



Dany Nachabe (B.S. '03, M.S. '06, M.B.A. '09) is married to Dima Masri Chaarani and is the owner of Medilic, a medical supplies firm. He and his wife are parents to three-year-old Tala.

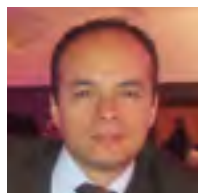
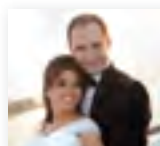
Reem Wahoud (B.S. '03, M.B.A. '04) had been working for ten years in the management field before getting married to Samer Baayno in 2011. She has a fourteen-month-old baby girl named Celine and is currently pregnant with her second daughter, Sophie.



Kamel Omar Abdouni (B.S. '04, M.B.A. '08) is the branch manager at BLOM Bank. He is married to Fadia Jarouche and they have two young sons, Omar, five and Mohamad, two.

Patrick Rahal (B.S. '04) obtained a master's degree from Grandes Ecoles in Paris, France. Over the past decade he has been appointed fund manager at a number of large financial institutions based in Paris, London and the GCC, where he manages multi-million dollar equity funds.

Rida Rteil (M.B.A. '04) is an audit manager at Deloitte. He wed Dana El Hadi on August 30, 2013.



Feras Issam Yehia (B.S. '04) is now embarking on the final stages of his master's degree in banking and finance from the University of Saint Joseph, as well as an M.B.A. from the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom. He works as a treasurer for the Youssef Abdul Latif Jamil Group Co. Ltd., one of the largest privately held private equity and venture capital groups in the world.



George Kassar (B.S. '05, M.B.A. '08) is the senior performance analyst at the branch management department at Fransabank. He is the father of two young daughters.

Maurice Jose El-Khabbaz (B.E. '06, M.S. '08) went on to obtain a Ph.D. in electrical engineering at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. He is currently a full-time assistant professor at ECCE department of NDU. He has recently had his publications accepted in several academic journals. He is the technical program chair of the IEEE Conference on embedded and ubiquitous systems.



Abdulaziz Farid (B.S. '06) lives in Riyadh with his wife, Roua Kahaleh. He is the executive director/partner at Technolight and managing director at Design Tech Services (DTS). He completed his master's degree in architectural lighting design in Wismar, Germany and has been involved in several prestigious lighting projects in Saudi Arabia, such as KAFD Grand Mosque, King Abdulla Gazan Airport, Alaam Artspace and Technolight showroom and offices. He is the parent of Suad and Omar.

Mohamed Abboud (B.S. '07) lives in Dubai, where he is the business development manager for IBM.



Ahmad Mohamad Daabas (B.S. '07) lives in Dubai, where he started the first online magazine for men (AMDmode.com). He is currently the managing editor for Marie Claire Arabia Online.



Manal Naboulsi Al Madani (B.S. '08) wed seven months ago and moved to Saudi Arabia with her husband. Prior to her move she had been working in a media consultancy firm in Dubai, Mediaedge part of Menacom Group, as a media manager handling the Nestle Group.

Ali Farhat (B.S. '08) went on to obtain his master's degree in water and environmental engineering at Masdar Institute for Science and Technology in Abu Dhabi, in 2011. He is currently a Ph.D. student in chemical engineering at the University of Queensland in Australia, where he has received a prestigious scholarship.



Bechir Hasbani (B.E. '08) currently works at APAVE Liban, an engineering team of electro-mechanical inspection for all construction projects. Hasbani is a solar photovoltaic specialist, who oversees his own company for solar photovoltaic and renewable energy concept and design.

Mohamad Seif (B.S. '08, M.B.A. '10) earned a Ph.D. from NEOMA Business School Campus in Reims, France. He resides in Kuwait, where he is a business-marketing lecturer at American University of Madaba. Additionally, he is developing his family business, Al Aman, which specializes in the marble industry.

Mona Daoud (B.A. '09, M.A. '12) is a television reporter for Future TV's "Aal Akid" program. She is also enrolled in a two-year

leadership program called Lebanese Young Leaders of Tomorrow, which aims at creating a network of young individuals that are determined to bring about positive change in their communities.



Youssef Chatila (B.S. '10) resides in Dubai, where he works in the acquisition department of MBC.

Ismail Dalli (B.S. '10) went on to obtain his master's degree in finance and investment from the University of Nottingham, in the United Kingdom, in 2011. He currently resides in Abu Dhabi, where he is a strategy consultant for PricewaterhouseCooper (PwC) on their management consulting graduate program. He, recently, began to expand his expertise into the realm of strategic design and execution.



Antoine Skayem (B.E. '10) has launched his own company in the energy reduction and renewable energy field called FREE sarl, (Free Renewable Electric Energy). Since its inception in April, the company has implemented more than 12 projects, including those with Liban Cables, the

Municipality of Ballouneh, Jeita Country Club, Country Lodge, ATCL, Edde Club, Bounce Club and several other residential projects. He was recently chosen to represent Lebanon at the World Energy Congress in Daegu, South Korea. Skayem is also a part-time instructor at LAU's mechanical and industrial engineering department.

Joe-Charbel Abdo Gedeon (B.S. '11) has recently established his own pharmacy on Ajaltoun Highway called "Gedeon Pharmacy."

Mahmoud Bassam Itani (B.A. '11) resides in Dubai, where he is the head of marketing and media at Gulf Craft LLC. He also launched a personal business venture selling and buying classic automobiles.

Mohamed Izzat Abbas (B.S. '12) lives in Khobar, where he is a HR officer in the training unit of the Nesma Trading Company.

Nelly Wakim Awad (B.A. '12) is pursuing graduate studies at the University of Nottingham in global citizenship, identity and human rights. She works as a cultural orientation trainer with the International Catholic Migration Commission.

Ahmad Halwany (B.S. '12) has been promoted to Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) at Crystaldeco. He and his wife recently welcomed the arrival of a baby girl.

Sybil Layous (B.S. '12) obtained her master's degree at Istituto Marangoni—The Fashion School, in Paris. She works as a press assistant at Maison Martin Margiela.

Samah Abdul Menhem (B.S. '12) is self-employed as the assistant general manager of her family business, Victoria Fire

Safety and Security. She is also decorating her future home for her impending marriage.

Dounia Alexandra Nassar (B.S. '12) is currently in her second year of a master's program at Pratt Institute in packaging design. She resides in New York.

Ehab Abdallah (B.E. '13) is a mechanical engineer at Dar Al Handasah, an international multi-disciplinary consultancy.

Mohamad Mowafak Allaham (B.S. '13) is pursuing a master's degree in computer forensics at George Mason University in Virginia, in the USA.

Samira Assi (B.A. '13) has applied to the diploma program in media studies at AUB. She is currently working at MTV.

Mirna Ayoub Salameh (B.S. '13) currently lives in Sidon, Lebanon and teaches at the German School in Dohat Al Hoss.



Chant Hagop Kazandjian (B.S. '13) has been nominated for a Fulbright Foreign Student Scholarship to pursue master's degree in the United States during 2014-2016. He is currently working as a registered nurse at Bellevue Medical Center in the medical-surgical and oncology unit. In

addition, he is involved in three research projects affiliated with LAU and investigating mental health, well-being, eating disorders and nutrition.

Mona Maher Keblawi (B.S. '13) completed a two-month internship at Zawya and is now currently exploring employment opportunities.

Afaf Walid Khattab (B.S. '13) currently lives in Lebanon and is the MIS administrator at Inspire Business Consult.



WHY I GIVE BACK

May Koleilat (M.B.A. '98)



What did you study at LAU?

After doing my undergraduate degree and working for several years, I came to LAU to pursue an M.B.A. in Business Administration.

Did anyone else in your family go to LAU?

My eldest daughter, Lina Farchoukh, is a LAU graduate. She graduated with a Pharm.D. in 2002.

What have you been doing since graduating?

I am a capacity building specialist working on a project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), entitled Lebanon Water and Waste Water Sector Support. Prior to that, I worked for the World Bank, Middle East Airlines and Makassed General Hospital.

How would you like your donation to be used?

To support needy and deserving students. My daughter benefitted from financial aid at LAU, so I know how much it helps students.

Why do you give back to LAU?

I always wanted to walk beneath LAU's beautiful trees and I was very happy to have the opportunity to do my M.B.A. here. I knew a degree from LAU would make a big difference to my career. I'd like others to have the same opportunity to excel, so I named a seat at Irwin Hall on behalf of my mother.

How has LAU changed in the years since you were a student?

The university has done a great job in expanding the Beirut campus and it's lovely to see a whole building dedicated to the School of Business. It feels a lot more like a university campus than before. I can imagine it's quite enjoyable nowadays to study here.

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

Everyone has a role to play because every donation, whatever the sum, can make a difference. It's true that we are experiencing difficult economic times but people can get involved in small ways. LAU's staff is very supportive and knows how to build lasting connections with alumni, which is very encouraging.

In what ways did your time at LAU contribute to your professional and personal development?

Doing my M.B.A. opened up a lot of opportunities for me. It gave me the courage to quit a secure job and move upwards. It prepared me to work in a diverse environment. I also took classes at the Continuing Education Program, which enabled me to take the Certified Public Accountant exam. Now I'm applying for certification as a Senior Human Resources Specialist. LAU enabled me to see things around me in a different light and got my engines going.



Fulfilling the Promise

LAU Campaign for Academic Excellence



✧ ANAN ANABTAWI IS FULFILLING THE PROMISE

Anan Anabtawi is committed to improving the lives of others.

An investor and venture capitalist, Anabtawi is highly respected as a person who cares deeply about community, development, and giving back. He and his wife Taroub are generous supporters of LAU and have a particular interest in the university's health care initiatives at the Shatila refugee camp.

Anabtawi lives in California, but has close family ties to LAU. His mother, Wissam Malhas Anabtawi, graduated from BCW in 1965; his aunt, Sahab Malhas, graduated from AJCW in 1944, and his son Rami took courses at LAU. There is a bench on the Beirut campus in memory of his mother. Anabtawi's ongoing support is not only improving the lives of underprivileged members of society, but also helping LAU to better serve its students and local community.



Scan this code with your Smartphone
to go to our giving page

For more information, please contact:

Beirut Development Office
Tel. (961) 1 786456 Ext. 1323
Fax (961) 1 803658
P.O. Box 13-5053
Chouran Beirut 1102 2801, Lebanon
Email: development@lau.edu.lb

New York Development Office
Tel. (212) 203 4333
Fax (212) 784 6597
211 East 46th St.
New York, NY 10017
Email: nydevelopment@lau.edu



www.lau.edu.lb

BEIRUT CAMPUS

P.O. Box 13-5053 Chouran
Beirut 1102 2801, Lebanon
Tel. +961 1 78 64 56
+961 3 60 37 03
Fax. +961 1 86 70 98

BYBLOS CAMPUS

P.O. Box 36
Byblos, Lebanon
Tel. +961 9 54 72 54
+961 3 79 13 14
Fax. +961 9 54 62 62

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS & ACADEMIC CENTER

211 East, 46th Street
New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel. +1 212 203 4333
Fax. +1 212 784 6597



Postage paid Port payé مدفوع مسبقاً

C 1041

RVU