

LAU magazine

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& ALUMNI BULLETIN

In pursuit of perfection

The perils of conformity

An education for all

Toward more inclusiveness
in school and society

Culture and its many faces

Giving difference a chance

Rebel with a cause

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FEATURES

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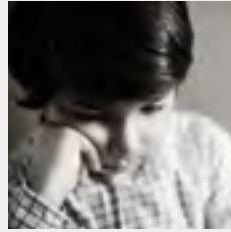


In pursuit of perfection

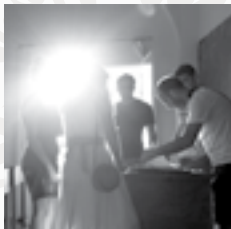
Numerous experts are raising the alarm about the perils of trying to look "perfect." *Mehrnoush Shafiei* investigates how the pressure to conform to unrealistic beauty ideals can have devastating effects and speaks to those who have broken the mold.

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Awareness, acceptance and adequate accommodations are all essential in creating a nurturing environment for differently abled individuals. *Selim Njeim* probes into the contribution of the Lebanese education system in the attainment of this goal and what is still needed.



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Culture and its many faces

Three leaders in the cultural sphere, theater director Lina Abyad, technical director Mona Knio and film director Amin Dora discuss with *Natalie Shooter* whether culture can play an important role in highlighting difference and what the implications are.

42 Rebel with a cause

There are many ways that a person can make a difference to improve the quality of life of others. *Leena F. Saidi* talks to those who have made their mark to discover why they took this journey and what they achieved.



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Wherever You Go

LAU Magazine & Alumni Bulletin 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.

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Letters to the Editor

Our son, now a Vice Chancellor of the Court of Chancery, founded in 1792 in the State of Delaware, had his initial schooling-start in the campus Nursery School, back in 1972 as part of the 3 year-old class, and what a start it was! ... If your new project picks up and carries on with the same standards and goals for the children as in its ancestor's day, it will be reinstating and continuing a vital offering to the children and the future of Early Childhood Education in the Middle East. I have every faith that it will.

—Dr. Madlon Laster, Winchester, Virginia, U.S.

Although it is always a pleasure to read the magazine, it would be even better with a section on faculty news. Would you consider adding a section featuring the very real achievements of LAU faculty, both past and present.

—Claire Clemons Cowan, Bethesda, Maryland, U.S.

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Wherever You Go

Children (left to right): Kiyana, Lamar and Rayan
Photo taken at the newly opened Early Childhood Center at LAU.

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From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

LAU is committed to graduating young leaders who not only want to make a difference in tomorrow's world, but who have already started to do so as members of the university's community. The desire to give back, a passion for helping others and an unshakeable commitment to easing human suffering might just be what sets a young leader apart from his or her peers. At LAU, we encourage our students not to be afraid to stand out, to accept those who are different and to learn how to cultivate tolerance.

*As guardians of the values of the society that sustains us, we universities have a unique role in nurturing that society, a role at once ethical and intellectual. To this end, art has a significant part to play in breaking down societal stigmas and changing perceptions. Our Department of Communication Arts provides fertile ground for experimentation and, through its major theater productions, is not afraid to break casting stereotypes and tackle taboos. A disabled child was given the opportunity to act in *A Shell in the Heart* while transgender identity issues were examined in another play, *I.D.**

Likewise, at our Department of Fashion Design, it is difference that makes fashion innovative and fresh; it is a way of expressing individuality. By standing out, one can break free of the constrictions of peer pressure, which says that to be "in" one has to conform. One needn't look like everyone else to be beautiful, nor think like everyone else to be accepted. At LAU, we inspire our students to discover their inner selves and bring about change.

Cultivating the potential of all people is indeed core to our university's mission. Many, who have been personally touched by someone close to them, someone who is different, have taken up the challenge of advocating on their behalf. LAU's School of Arts & Sciences has heeded the need to nurture these individuals and celebrate their difference. Our M.A. in Special Education effectively serves this end.

At LAU, we have chosen our Masters programs with care, taking into consideration the needs of the job market and our capability to produce experienced graduates. The university has also invested heavily in innovative teaching methods that allow both student and instructor to move out of the classroom and experience life in the real world, acquiring inspiration and motivation.

*We have a lot to be proud of; far more than can be mentioned in this message. In each issue of this magazine, we shed light on achievements – not only of the university's faculty and staff but also of its students, both past and present, as a body and individually. In this issue, we celebrate difference and the courage required to stand out from the crowd. In addition, we put the spotlight on athletics, look at recent books published by faculty in their fields of expertise, attend last semester's major production and get to know about *The Tribune*, the students' digital newspaper. All of which showcase future role models, who will one day go out into the world and make a difference.*



Joseph G. Jabbara
President



Reporting women's rights

IWSAW and Thomson Reuters Foundation highlight importance of responsible journalism in gender equality

By Mohamad Ali Nayel



"The aim of the program is to reform the way women are reported about in the news."

—Thomson Reuters Foundation trainer Ghaida Ghantous



Try typing the words "women should" into Google and let the search engine's predictive search feature make a few suggestions on how to finish the sentence. Chances are you'll stumble across some disquieting answers that reveal what many people really think about women's place in society. The following are only a few examples of suggested answers based on popular searches by other Internet users: "Women should not go to college, women should serve men, women should not be in combat, women should remain silent." Google searches in Arabic deliver similar results. Predictive searching is proving to be a good tool for discovering just how widespread gender bias still is.

It is precisely because of such prevalent views that journalists must work harder to properly advocate the human rights of women, said Ghaida Ghantous and Joelle Bassoul, two trainers from the Thomson Reuters Foundation. They were at LAU to lead a weeklong journalism workshop, made possible by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), on how to strengthen Arabic-language reporting on women. Some twelve journalists — both men and women — from across the Arab world participated in the training, entitled "Reporting Women".

"The aim of the program is to reform the way women are reported about in the news," explained Ghantous. "The training is also meant to empower women reporters and boost their self-confidence in what remains a very male dominated field."

The workshop is part of several ongoing development projects at IWSAW intended to improve the status of Arab women, said Anita Nassar, the institute's associate director. "Our goal is to create a solid platform to support activists

and advocates in their campaigning on women's rights, be it in the field of finance, health or journalism."

Ghantous and Bassoul took turns to tackle important issues currently facing women in the Arab world, such as the marginalization of women from politics in post-Arab Spring Egypt, women in the Syrian opposition movement and the sexual exploitation of female refugees. "There are ample opportunities for journalists to highlight rights abuses," noted Bassoul, adding that such reporting must be ethical, informative and engaging. The trainers shared their own experiences as reporters in the Arab world and emphasized that reporting about women was something that both men and women should do. Using a human rights perspective in reporting can help change the way women's rights are viewed and enforced.

Myrna Nasser Eddine, a Lebanese journalist working with *Naharnet*, said she'd been eager to attend the workshop from the moment she saw the application invitation. "We all need to learn about women's empowerment, particularly in the Arab region. It's a time of change and women's rights are an important topic. The workshop will help me in my reporting as a woman and a journalist wanting to make a difference in the way women's stories are told."

On the final day of the program, participants went on a field trip to talk to women who had been empowered and those whose stories had yet to be told. They visited women refugees at Amel Association and also met female prisoners working for the high-end handbag company Sarah's Bag.



A lifeline for health sciences

LAU Health Foundation raises funds for LAUMC-RH and health sciences schools

By Dalila Mahdawi and Maryam Zoma



"We have always placed a priority on serving the public and I think that goes to the heart of LAU."

—Board of Trustees member
Philip Stoltzfus

To learn more about LAUHF, giving opportunities or to donate to the foundation, please visit www.lauhf.org or www.campaign.lau.edu.lb



In only a few years, LAU has become one of the region's premier destinations for education in the health sciences, encompassing the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine, Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing and the School of Pharmacy, in addition to public health and nutrition programs within the School of Arts and Sciences.

To support its programs, LAU acquired the university's Medical Center – Rizk Hospital (LAUMC-RH) in 2009. The hospital, located in Beirut's Achrafieh district, is undergoing extensive renovations in order to transform it into one of the Arab world's leading academic medical centers. But such ambitious projects require considerable support. The LAU Health Foundation (LAUHF) was recently created as the U.S. fundraising arm of LAUMC-RH and health sciences programs. It is charged with securing funds, building partnerships and creating outreach opportunities to assist the university's health sciences to grow in size and quality.

"The foundation's primary purpose is to facilitate excellence at LAUMC-RH and in LAU's health sciences programs," says Dr. Sami Khoury, chairman of LAUHF and a physician. This involves forging partnerships with like-minded individuals and institutions, but more crucially, identifying avenues of funding. "Because the hospital is not a U.S. institution, donors cannot make tax-deductible gifts to LAUMC-RH," Khoury explains. "LAUHF was created as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, permitting individuals and corporations in the U.S. to make tax-deductible contributions."

LAUHF offers donors interested in the health sciences a number of unique possibilities that include a new operating

room complex at the hospital, as well as renovation of the emergency room, intensive care unit and cardiac care unit. On the academic level, giving opportunities include laboratories in the School of Medicine, breast cancer research at the School of Nursing and a Bioequivalence Center for the School of Pharmacy. Donors can also support inter-professional education initiatives throughout the health sciences. In addition, benefactors can support community health projects at the LAU-staffed Volunteer Outreach Clinic in the Shatila Palestinian refugee camp. The university's Simulation Center, one of the most sophisticated facilities of its kind in the Arab world, is also available for naming. Scholarships for exceptional students are needed, as are endowments and in-kind gifts of equipment.

"The medical, nursing and pharmacy schools have introduced what are probably the most advanced curriculums in Lebanon and are becoming centers of excellence for the whole MENA region," says Philip Stoltzfus, a trustee of the foundation and the university. While many people will support LAUHF because of its innovative role in broadening the academic mission of LAU, there is "also a more fundamental reason that has to do with the ethos and legacy of LAU," Stoltzfus says. "When I look at the history of our university, I am reminded that we have never been solely an academic institution — we have always placed a priority on serving the public — and I think that goes to the heart of LAU. The medical profession is intrinsically tied up with service, with helping people across the spectrum, and our commitment to these academic programs and to the hospital is a way of renewing the university's service legacy."



FEATURE

In pursuit of perfection

The perils of conformity

By Mehrnoush Shafiei



Overheard in a shop near LAU:

Salesperson: Why not choose something funky? Here's a t-shirt with a cool unusual pattern.

LAU student: I'm not sure, I don't think I'd be comfortable wearing it.

Salesperson: Why not? It's different... you don't need to look like everyone else.

LAU student: Maybe, but I don't want people to mistake me for... I'll just get a normal polo shirt.

"This is a campus of look-alikes," says LAU journalism student Joanna Sawalha. "And it's not just the girls; it's even the guys. It seems that there is an LAU uniform and people are afraid to step out of their comfort zones. There is an obsession with looking 'perfect', and looking like everyone else, to belong."

What is at stake when a culture of conformity meets an obsession with perfection? Indeed, an increasing number of academics and social activists are warning of the perils of the pressure to look "perfect".

Dr. Nadine Zeeni, assistant professor of nutrition and coordinator of the nutrition program at LAU, recognizes the problem: "Though there are times when striving to conform to a high level of excellence is advantageous and healthy, when it comes to an individual's body image, an uncritical dedication to the doctrine of perfectionism can have devastating consequences."

One such manifestation of this is the increasing prevalence of eating disorders. Eating disorders include extreme attitudes, emotions and behaviors in relation to body image, food and weight issues. For Nathalie Sleiman, an entrepreneur with a successful interior design business, such concerns hit close to home. "For years I have struggled with the way I look—it was a terrible cycle. I would become stressed by the way I look and to ease the stress I would overeat. And the cycle would repeat itself," she says.

Described by her friends and family as driven and ambitious, Sleiman was finding that her success in business was coming at the expense of her health. "In a competitive field like interior design people expect you to look a certain way and since I didn't fit the mold I would overcompensate by outworking everyone else." A professed perfectionist by nature, Sleiman is never satisfied with her looks. "I know that I am a healthy weight and everyone tells me that I look normal but to me it's never enough," she says, adding: "It's become something of an obsession, I look around and I want to look like everybody else that I see around me." Indeed, studies have shown that youth who tend to be conformist and go along with the expectations of others have a negative image of their bodies. According to a report by two researchers from Syracuse University published in the journal *Body Image*, being a conformist may be a huge risk factor for such disorders. Wanting to look like everyone else and have the same body can prompt extreme dieting. >



Hildos' artwork combines erotica with a dash of wit and humor. Image courtesy of hildos.com

Dieting at a young age is something Hilda "Hildos" Abila can relate to. She began her quest to lose weight at the tender age of five and has seen nutritionists on and off for over ten years. Last year, Abila gave a provocative talk at TEDxLAU about her personal struggle to come to terms with her body image.

She captured the crowd's attention by beginning her talk with a dance to Lady Gaga's smash hit *Born this Way*. She then went on to offer a glimpse into her personal experience of being bullied because of her weight: "One day a friend of mine was asked: 'Why do you speak with her, she's *fat*?' " On another occasion a hiring manager asked her during a job interview if she was on a diet. "The dieting is not the worst part—society is," says Abila emphatically, explaining that it is not about fat versus skinny but rather about the impossibility of living up to unrealistic notions of beauty.

In an attempt to boost her self-confidence on the eve of her 40th birthday, she arranged for a professional photo shoot and posted the glamorous shots on Facebook. Although she received lovely comments and many "likes", the effect was short-lived, appealing to her vanity while ignoring the deeper issue. She decided to take a more drastic course: she began painting pictures of herself nude. "The hate, the struggle, the denial, the anger—all of that was present on my canvas," she explains. With time came self-acceptance to the point where she even appeared nude in public while painting her self-portraits. In this series of paintings, called *Seeing Beauty in Imperfection*, her aim was to celebrate a different kind of beauty — an alternative to what the

media bombards viewers with on a daily basis.

While eating disorders are less common in males, Zeeni says that about ten percent of those suffering from them are men: "Studies demonstrate that cultural and media pressures on men to have the 'perfect body' are on the rise."

Men are increasingly obtaining plastic surgery as well, notes Dr. Shady Murr, plastic surgeon at University Medical Center – Rizh Hospital (LAUMC-RH). "Plastic surgery is becoming less and less taboo—especially in the Middle East—and men similarly seek to defy the aging process," he says. "Of course, the number of women who opt for plastic surgery is still much greater than men but each year we are seeing an increase," he adds. "Men are now beginning to delve into the realm of surgery that may be considered by some as unnecessary."

The line between necessary versus unnecessary plastic surgery can be fuzzy, particularly in Beirut, where some banks even offer loans for cosmetic enhancements. "Young women are extremely pressured by society," says Dr. Rima Tbeur, a plastic surgeon in New York City of Lebanese-Moroccan descent. The idea of what constitutes necessary plastic surgery is culturally determined. It's not completely shocking to know how prevalent plastic surgery is in Lebanon, often fuelled by the ubiquitous images of "perfect" pop stars and celebrities. "I've met many young girls who have planned out a strategy to fund their future plastic surgery as young as seven or eight years old," she laments.

The children's book *"Maggie goes on a Diet"*, published in 2011 by American author Paul Kramer, is described by Amazon

as follows: "This book is about a 14-year-old girl who goes on a diet and is transformed from being extremely overweight and insecure to a normal-sized girl who becomes the school soccer star. Through time, exercise and hard work, Maggie becomes more and more confident and develops a positive self image." Such books, according to experts, expose children to destructive ideas of linking self worth to appearances. Indeed, the book was seen as extremely controversial because it depicts Maggie becoming more popular and less bullied as she loses weight. The Huffington Post decried the book as "extremely disturbing."

Many, including in the world of fashion, today share Abila's concern about the beauty ideals circulated by the media. What is even more alarming is that more often than not, such "ideal" images are digitally enhanced to make models seem thinner than they actually are. Even world famous models such as Miranda Kerr and Alexa Chung are not immune to the flaw removing effects of airbrushing. Children, and particularly young girls, are vulnerable to the influence of such images unless they are educated about the fact that such images are not a reflection of reality. Many studies have pointed to the fact that social media has exacerbated this problem by giving users an easy platform to engage in self-comparison, which may produce feelings of inadequacy.

In an attempt to decouple the linking of self-esteem with body image and to repel these harmful media messages, some Western companies are pushing back against the idea of a "perfect" body, the best example perhaps being the highly successful Dove "campaign for real beauty". The powerful ads show women of different shapes and sizes embracing their unique beauty. The campaign has been dubbed as a game changer in the world of marketing, with many other companies taking note of the success Dove has garnered as a result of driving against the tide of unrealistic body images.

Most recently, Dove kicked off a "selfie" campaign to uncover the insecurities behind many of the picture-perfect self-portraits. Organizers asked young women and their mothers to take selfies and reflect on what body part they were trying to deemphasize in the pictures. The campaign ultimately drove home the message that the physical characteristics most people are insecure about are the very things that make them different and hence beautiful. This way of thinking resonates strongly with Abila. "You don't have to look like everyone else to be beautiful," she says.

Being different is not only empowering on a personal level,



"The dieting is not the worst part—society is."

—Hilda Abila, artist and TEDxLAU speaker

but it is fundamental in other arenas as well, such as fashion and design. According to Jason Steel, British contemporary fashion academic at LAU's department of fashion design, difference is what makes fashion innovative and fresh. For Steel, fashion is not always simply about labels and expensive clothes but rather a way of expressing one's individuality. "If everyone wore the same thing it would make for a very boring society," he says. "When I first arrived at LAU I noticed that many of the girls looked the same and that is not the idea behind fashion; it is about forging a new path."

Of course there are always exceptions, even at LAU. "I don't really fit into any social group," says Zahi Sahli, a graduate student in comparative literature. "I wear what I want and express my individuality. What I put on in the morning depends on how I feel," he says. "I think it's silly to look like everyone else."

Perhaps the greatest pearls of wisdom can be found in the following oft-quoted line: You laugh at me because I'm different, and I laugh at you because you are all the same. ■



Famous faces young girls try to imitate



Paving the way to a brighter future

Through its post-graduate programs, LAU forges careers for global employment

By LAU staff

Today's multinational corporations and international organizations are always on the lookout for better-educated, specialized, and more cultured employees who are capable of thinking for themselves, strong in their communication and comprehension skills, and competent leaders. An advanced degree may be worth thousands of dollars in extra earnings over the course of a career. With an eye on the market, LAU offers a wide range of graduate programs specially designed to give graduates the tools they need to succeed in the real world. LAU Magazine takes a cursory look at some of those programs and talks to students to understand why the university's graduate programs are second to none.

The business elite

The first of its kind in Lebanon and the Middle East, the **Executive M.B.A.** program, offered by the School of Business, was established in February 2000. Since then executives have gone on to hold top management positions at some of the best-known institutions in Lebanon and worldwide. Highly flexible and designed to meet the needs of a demanding work force, the program allows professionals to receive top-notch training and education while remaining in their positions at their respective organizations. It is proving so popular, the number of graduates doubled this year alone.

"The EMBA is developed to enhance students' managerial as well as leadership skills. Courses and seminars, in all areas of

business, are offered at flexible times to suit the students' busy lifestyle," says Hisham Hashash, IT and operations management senior academic assistant.

"The timing of the classes (Friday evenings and all day Saturdays) certainly allows for a greater balance between work, home and EMBA-life. The program gives me the opportunity to network with bright executives from vast and varied backgrounds," says EMBA student Magdalena Roumy, owner of Diet Delights.

Roger Tanios, general counsel of Indevco Group, agrees wholeheartedly. "I enjoyed putting my knowledge from weekend classes to work the following week, and make a difference," he says. "The opportunity to travel to emerging countries, like China, was a unique and invaluable learning experience. The peer-to-peer interaction is particularly valuable. I formed solid friendships with other executives facing similar challenges to mine."

Educating the educators

The educational sector in Lebanon has undergone major changes since a government decree in 1997 made education compulsory for children aged 6 to 15. This was the first in a series of initiatives that have elevated the debate about the purpose and quality of education, overhauled the delivery modes and assessment practices in the field, and created new positions in educational settings.

LAU's highly successful **M.A. in Education**, offered by the School of Arts



and Sciences, aims to fulfill the need for qualified professionals that these changes have ushered in. The master's degree program boasts enrollment of over 80 students and is designed for those who wish to study a particular field in education, acquire a theoretical background for fieldwork, or develop new professional skills in the field of education.

"The program was designed for educators who would like to remain on the cutting edge of information, technology, and policies affecting the field of education," says Dr. Rima Bahous, associate professor and chairperson of the Education Department. Adding: "Some educators merely want to update their teaching and counseling strategies, research skills, or management techniques needed to play a unique role as teachers, counselors, special educators, administrators, and material developers in leading educational institutions in Lebanon and the Arab world."

Considering the program's high enrollment, LAU is on track to become the country's premier provider of advanced teacher training. A student enrolled in the program, Beesan Hammad, says: "As students we are given up-to-date knowledge and skills of all the major changes, policies and technologies in the global field of education"

Tried and tested

As technology becomes a ubiquitous part of daily life, the need for engineers is growing.

LAU's School of Engineering currently offers three masters programs—an **M.S. in Civil & Environmental Engineering**, an **M.S. in Computer Engineering** and an **M.S. in Industrial Engineering & Engineering Management**—that are unique in their multiple emphases and tracks. The programs give students access to a variety of advanced courses and the opportunity to conduct research, thereby combining the theoretical and applied aspects of engineering.

"While we urge independent work and research, there exists a real sense of partnership between our faculty and students providing a special learning environment full of excitement, stimulation and mentoring," says Dr. George E. Nasr, dean of the School of Engineering. "Our graduate engineering programs are designed to stimulate independent thinking, acquisition of knowledge, and application of the acquired knowledge and skills to the solution of practical engineering problems."

Indeed, the programs better suit students with long-term career goals and prior experience. "I was able to support myself with the graduate student employment LAU offers. Through both teaching and research assistantships, I have been able to make more money than any employer could offer for a fresh graduate," says Joseph Khalife, who is pursuing a master's degree in computer engineering. "I don't think there is a more comfortable, friendlier or safer environment than the one provided by the Department of Computer and

Electrical Engineering here at LAU. I feel like I am part of a family."

A global affair

Located in the heart of one of the most politically dynamic regions of the world, the **M.A. in International Affairs** also offered by the School of Arts and Sciences at LAU provides an intellectually rigorous environment to unpack global complexities and to analyze international issues from a wide variety of perspectives. Students striving to forge a path in global leadership find that the program provides them with the theoretical foundation and practical skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly complicated global community.

"The program offers students the opportunity to thoroughly master major facts, methodologies and theoretical perspectives in the field, as well as to develop analytical and research skills," says Dr. Paul Tabar, associate professor of sociology and anthropology and chair of the Department of Social Science. Graduates often proceed to successful and fulfilling careers in academia, foreign affairs and diplomacy, the media, government, business and finance. The program allows students to truly leave their mark on the international stage. In fact, this past year's students Assem Abi Ali, Hessa Saad Al-Muhannadi, Khalil Fayad and Amr Yafawi are among those who have had their theses published.



A home away from home

The Widad Said Khoury Student Center: A place to unwind

By LAU Staff

Students on the Beirut campus now have a home away from home, following the recent opening of the Widad Said Khoury Student Center.

Located at the corner of Upper Gate, the 4,307m² building connects to Nicol Hall via a spacious and futuristic revamped cafeteria. The ultra-modern center was designed so that students “could have a place they feel is solely theirs,” said Dr. Raed Mohsen, dean of students for the Beirut campus. “They can meet to listen to music, play games, socialize or study.”

The building was designed with “special consideration to sustainability and energy management,” noted Georges Hamouche, assistant vice president for Facilities Management. It houses the Outreach and Civic Engagement program, SINARC and the Office of the Dean of Students, which comprises Academic Advising, Counseling, Career Counseling, Campus Activities and

Health Services. It is also home to a new gym, music and choir rooms, dance studio, student club meeting rooms, a Red Cross office and film screening room, as well as two classrooms, a student lounge and a games room boasting table tennis, table football and billiards.

A typical day at LAU will find the building teeming with students. “I really like the new building and spend a lot of time here when I’m not in class or the library,” said Dana Younes, an English major. “It’s nice to see that the university is staying true to its values of student centeredness through such an inviting space,” she said, adding that she hoped the center would eventually be open on the weekends too.

“A place that is solely theirs.”

—Dr. Raed Mohsen, dean of students,
Beirut campus

Exchanging thoughts, knowledge and skills

Experienced Iraqi academics spend one month at LAU learning about higher education

By Linda Dahdah

This program couldn't have been successful without the indefatigable work of Rola Nader, administrative coordinator and Khaled Kabbara, assistant administrative coordinator.

Once the Arab world's model of excellence in free and higher education, Iraq was not so long ago a nation where regional and international scholars pursuing instruction of quality would flock to. A mirror image of the country, Iraqi academia has been bearing the brunt of years of instability, but today the government, in collaboration with active professors, is focused on regaining its reputation in education.

It is within this framework that LAU hosted 19 faculty members from different Iraqi universities to learn about its governance system, strategic vision and programs. In fact, the month-long exchange program was initiated by the Iraqi ministry of education and higher education, facilitated by the Iraqi embassy and hosted at LAU by the University Enterprise Office (UEO).

"We were really eager to know how things are done in Lebanon," said Dr. Inas Younes, a mathematics professor from the University of Moussel. "The ministry usually sends us to foreign countries that we cannot really relate to. By coming to LAU we are being introduced to the American education system in an Arab environment with people who speak the same language. This is key to good communication and genuine exchange," she added.

Participants were acquainted with LAU's diverse approach to academic excellence, research, faculty affairs, strategic planning, shared governance, accreditation, student life and extracurricular activities. They were introduced to the university's liberal art education approach and requirements, met with and attended classes of faculty from similar academic disciplines, visited computer and other teaching labs, as well as LAU's libraries, sports facilities and the affiliated Lebanese American University Medical Center-Rizk Hospital. The academics also had the opportunity to meet with the Alumni Relations office, the Outreach and Civic Engagement unit,

the Continuing Education Program and the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, among others.

"What struck us is the fact that the concept of education here goes beyond providing students with academic knowledge. It actually aims at educating the whole person," said Dr. Mejbil Hammad, a mathematics professor from the University of Baghdad.

Hammad expressed his surprise at the number and quality of extracurricular activities offered to the students and the stress put on civic engagement. "Such a focus was a real eye-opener for us," he added.

According to Dr. Makram Ouais, assistant professor at the Department of Social Sciences who managed the project, such a program offers the university's faculty "the opportunity to support academic reform in Iraq, as well as encourage collaborative research and exchanges in the Arab world, furthering LAU's mission in the region."

At the closing ceremony on January 31, plans for co-organized workshops and conferences, collaborative research and visiting professor exchanges were already being discussed.

For UEO Director Dr. Walid Touma, such results couldn't have been achieved without "the tremendous collaboration of the university's community, which was crucial in turning this venture into a fruitful experience and carries promises of great future partnerships between Iraq and LAU."

This echoed the address of LAU Provost Dr. George K. Najjar in linking the success of this pilot initiative to future collaboration. "This month is only the beginning of a journey that we hope will last for many years to come. We are striving to build bridges between our institutions and the future collaborations I foresee are the only indicators of this program's successes."





FEATURE

An education for all

Toward more inclusiveness
in school and society

By Selim Njeim



As his trembling hand holds a pen, Gabriel struggles to keep his equanimity, which has never been abundant in the first place. Through weary eyes he looks at his tutor, nonverbally communicating his frustration.

Time crawls by without Gabriel being able to compose a full sentence. He hops off the couch, sprints over to the kitchen and starts preparing a snack. It took an hour and forty minutes for the 12-year-old to finish writing the paragraph assigned by his English teacher. Too exhausted to complete the rest of his homework, he calls it a day.

Gabriel was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder five years ago. "His father and I weren't shocked when we learned about his condition, we had been anticipating it. Our son is very clever, but he never had the ability to concentrate nor the skills to apply his knowledge to daily activities," says Gabriel's mother, who agreed to speak on condition of anonymity. "He has progressed so much, but we still have a long way to go."

'Special needs' is an umbrella term representing an array of different disabilities. They are generally classified depending on their kind, such as physical, cognitive or emotional, as well as their prevalence. For example, visual and hearing impairment, juvenile diabetes and muscle dystrophy are considered among the low incidence disabilities, while learning and communication difficulties, such as dyslexia, are under the high incidence category.

Some individuals with physical or learning disabilities require full-time attention, care and guidance to carry out everyday tasks and learn how to integrate into society. "Gabriel was, and still is, the one who loves going out the most. When he was younger, he would beg his mother and me to take him to the zoo or to visit relatives," reminisces his father. "He only started to feel that he was marginally different when some of his older cousins would look at him and whisper."

Gabriel's father recalls a time when an acquaintance of the family called his son undisciplined "because he constantly fidgets at the dinner table." What that person might have failed to understand was that Gabriel's vigorously energetic behavior was what his parents liked the most about him. "He is so smart and never ceases to impress us, particularly when he notices a detail in something commonplace that we would never have been able to discern," says his mother proudly.

Aware parents and a loving home, while crucial for individuals with disabilities, is only one pillar of support. Converging efforts on the part of the government, the educational system and individuals are also needed to support special needs students in schools and at home. >

It wasn't until the early 20th century that parents in America started to cluster into advocacy groups, putting such a topic as special needs, foreign to many at the time, under the spotlight. In 1961, under the term of President John F. Kennedy, the 'President's Panel on Mental Retardation' was created. Halfway into the century, funding was granted for primary education in an attempt to make schooling more accessible to children with disabilities. In Lebanon, however, it has taken much longer for the momentum to build.

"He is so smart and never ceases to impress us."
—Gabriel's mother

In the late 90's, a couple of Lebanese schools inaugurated special education departments, constructing specialized facilities or offering tailored programs. Around the same time, and as a result of advocacy by the Lebanese Down Syndrome Association, Heritage College became the first school in the country to accept a student with Down Syndrome. Numerous conferences and focus groups were organized. Results were anything but tangible, though. "Sadly, a lot of plans were laid out but they were never brought down off the shelf. Nothing was implemented, especially by the public sector," says Dr. Ahmad Oueini, LAU associate professor of education with an emphasis on special education, learning disabilities, and counseling.

Around 2005, the Ministry of Education approved the possibility of an exemption from the Lebanese official exams for children with learning difficulties. Before that, such exemption had been granted only to students with a dual citizenship or ones who had studied abroad for two years or more. Another achievement was attained in March 2006 when a government decree made this type of exemption lawful. Oueini, a consultant on the decree committee, stressed the importance of that triumph: "With this legal text, a 'culture' pertaining to special education finally saw the light, leading to a better understanding of learning disabilities and the struggles of the people living with them."

The exemption process has evolved considerably over the years. Nowadays two options are available for examinees with special needs. Depending on the severity of their disability, they can either be exempted or receive accommodation to make the experience more manageable. Parents seeking an exemption for their children are required to provide professional assessment test results, seek positive recommendation from the school and go through an interview process at the ministry. Nevertheless, this attempt at accommodating differently-abled children leaves much to be desired.

According to trusted sources in Lebanon's education field, proctors do not always adhere to ministerial instructions. It is not uncommon for classroom supervisors to simply give the answers to the students or read the questions out loud to them, thus limiting the benefits they get from sitting for their tests.

Special accommodation provided during standardized tests, such as the SAT and the TOEFL exams, are more professional, say those sources. However, there have been efforts to uphold the rights of special needs students and stifle possible corruption. "What the ministry is trying to avoid are students who want to get away with not sitting for their exams out of laziness," Oueini explains.

Dana Chaaban, 32, has never sought an exemption. She has muscle dystrophy, is unable to walk and has been in a wheelchair ever since she was a child. Dana goes to an institution for the

disabled where she spends time with her friends and learns basic skills, such as reading the alphabet. Unable to talk, she cannot voice out the letters but she has been helping everyone around her hone their communication skills.

"Usually one blink means 'No', two mean 'Yes'. A blink while squinting and making a funny face means 'Get away from me, I don't like your cooking,'" says her mother, Amale. Spending a few minutes with Dana confirms the veracity of her family's words. "We go to her for comfort, she has always a smile on her face. The only time she cried was when our father died a few years ago, but you could still see this immense hope in her eyes," recalls her brother Mansour.

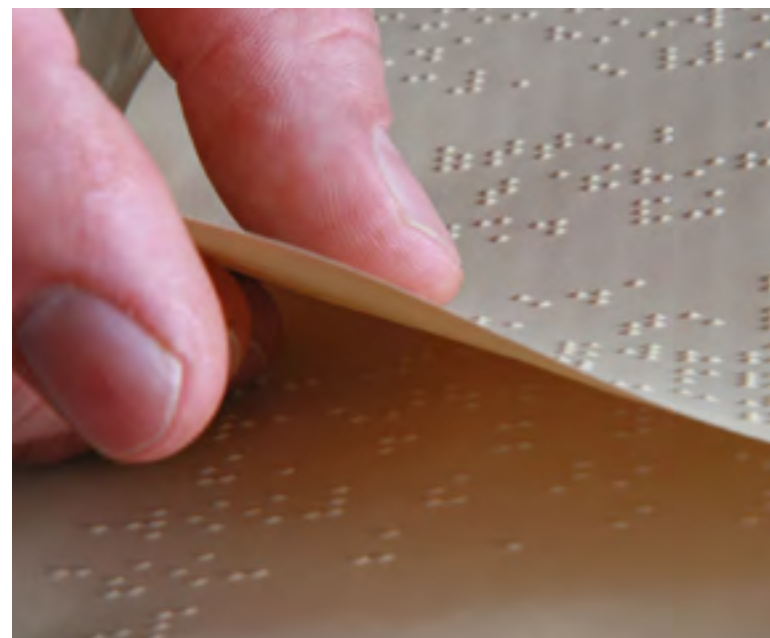
Chaaban's mother works at the institution Dana goes to up to six times a week. She is grateful for the opportunity but says she would love to be able to send her daughter somewhere where she could "flourish more." Unfortunately, such luxury is beyond the family's means.

At the dawn of the 21st century, there has been a growing interest in special education and related services in Lebanon. With around 30 schools introducing special needs departments over the last decade, those with learning disabilities are now less ostracized. Nevertheless, those with means have easier access to services. "What ends up happening is that families from privileged segments of society are the ones who can afford to pay for assessment tests. There is discrimination, in a way, and unfortunately, benefits are usually accessible only to the rich and powerful," notes Oueini.

Tuition fees within special education departments are usually higher than those for the regular curriculum. Enquiries by *LAU Magazine & Alumni Bulletin* at five different schools showed tuition increases of 7.5 to 13 percent.

"The legal text led to a better understanding of learning disabilities and the struggles of the people who live with them."

—Dr. Ahmad Oueini, associate professor of education at LAU



From the Cedar to the Maple

LAU signs a five-year agreement with the University of Ottawa in Canada

By Mehrnoush Shafiei



“LAU is continuously seeking to expand its international research collaborations.”

—Abdo G. Ghie, assistant vice president for Enrollment Management

As the world becomes more and more interconnected, LAU is expanding its global reach at lightening speed and fulfilling its promise as a university without borders. It is in this spirit that LAU has signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) and memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the University of Ottawa (UO) that is set to run through to July 21, 2018.

exchange. At the same time, we are committed to welcoming international students and scholars on our campuses.”

Located in the heart of the Canadian capital, UO is the largest bilingual university in the world, where it is possible for students to study in French, English or in both languages. It shares LAU’s commitment to excellence in research and encourages an interdisciplinary approach to knowledge creation.

As part of the agreement, LAU students can study at UO and benefit from a differential fee waiver, meaning Lebanese students pay local tuition fees. The fee waiver is applicable only to LAU students registered to study in French.

“LAU is actively seeking to significantly expand our international research collaborations to support the strategic goals of our global agenda,” says Abdo G. Ghie, the university’s assistant vice president for Enrollment Management.

Since both institutions share similar academic goals in teaching and research, they are intent in strengthening the links in their areas of common interest. Through the MOU a framework is provided for activities such as faculty, staff and graduate student exchanges, co-supervision of doctoral theses, joint research activities and participation in academic conferences.

“These agreements will benefit researchers and students in both Canada and Lebanon, and strengthen ties between the University of Ottawa and LAU,” he adds.



“Such agreements serve to provide international exchange opportunities for our students with the main purpose of widening their horizons and expanding their perspectives,” says Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs Dr. Mona Majdalani. “We continuously strive to promote LAU as an academic institution of high standards that thrives on international

Op-Ed

An essential component of future leaders

By Dr. Imad Btaiche



Dr. Imad Btaiche, B.S., Pharm.D., BCNSP, is the interim dean of the School of Pharmacy.

The evolution of human emotional intelligence is lagging behind the fast progression of human intellect. While raw intelligence is considered innate, emotional intelligence can be developed through proper training and practice.

Renowned author and psychologist, Daniel Goleman, classified emotional intelligence in four components: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Whether dealing with conflict in the workplace or facing the mounting pressures of work and life demands, striking a balance between the rational and emotional mind presents itself with challenges and rewards.

When stressful conditions arise, having the necessary skills to understand and manage emotions becomes imperative to problem-solving and saving relationships. It has been shown that the intelligence quotient (IQ) alone is not the sole predictor of success and that emotional intelligence largely contributes to one's achievements and happiness. In spite of such data, formal education that emphasizes the development of cognitive and reasoning abilities has done little to improve on intrapersonal and interpersonal abilities of students.

Preliminary research has shown that the acquisition of positive emotional skills by students improves their professional abilities and academic achievements. Teaching social and emotional skills is mostly examined in school-based prevention and promotion educational programs. By integrating the development of such skills in the school curricula, students' behavioral, psychological and academic performance improved.

In higher education, the role of emotional intelligence has been investigated in limited areas of academic disciplines. Health disciplines have long recognized the role of developing both cognitive and non-cognitive skills in their students. However, more remains to be accomplished, in health science curricula and admission processes, to systematically embed various aspects of emotional education, such as conscientiousness, empathy, interpersonal sensitivity, conflict management, stress tolerance and regulating emotions.

Similarly, the role of emotional intelligence has been the subject of the business administration curricula, whereby non-cognitive abilities are crucial to becoming a successful manager or

leader. To be effective forerunners, leaders are subject to ongoing and unexpected challenges that require from them a set of special personal and soft skills including positivity, motivation, perseverance, humility and effective communication.

Slowly, accreditation councils of higher education programs are recognizing the role of soft skills, such as effective communication, cultural sensitivity, self-awareness and constructive coping strategies, as educational outcomes that support students' personal and professional growth. Much more emphasis is being placed on the individual's soft skills in recruitment and hiring practices.

Still, the incorporation of emotional education in university curricula remains to-date largely marginal and exploratory. Some of the reasons revolve around the identification of proper ways of implementation, delivery and assessment, along with the lack of rigorous outcome data, so far, to support its broad application. For instance, emotional understanding and application cannot be effectively acquired in traditional lecture or discussion teaching sessions. Acquisition of emotional skills requires practice on addressing real-world problems or scenarios. Although workshops may provide a possible alternative, such activities need to be frequent, continuous and well-designed in order to achieve their objectives. With the curricula being packed full of regular academic courses, there is little room to include additional course material at reasonable depth and breadth.

Tests that quantitatively measure the qualitative aspects of emotional skills also need to be further developed to reliably assess the desired outcome measures of emotional education. So, with more resources needing to be allocated when new programs are launched, the financial costs of higher education may further increase.

The many questions that remain unanswered present a unique opportunity for exploration. Leaders in higher education are well positioned to lead and influence change. Universities have the responsibility to promote a holistic approach to education by developing students' intellectual, cultural, creative and social abilities. Today's students are tomorrow's leaders. So, could the formal education of emotional intelligence in universities prove to be the missing piece?



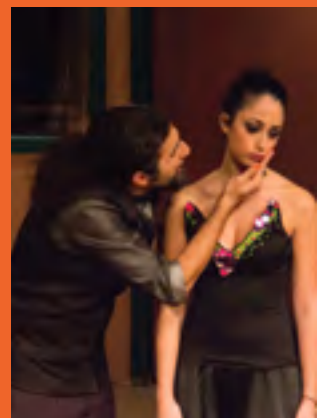
Mirroring society

The 2013 fall major theater production, “Rumors”

By LAU Staff



In keeping with tradition, the Communication Arts Department’s flagship academic program presented another astounding success.





Being funny is not as easy as it sounds. "The essence of comedy is to laugh at things that are not necessarily funny in life," wrote Antonin Peretjatko. You wouldn't be laughing if you were invited to your friends' 10th anniversary party to find that the man had shot himself in the ear and his wife was nowhere to be seen. Still, LAU Stage Director and Theater Instructor, Lina Khoury, who directed university's fall major production, *Rumors*, managed to make out of that particular situation a hilarious one.

Dr. Ahmad Oueini, associate professor of education, and Khoury herself translated *Rumors* originally written in English by Neil Simon, into Arabic. Simon, an American playwright, is known for his comic style. The play starts with Christina storming out of the kitchen's revolving door into the living room. She is all dressed up, her hair is in a huge chignon, her face is fully made up and she is wearing a black and fuchsia suit, a cropped fur jacket and high heels. She is panicking. She tries to calm herself down by inhaling and exhaling in an exaggerated manner. Of course, this is not a laughable situation if it were in real life. However, sitting in the Gulbenkian Theater, looking down at the stage, you can't help but giggle.

The hosts are in no state to welcome

their guests. Charlie, a member of parliament, is lying in bed, heavily sedated from the Valium he took after having shot himself. Mira, his wife, and the help have disappeared. Christina and her husband Fady, who always insists on being the first to arrive, attend to the other guests and try to divert their attention so that they don't notice what has happened with the hosts. Covering up for missing hosts is no easy task and sooner or later everybody finds out. Meanwhile, several unlikely events occurred, one after the other. All of which, of course, are hilariously unrealistic.

"I liked the play very much, I know it is a farce, but I felt it was real" said student Zeinab Abdallah. Believability is a key element to humor it seems. "It will be impossible to laugh if you do not believe that the character is real," said Khoury.

"I chose this play because it resembles us, the Lebanese love spreading rumors."

—Director, Lina Khoury LAU Stage Director and Theater Instructor

Indeed, bursts of laughter characterized the performance. The plausibility of the acting, by both students and professionals, had a major impact on the

success of the play. All four couples, in *Rumors*, are convincing in their roles. You will find it difficult not to relate them to somebody you know.

Due to the exaggeration of their tragic situation and unheroic attitude, the audience will find it easy to identify and empathize with at least one, if not more, of the characters. In fact, all the characters in the play, even the stereotypically sluggish policeman, played by Samy Hamdan, are likeable. Take Mikhael, played by Joseph Zeitouny, who is supposedly running for elections in the North, when the policeman knocks on the door and comes in to investigate a benign car crash, he slides under the recliner and hides like a child.

"Simon's popularity rests upon his fine control of a very particular kind of painful comedy. It consists of his characters saying and doing funny things in ludicrous contrast to the unhappiness they are feeling". Khoury successfully managed to adapt his popularity to the Lebanese scene.

"I also chose this play because it resembles us", the director adds, continuing, "Lebanese love spreading rumors in this country". The characters, in the play, she explains are all "wacko" like us.

LAU carries the ball

The university's year kicked off with a hectic sports schedule

By Natalie Shooter



Winning over AUST team in chess



Dina Alaeddine (LAU) winner of the women's table tennis tournament



Winners in the swimming competition with director Sami A. Garabedian

There was certainly no slow onset to the year, if the university's jam-packed sports calendar is anything to go by. On January 18, LAU held its annual swimming, table tennis and chess tournaments. The competitions have become a popular pre-exam stress release, marked by a healthy dose of competition, as the country's universities used wit, tactic and the fitness peak that comes with intense training sessions to take the glory for their institution just before finals.

The year got off to an encouraging start as the university's Byblos Swimming Team struck gold – seven times to be precise – at the meet. After doing their best dolphin impressions, they swept up an armful of medals, also winning silver and bronze.

In other competitions, LAU Beirut campus men's basketball team won three out of four home matches and one of the two away matches. Within the women's fifth basketball league, the LAU Sailors breezed through their matches, winning four out of seven. And in the University Sports Conference (USC) fourth men's handball tournament, LAU proved themselves kings, winning all six matches of the year.

Also in early 2014, LAU gave local high schools in Beirut the chance to compete on its turf with the 15th Annual High Schools Invitational Tournament in basketball, table tennis and swimming for boys and girls, along with a special indoor soccer (futsal) tournament for boys. With 30 schools invited, there was an excellent turn out as over half them took part. Running in parallel to Beirut's competition, high schools in North Lebanon came together as of January 20—1,080 student athletes took part in all—to battle it out for the winning place in the 12th edition of their yearly tournament.

Meanwhile, LAU Byblos and Beirut's varsity teams restarted their intense practice sessions following fall finals. At the top of their game within university's various athletic departments, they prepared to compete against other top varsity teams for the retour leg of the USC. On February 12, the heat was back on for Byblos' varsity teams, with their weekly games commencing in the USC, competing across 10 different sports.

Other tournaments had some bad news after the Basketball Intramural Championship, the Women's National

Intercollegiate Volleyball Championship and the Third Annual International Tournament were postponed, but there are hopes they will be re-launched soon. League championships across a variety of sports, resumed in February and will continue until May.

"LAU's Athletics Department continues to develop and grow," said Sami Garabedian, director of athletics on the Beirut campus. "We have the full support of the university and the Student Development and Enrollment Management (SDEM) office. Since the launch of the new fitness center more people are getting back in shape and now we are looking into purchasing additional machines to cater for this increased demand."

Joe Moujaes, director of athletics on the Byblos campus, voiced a similar sentiment. "Thanks to SDEM we were able to replace the gym's old machines with the newest models on the market," he said. Moujaes is particularly proud of the new physiotherapy room, which will be dedicated to student athletes from the varsity teams so that they may be treated on campus in case of injury.

Off to a running start

Recognizing talented student athletes with scholarships

By Dalila Mahdawi

LAU is one of only a few institutions in Lebanon to offer competitive scholarships to talented student athletes.

Being an athlete takes hard work, discipline and commitment. Not everyone can sustain the long hours of grueling practice that goes into sports, but LAU believes that those who can should be rewarded.

The university is one of only a few institutions in Lebanon to offer scholarships to talented student athletes. The scholarships, usually 15 percent of tuition but rising to 25 percent in exceptional circumstances, can be combined with other forms of financial aid, making for extremely attractive financial aid packages. To top it all off, LAU grants two additional scholarships to distinguished "Athletes of the Year". Around ten new scholarships per campus are offered annually.

Sami Garabedian, director of athletics on the Beirut campus, says universities need to acknowledge the dedication of their athletes. "LAU prides itself on its sporting strength. We have always been at the forefront of national athletics, and scholarships are an important incentive for students to dedicate themselves and to give their all."

Hani Chehimi, a senior in marketing, received LAU's Athlete of the Year in 2013 following victories at the Inter-University Championships in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) and Muay Thai (Thai Boxing). Chehimi has been honing his fighting skills for the last 11 years and training with dedicated coaches for the past five years. "Having an extra-curricular activity that I love has helped me sharpen both my fighting technique and my understanding

of marketing strategies in the sports industry, as well as how to promote both my style and gym," he says. "The instructor here, Sami Kiblawi, is the best Muay Thai trainer in the Arab region and has a renowned MMA team, who together with my longtime kickboxing/MMA coach Riad Al-Kamand, have helped me achieve both competitive and personal goals."

LAU's commitment to sports is reflected in its athletic successes. LAU Byblos' men's basketball team has won Lebanon's annual University Sports Conference competition three years in a row, the first university to do so. LAU has also been decorated several times over in swimming, tennis and soccer, to name just a few.

"We're recruiting Olympians," says Joe Moujaes, director of athletics on the Byblos campus. LAU helped prepare alumna Karen Chammas, who represented Lebanon at the London Olympic Games in 2012, and expects to help support other future Olympians.

To further cement LAU's reputation as a hub for sporting excellence, LAU has initiated plans to build a state-of-the-art athletics complex at the Byblos campus. This will comprise of a green field with an outdoor track, two indoor sports facilities, tennis courts, an indoor swimming pool and a gym and weights room. "Students are now coming to LAU because of the university's athletic reputation, so we want to offer the maximum services possible to attract talented athletes," says Moujaes.

LAU has also revamped its sports facilities on the Beirut campus, resurfacing the basketball courts and renovating the old fitness center into an ultra-modern gym at the Wadad Said Khoury Student Center, where a new multi-purpose dance studio and activities rooms were also built. The facilities should be an additional incentive for student athletes to join LAU, accelerate the momentum of the university's athletics and will help bring together the campus community through sport.

Kim Sadi, a third year pharmacy student and award-winning athlete, says her 25 percent scholarship makes her all the more motivated to excel in sports and class. "LAU makes sure that playing doesn't get in the way of our academic obligations. Training with the volleyball team and playing tennis is a really fun way to relax and creates a healthy atmosphere for studying."



Alumna Karen Chammas represented Lebanon at the London Olympic Games in 2012



FEATURE

Culture and its many faces

Giving difference a chance

By Natalie Shooter



Culture can play an important role in highlighting difference. But when art steps in where a government fails, what price is paid?

Where a government fails to provide any real model for dealing with diversity, through lack of funding, priority or archaic laws, others have to step in to fight for the equal rights of minority groups that have long been neglected. Often it's left to the arts to play a significant role in breaking down societal stigmas, changing perceptions and challenging stereotypes.

In Lebanon, many artists, directors and cultural commentators have taken a social perspective or cause to their work, from giving voice to 45 inmates from Roumieh Prison in Zeina Daccache's documentary *12 Angry Lebanese*, which she staged as an adaptation of Reginald Rose's *12 Angry Men*, to a look at society's reactions to a young boy with Down Syndrome in director Amin Dora and writer Georges Khabbaz's recent film *Ghadi*.

Theater is perhaps one of the most powerful art forms in shaking an audience and creating a direct and instant impact. Performed live, even if a play lacks audience interaction, its physical proximity can give the message a hard-hitting intensity. Assistant Professor of Communication Arts at LAU, and theater director, Dr. Lina Abyad's play *I.D.* could certainly be considered boundary-pushing. It focuses on the identity issues of a transgender person, exploring their daily realities. Though the play, which was shown as part of NYC's *Between the Seas Festival of Mediterranean Performing Arts*, is yet to be performed in Lebanon, the press coverage inside the country brought the same issues to a Lebanese audience. By offering a platform to minority groups on the fringes of society and speaking the unspoken, art can help promote a climate of tolerance, equality and education.

By tackling difference on stage, the effects on an audience can be huge. An audience's stereotypes can be challenged and stigmas broken down. *I.D.* directly challenged audience's prejudices on transgender issues, sparking audience interaction by asking them to pose pre-prepared questions to the actress on the realities of issues facing a transgender person. "People identified tremendously with this character," Abyad says. "Suddenly they thought this is not a person only fighting for her gender, but also for her identity." >

The recently released local film *Ghadi* explores the reactions of a Lebanese village to a young boy with Down Syndrome. Some of the villagers translate the “difference” of ostracized Ghadi into meaning he “has the devil inside.” However, the film turns that difference into something positive, as Ghadi’s father Leba tricks the town into believing his son is an angel.

With few support systems in place for children with Down Syndrome in Lebanon and little public awareness on the disability, could the reaction of the villagers to Ghadi in the film be close to reality? “Yes, it still happens in some areas,” director Dora says. “Though we have exaggerated [their reaction] for dramatic effect, in some places you can still find people talking about such kids as Satan.” Perhaps, as the first film in Lebanon to tackle the stigma of learning disabilities on screen, *Ghadi* could certainly be considered groundbreaking in at least bringing the topic to a mass audience.

Some art instead highlights difference through “visibility,” with equal opportunities casting giving segregated individuals a place in front of an audience. Abyad’s plays often highlight issues of difference. *A Shell in the Heart* cast Zeina Salem, an actress with Down Syndrome, while in her adaptation of Federico García Lorca’s *The House of Bernarda Alba* she cast a student with a hunchback. “When I am working with people who have differences, it’s not therapy,” she says. “I work with them because they really fit the part.”

Abyad’s casting of Salem in *A Shell in the Heart*, performed at LAU in 2011, was due to the actress’ “special presence.” “I’ve known her for more than 10 years. She’s not over-styled and she’s a very talkative person,” Abyad says of Salem. “She is the only one I thought of for this part.” For Abyad, these kinds of castings can have a double edge. “I think it’s interesting when people realize that you are taking them because they are very good actors and they fit the part. The difference is discarded and yet, at the same time, it is more acknowledged. It is pointed out that despite the difference Salem fits the part beautifully.”

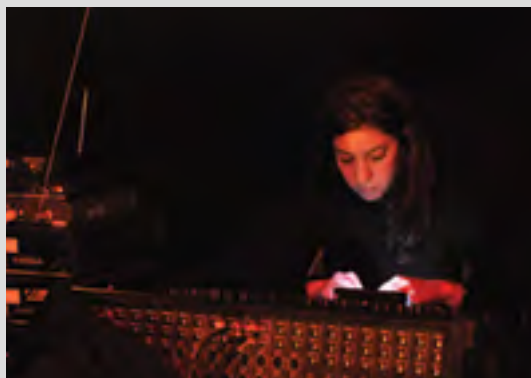
Through interaction and proximity, often comes acceptance. By giving a stage to those often seen in the outside world as “different,” that difference is in a sense broken down or forgotten about. “The fact that you are on stage puts you under the spotlight. [In the past] people didn’t want to expose a child with disabilities. Although this has changed, it still breaks down stigmas to put someone different on stage. It’s quite a strong statement,” Abyad says.

Such acceptance though, doesn’t always translate back to real life. Abyad remembers staging the play *The Blind* in front of a group of children. Offstage the same kids, unreactive during the performance, pointed and giggled at the actor’s hunchback. “It was interesting because on stage the kids didn’t point at him. But when they were standing in a line outside, the actor looked from one to another, and they started chuckling. Within a moment the entire line was giggling,” Abyad says.

There are certain issues that come to play when exposing an individual in front of an audience. Matters of ethics are perhaps felt most strongly when casting those with learning disabilities – how much can such a child really give their full consent to being in a performance? “If I had a character with Down Syndrome most likely I would not cast Zeina. I would like to take somebody who could compose this character,” says Abyad. For Dora the question of exploitation is ever present, but he feels that somehow Emanuel has the “right presence” in the film. “You barely feel him,” he says.

During the pre-production of *Ghadi*, Dora visited several schools to meet children in search of the one who would fit the title role and came across a charismatic Emanuel. Originally finding it a challenge to convey the script to the young boy, the director and actor learned how to communicate with each other on set. “I started to get really close to Emanuel. I turned it into a game for him and me. He made me forget that he’s a special case,” says Dora.





Women behind the scenes

While working within the field of art itself, stereotypes can be challenged, difference ignored and assumed structures rejected. Though Mona Knio, associate professor of theater at LAU and chairperson of communication arts, takes it for granted to be in an assumed position of equality in a university as a woman, she insists on the importance of questioning everything.

"I must admit that most of the time I forget that there are women who are not as privileged. We need to be constantly questioning things," she says. "Art, of course, can share questions with a larger community. Asking these questions in an environment where it is taken for granted that you are supposed to be treated equally is very different to other more challenging places."

As one of the first female technical directors and lighting designers in Lebanon, things weren't always so easy for Knio. The challenges of working within a male-dominated industry were enormous. "I was always looked down at. They automatically assumed I should be a man when I told people I was a technician,"

she says. "I grew up in a society where a woman is accepted when she has the status of a mother, not just the wife."

By working in the industry, Knio helped level out the gender divide and create change by example. Throughout her long career, working behind the scenes everywhere from Hamra's Masrah al Madina to Fairouz concerts in Downtown, Knio has often found attitudes to a woman taking the technical role as somewhat frosty. "I had to give orders to all these men around me, which was tough. I remember whenever I was working on a show, I would have to hear certain comments."

Opinions are evolving and what was once considered a provocative career choice is now more and more acceptable. "Currently, I have at least 30 female students working as technical and lighting designers and nobody questions them. They are much more assertive and confident. Twenty years ago I was the only woman around," she says.

For Dora, cinema by default should be ultimately, honest and reflective. "It's a truth medium. They have a major role to play in society but it's through their responsibility to be honest. A film might shake somebody into changing their view." For Abyad, the impact of the arts on social change can be huge. "When you do it without intention, you realize the impact it has on people, it's tremendous. For those who are acting, it's a platform for them to build self-confidence, to create visibility," she says.

She doesn't believe, though, that the "mission of art" should have a prerogative to create social change. Knio agrees, suggesting that social change is not the responsibility of art, but that civil engagement should enter every part of our lives. "It's our responsibility as citizens, as human beings to draw attention to this."

Can a piece of art have a significant impact, create real change and break down long-held stereotypes? The answer perhaps is in how far an audience can be pushed, without being lost. It takes a gentle hand to approach taboos, while capturing an audience's emotion and ability to relate. "You shake them, you create breaches, you disturb them or you comfort them," Abyad says. "I think theater is like a pebble that makes ripples when you throw it in calm water. These ripples first touch the actors and the people backstage, but hopefully then they cross into the audience and they will eventually use them to create ripples in society." ■



Making classrooms come alive

Innovative teaching techniques

By LAU Staff

Though the university prides itself on its deeply rooted traditions, its classrooms are anything but traditional. “A commitment to innovation in teaching is at the heart of everything we do,” says LAU Beirut Dean of Students, Dr. Raed Mohsen. Students learn in different ways—some are visual learners, others auditory.

Technology and innovation go hand in hand and nowhere is this more evident than in the Clinical Simulation Center, located in the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury Health Sciences Building on the Byblos campus and accessible to all health science students. “The center is equipped with advanced patient simulators so that students can learn important medical procedures without putting real patients at risk,” explains Dean of the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing, Dr. Nancy Hoffart. “The safe setting allows them to build confidence before they begin their rotations.”

The center’s high-fidelity mannequins are capable of simulating physiological changes such as loss of pulse, sudden drop in blood pressure or pupil dilation. They can also be used to treat a range of scenarios from heart attacks or stab wounds to giving injections and

delivering babies. “LAU is one of the regional pioneers in using simulation in teaching, which is now a requirement for most medical schools in the U.S.,” says Dr. Vanda Abi Raad, associate professor of anesthesiology at the School of Medicine, as well as the co-director of the LAU-Clinical Simulation Center along with Dr. Nadia Asmar, assistant professor of medicine.

But innovation is not just about technology; it is also about alternative ways of perceiving the classroom. For instance, take the School of Architecture and Design (SArD) instructor, Dr. Hani Asfour’s foundation design class studio, where the traditional hierarchy of professor-student is turned on its head. “I like to do things differently,” Asfour declares. “The first thing I say when students enter my class is ‘Stop thinking, start seeing.’”

With over 20 years of industry experience, Asfour knows that the traditional classroom no longer sufficiently prepares students for the fast and furious world they live in—the 21st century demands innovation. “A great deal of what happens in my classroom is unlearning,” he admits. “Some students are quite uncomfortable with the experience at

first—in my classroom, the group operates as a collective of equals, where everyone’s opinion is valued.”

If Asfour is redefining what a classroom means, then Dr. Jose Manuel Madrigal, chair of the department of Architecture and Interior Design is taking it to a whole new level. Students have a rare opportunity to travel abroad to research for the department’s Travelling Studios Exhibition. Accompanied by their instructors, students journey to such wide-ranging places as Tokyo, Cuba, Dublin and Portugal, where they immerse themselves in the cultural and architectural landscape of their chosen destination. “This is a very intellectually stimulating experience for our students,” says Dr. Elie Harfouche, assistant professor and coordinator of the Travelling Studios. “It provides them with a unique opportunity to step outside the classroom and become acquainted with a new way of thinking.”

“I learned so much from the time I spent in Dublin,” enthuses fourth-year SArD student Joseph Tabet. “I was able to experience spaces that I had read about in textbooks.” Echoing that sentiment was sixth-year SArD student Lily Hamouche: “My trip to Cuba had a huge impact on me.



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I could never have gone there otherwise. I learned so much.”

Department of Architecture and Design lecturer, Antoine Lahoud, who joined LAU in 1990, is credited with establishing the exhibition as part of the design students’ curriculum. “It is important for students to be exposed to new environs so that they can see architecture and design from a fresh perspective,” he explains.

But sometimes the best learning occurs only a stone’s throw away. LAU’s Early Childhood Center (ECC) is a state-of-the-art educational facility for children between the ages of two and four that sets pupils on a path of academic distinction. It offers placement opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students, who develop practical knowledge about the development and learning of children while also acquiring effective strategies for teaching.

Originally established in the 1950s as a nursery, the curriculum and premises have since undergone drastic transformation to give toddlers the most stimulating education possible at a pivotal time in their cognitive development. University students are able to apply and assess developmentally appropriate activities and gain hands-on experience in children’s social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and physical development.

The facility, which is the only childhood center in the Arab world within an academic institution, is “not merely an addition to the daycare already available in Beirut, but an optimal learning environment where

pupils interact with LAU students and faculty,” points out Dr. Garene Kaloustian, ECC director and assistant professor of education.

One of the greatest advocates for learning outside the classroom is Elie Samia, executive director of the university’s Outreach and Civic Engagement unit. He and his team employ an innovative educational pedagogy that teaches students about democratic participation, social justice, civic professionalism, public leadership and social capital.

Each year students gain civic skills through activities like the annual Model Arab League (MAL), which provides an exciting opportunity to recreate Arab political, economic, cultural and social life. Student leaders receive training in research, negotiation, public speaking and resolution writing, which they in turn teach to local high school students. It is in a similar spirit that LAU hosts the highly successful Model United Nations (MUN). “Leaders are not born, they are made, and the LAU MUN program has proved throughout the years to be a school of leadership par excellence,” stresses Samia.

While many of us instinctively feel that learning is antithesis to playing, students in LAU’s Communication Arts program know that this is not necessarily the case. The program—which prepares students for careers in journalism, publishing, filmmaking and other media—is one of the region’s oldest and most renowned. “If you want to understand the challenges a society is facing, you have to go to the theater, watch films and read,” says Dr. Mona Knio, associate professor of theater in the Department of Communication Arts.

In a prime example of a student-centered classroom, LAU communication arts students organize a major production that they execute from start to finish. Not only do the students act in and direct the plays, they are also responsible for technical tasks crucial to the staging of the productions, such as asset construction, lighting, sound-check and operations management.

In a traditional classroom, the focus was primarily on the instructor at the



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head of the class. Today there has been a shift toward a more student-centered approach—where students are active participants in their own learning. Whether it is rescuing a mannequin from cardiac arrest, training high school students in diplomacy or staging a major production, LAU students are stepping outside of their comfort zones and challenge themselves to take responsibility for their own educational journey.

1. Students immerse themselves in the cultural and architectural landscape of major cities.
2. LAU’s Early Childhood Center (ECC) is a state-of-the-art educational facility for children.
3. Accompanied by their instructors, students experience first-hand the impact of innovative structures.
4. SArd students take a hands-on approach for a visceral experience.



3

Recipes to make dreams come true

*Future writers put
pen to paper*



By Sahar Daouk,
Joseph Abdelnour, Feras Obeid
and Zeinab Darwish

Ingredients

- 400g caster sugar
- 225g melted butter
- 60g cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 eggs
- 225g plain flour
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 60g walnut halves

By Rafif Jammal,
Amani Dakkak, Zamzam Chaar,
Yaman Kossaybati and
Anne-Laure Troesch

*Chocolate Chip Cookies
Original recipe makes 4-dozen*

Ingredients

- 1 cup softened butter
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons hot water
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups semisweet chocolate chip
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

Magical realism is a style of writing that combines the real with the unreal, as in the case of Laura Esquivel's novel *Like Water for Chocolate* (1989), where food is used as a medium to transmit deep emotions. LAU students taking English 212, part of the Liberal Art Curriculum elective requirements for all the university body, had the chance to experiment with this genre and discover the power of food.

After reading the book, the students were asked by Dr. Luma Balaa, assistant professor in the Department of Humanities, to compose a short story interweaving their narrative with a recipe utilizing magic realism. The resulting stories were outstanding and Balaa had a tough time choosing specific ones to share with the LAU community. "It is amazing what students can write when given the adequate 'ingredients' and encouragement," she pointed out.

Magical Brownies

Preparation

It was March 25th. Sara was in the kitchen baking when she had a flashback. All the memories of her with Karim came flooding back. The time they had spent together, their conversations and their love of baking haunted her like a ghost. Karim had died on that same date four years ago, and from then on, every 25th of March Sara would make some brownies in the memory of her love.

Sara started by whisking the ingredients together. As she was mixing her necklace fell into the bowl. She immediately searched the mixture but couldn't find any trace of it. The necklace was a gift from Karim and was the only thing that still reminded her of him. What has she to do? The only tangible object left of him and now it is gone.

After she finished baking the brownie mixture at 180 °C for 25 minutes, she left it to cool and then sliced it into equal square portions. Sara thought that maybe a piece of the brownies might cheer her up. She had a bite and couldn't believe her eyes. Karim appeared in front of her more alive than he ever was!

United By Cookies

Preparation

As we preheated the oven to 175 °C, we mixed the butter with the white and brown sugar until creamy. Then we whisked in the eggs one at a time and added the vanilla. Next we dissolved the baking soda in hot water, representing my image of a group of Lebanese from different sects getting along regardless of their differences, and added it to the rest of the ingredients, where each represented a Lebanese individual of different backgrounds, all were united and moving together in harmony.

We then placed small round balls of mixture on a cookie sheet. Finally, we baked the cookies for about 10 minutes until the edges were nicely browned. As I waited, I started imagining what it would be like if people weren't so offensive to others because of their differences.

The next day, during the independence parade, a typical scenario took place with two guys arguing about politics. I gathered my courage and went to offer them cookies, even though I knew they were going to think how stupid and irrelevant I was to do so. But I did. I approached them and handed them each a cookie made of love, passion and hope.

A few minutes later they were hugging each other and apologizing for the stupid argument. Before I knew it, people were seeking my cookies and once they had a bite, I saw love and passion taking over. This image made me realize that with just a little of hope and faith anything is possible.

Op-Ed

Embrace the limitation

By Reine Azzi

Sugata Mitra developed a prize-winning idea out of a simple concept: take one computer, a room full of children with inquisitive minds and allow them to ask the right questions. His 'School in the Cloud' is indeed an example of developing human creativity within the context of limitations. And this case isn't exceptional. We've all heard stories of innovators, working in their garages, rummaging through second-hand gadgets in order to fashion the predecessor to the MacBook, for instance.

Creativity is rarely the result of abundance; it is generally born out of constraints. If this premise were to be revived, then a complete revolution may be necessary in the way we perceive the context of teamwork. The irony, though, is that our managerial prowess regularly tends to ignore this essential factor.

When I applied for the TEDxLAU license, the first of its kind for a university in Lebanon, I was aware that our path wouldn't be straightforward. In fact, I was banking on that. My life has always been an uphill climb, with one obstacle after the other. In time, I came to cherish these moments of pure bliss, the feeling of complete self-actualization when a particular challenge is overcome. TEDxLAU would just be another incredible path.

Limitations came to define who we were as a team. As a TED-style conference that was relatively unknown, it was difficult to convince everyone of our worth. As such, our major limitation was financial, yet we managed to create our first live event, with 12 speakers, social space activities, and beautiful set design for only USD1,250. My strategy as a manager wasn't all that clear to me at first. It was our own organizing students who showed me the way. All I had to do was convince them of the value of our work together and our dream carried us along for the rest of the ride.

To overcome our restrictions, we resorted to creative means of expression. Lack of exorbitant funds for stage design meant we recycled, reused and abused every item at our disposal to develop a concept of LED creations or manufacture our own from scratch. Lack of a proper budget for



a buffet – we created an exciting picnic to bring people together over a simple meal. Lack of funding for event souvenirs – we designed 500 one-of-a-kind hand-drawn tote bags. Each restriction challenged our young team to create a corresponding solution, stimulating original minds in the process and allowing them to stand out. From students of graphic design to hospitality and all the other majors, it was precisely these restrictions that allowed our team members to prove themselves!

The paradox lies in the following: every success leads to greater appreciation, and inevitably, the community answers back. Over the years, our limitations are no longer the same. The more faith people have in us and our vision, the more flexible our reins. It becomes harder for a team leader to maintain the delicate balance between the bounty of success and the perceived rewards of limitations. My utmost fear in the forthcoming days is our possible dependence upon our resources and our subsequent loss of the drive to overcome these “non-challenges”.

I tend to detest oversimplified answers, but I'll be offering one of my own here. One can't put a price tag on dreams; it is the ultimate means of motivation. We are fellow dreamers, and as I like to call it, realistic dreamers. I embrace that identity, but I'm also fully aware of the beauty of realizing a dream amidst a prevalence of boundaries.



Reine Azzi is an instructor of English and Moral Reasoning and the curator of TEDxLAU. She received her M.A. in European Humanities, 2007, from University of St. Andrews (Scotland), University of Bergamo (Italy) and University of Perpignan (France).



"Software engineering is about building things, testing limits and pushing boundaries."

—EyeEm team member, Ramzi Rizk (B.S. '03)

Picture perfect

LAU graduate and team create successful photo sharing mobile app, EyeEm

By Mehrnoush Shafiei

In the ever-increasing competitive field of technology, only the cream of the crop can hope to survive. Though still a relatively new kid on the block, EyeEm is giving photo-sharing apps like Instagram a run for their money. Recently profiled in Forbes magazine, the free photo sharing mobile app is a unique platform where a photograph can be shared, uploaded and even sold for profit.

The app was created just three years ago and allows users to take and edit photos, using seventeen filters and twelve frames. The photos can then be shared on the EyeEm website, via email or on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Flickr or Foursquare.

The Berlin-based startup is the brainchild of LAU graduate Ramzi Rizk, Florian Meissner, Lorenz Aschoff and Gen Sadakane. Rizk graduated in 2003 with a B.S. in Computer Science from LAU Byblos.

At an astounding ten million users, EyeEm is well positioned to compete with the likes of Instagram and other similar photo sharing applications. In fact, last January the application topped the U.S. app charts at number two in the photo/video category.

When asked to reflect on what he attributes to EyeEm's success, Rizk says: "It was a combination of things, the size of our network increasing meant that the impact of features in app stores and press had a bigger effect."

EyeEm has been cultivating relationships with corporate powerhouses, such as Lufthansa and Red Bull, in a bid to allow EyeEm users the opportunity to make money in exchange for licensing of their images. This interesting business model has caught the attention of social media users and is perhaps one of the reasons for EyeEm's success.

"The peak in January 2013 can be attributed to word of mouth mostly," says Rizk. High school students in a suburb of Houston started using EyeEm and asking their friends to join - within a day or two, we were trending on Twitter in the U.S. and globally, and that led to hundreds of thousands of people downloading the app. It was (as is always the case) a combination of word of mouth, quality products and social media."

The app is perfect for photography aficionados or amateurs looking to network with like-minded individuals since it boasts a unique tagging system that makes a theme or location or an event to each photo taken. "We're building some awesome technology and using it to power a marketplace that will change the landscape of photo agencies," says Rizk.

Reflecting on his experience at LAU and the inspiration it instilled in him to strive toward distinction, Rizk has the following words of wisdom to offer budding app-builders: "If I had to give one piece of advice, it would be to never accept the status quo. Software engineering is about building things, testing limits and pushing boundaries. Facebook's motto 'move fast and break things' sums it up," he says.





Fly Dubai

The Emirate's annual international airshow becomes a training field for over 60 LAU business students

By Linda Dahdah

An LAU delegation of 63 hospitality graduates and students accompanied by two faculty members took off to Dubai mid-November to the 13th edition of the Dubai Airshow (17-21 November). LAU's School of Business had been invited by the event's caterers – Dubai World Trade Center – to provide them with managers, supervisors and servers for the exhibitors' tents.

"This is the sixth time that LAU has taken part in this event, even so the number of students participating has increased substantially," said Bassem Slim, instructor in the Hospitality and Marketing Department, who was behind the onset of this venture in 2000. "We were not even sure that we were going to go this year, as the event had a new caterer with who we had absolutely no connection, but they requested us."

many of whom were prestigious figures like royal family members, presidents, key businessmen. Airbus, for instance, welcomed over 700 and had two sittings at lunch," pointed out Slim.

Lara Kambriss, a hospitality graduate who participated in the salon for the third time, was specifically requested by some of the exhibitors. "Every time it's a new and unique experience. There is great pressure working with big companies and dealing with so many different cultures and nationalities. We have to adapt, be in control and give our best," she said. "And we succeeded."

Waking up at 4 a.m. every morning, the students would get ready to be on site by 6 a.m. For the next 12 to 13 hours they would dash around nonstop, almost like running a marathon some may say. However, it would take a lot more to deter the students.

"Although our legs were burning from standing, walking and running all day, we were happy to have a chance to talk to and even befriend some very important people that may impact our future careers," said second year hospitality student Christopher Barakat. As a supervisor in the Airbus pavilion, Barakat was able to test his skills in a major setting, as well as take the opportunity to network with figures from the business industry. Although the task was enormous, the close supervision by Slim and his colleague Georges Tamer, hospitality lab supervisor, guaranteed the success of the delegation's mission.

"Our students have shown a lot of professionalism, seriousness and discipline," said Dr. Josiane Sreih, chair of the Marketing and Hospitality Department. "The biggest proof is the number of companies and people who requested them for other events taking place in the emirate."

Sreih believes that what makes LAU hospitality students so popular in Dubai is their technological, theoretical and practical skills.

"The broad in-house and hands-on experience our students receive enables them to adapt quickly to any situation they are faced with. Their education and formation is their added value," she said.



"The in-house hands-on experience our students receive allows them to adapt quickly to any situation they are faced with."

—Marketing and Hospitality Department chair, Dr. Josiane Sreih

According to the 2013 Dubai Airshow website, the event saw some 60,692 trade attendees from around the world, 1,046 exhibitors from 50 countries, 1,735 international and regional media, and a total of USD206.1 billion in book orders.

The pavilions of key companies like Airbus and its parent company EADS, Boeing, Mubadala, General Electric and Eurofighter were wholly managed by LAU graduates and students. "Some of these stands received over 500 visitors a day,

Train Train

A Lebanese NGO is working on preserving and reviving Lebanon's rail industry

By Natalie Shooter



"You don't know how great our country was until you get into the history of its railways."

—LAU alumnus, founder of Train Train, Elias Maalouf

It might be difficult to imagine that Lebanon once had a fully functioning rail system, but travel back over a century and you'll discover a network that connected its capital city to the rest of the Middle East. The NGO Train Train, founded by LAU alumnus Elias Maalouf, was set up to shed light on the country's long-forgotten rail industry.

Built in 1895, Lebanon's first railroad connected Beirut to Damascus, through Rayak, launching the first chapter in Middle Eastern rail history. Later lines joining Beirut to Tripoli and Haifa, as well as Rayak to Aleppo, connected Lebanon to Europe revealing a time of booming industry.

Maalouf's interest in Lebanon's locomotive history has dramatic roots. In 2005, his final year university documentary, first planned on Syria's withdrawal in Lebanon, took him to Rayak Train Station that was at the time a Syrian military compound. "I was filming the Syrian army's withdrawal from the station. They burnt archives in a wagon as they were leaving," Maalouf says. "As they mounted the last truck, I tried to save some of the archives, but they started shooting in the air, so I fled. I regret not being able to save them."

Afterward, Maalouf was inspired to switch the topic of his documentary, later called *Ya Train*, to Lebanon's railway history and started by interviewing the country's few remaining train drivers. "Many of them died not long after I spoke with them. It was as if they were waiting to say something," Maalouf explains. "They all gave me their archives. Over time I met so many enthusiasts that I decided to create the NGO."

The NGO's archives now stretch to over 3,000 original photographs of

Lebanese railways, footage of the coastal line's construction and a collection of maps, documents and plans. A successful exhibition at Beiteddine Festival brought an audience of 25,000 people and another at Beirut Souks unearthed numerous more archives to add to the collection.

Train Train is in the process of creating an archive and research center in Beirut to preserve their century-old collection, restore damaged archives and digitize it for the future. "You don't know how great our country was until you get into the history of its railways," Maalouf points out. "The Lebanese railways were the best in the region and Rayak's train factory created great inventions used all over the world."

Train Train hopes to work alongside the government to preserve Lebanon's remaining railways and push for its eventual refurbishment. Their plan to rebuild the Byblos-Batroun line aims to show the potential success of national rail refurbishment. Train Train has been working closely with the new Director General for the Railway and Public Transportation Authority, also an LAU alumna, Ziad Nasr. "He's been a great support," Maalouf says. "He's the first to do something about the railways."

Maalouf has faith that one-day Lebanon's rail network will be revived. "Is there any other solution for the awful traffic jams? Before they thought the only way out was to build more roads, but traffic is like a goldfish, the bigger the aquarium, the bigger it grows," he questions. He's found the enthusiasm for his project encouraging. At a recent NGO fair over 200 applications for volunteering were received from LAU. "We really believe with the help of students we can get somewhere with our cause which needs a lot of love," Maalouf stresses.



The under print of the LAU Tribune

A closer look at the official student newspaper

By Selim Njeim

Written for students by students, the LAU Tribune is a platform for the university's community to read about events on campus and beyond. Dr. Yasmine Dabbous Nasser, LAU assistant professor and fall 2013 academic adviser for the newspaper, remembers when she penned articles as a student herself and ran around campus distributing copies.

"Coming from a journalism background, it was so exciting to experience it at university," Dabbous said. "Now, I teach the Journalism Workshop class, which is extremely demanding, as the editing process is so time-consuming, but there's nothing I love doing more," she said.

The LAU Tribune is the crux of the class, a requirement for all journalism students. Assignments consist of writing news articles, which are relatively short pieces providing coverage for past or upcoming events, and features, which are longer human interest stories or articles delving deep into a specific topic.

"No matter how many classes you take, when you're majoring in journalism, you only truly learn when your articles start being published," said Doha Adi, a journalism student and the editor of the Tribune's Introducing to You page for fall 2013. Not only does the class offer hands-on experience to enrolled students, but by the end of the semester, they also accumulate a substantial stack of writing samples to use when applying to jobs or graduate school.

Publication of the Tribune was suspended and re-launched multiple times in the past, before reaching a milestone in spring 2011. To keep up with the latest technological advances and cater to contemporary readers, the publication went exclusively online. The LAU Tribune now flaunts eight sections, updated every other Thursday, covering an array of topics. "Writing articles—and reading the ones by my classmates—introduced me to topics I had never thought I could tackle and sometimes issues I didn't think I would like or find interesting," said Hiba Zibawi, co-editor of the Opinion page.

A lot of budding journalists graduate from the class but never cease to feel inexplicably drawn toward the Nicol Hall newsroom. Zayna Ayyad, a third-year journalism student, is one of many who still refuse to take off their LAU Tribune cap, even post-completion of the class. "I hope I always have the chance to write for The Tribune, even after graduating. It is such a pleasure for me," she said enthusiastically.

This year, and for the first time since its inception, the LAU Tribune published articles in Arabic. "While I like writing in English, Arabic has a very special place in my heart," said Majdoleen Chmouri, a senior journalism student who writes in both languages. "Arabic is such a beautiful language. Hard to master and a little confusing sometimes, but charming nevertheless," she added.

When asked to give some advice to those who will be taking the class in the future, senior journalism student Sara Akil offered the following: "Don't be afraid to push yourselves and, most importantly, don't be afraid of the pressure. You will make mistakes, but you will learn from them and then apply the lessons you've learnt in future real-life dilemmas."

This spring the Journalism Workshop class is being given by Maya Rahal, LAU instructor and managing editor at Wamda.com



"You only truly learn when your articles start being published."

—Doha Adi, an editor of the LAU Tribune

Its classroom in LAU Beirut's Nicol Hall simulates a professional newsroom environment, where one will find students fully immersed in all stages of content production. They hunt down compelling stories, select and interview subjects, take photographs and edit each other's articles. Each section of the Tribune, as it is more affectionately known, is supervised and edited by two student co-editors.

The course aims to reflect reality in the field and journalism as a profession. In the late 1990s, veteran journalist Magda Abu-Fadil succeeded in bringing it closer to an authentic newsroom with students going out to report and take photographs, then returning to write and produce. "I'm gratified many [of my students] have become big names in major print and broadcast media and international news agencies. That was my reward," she said.



Celebrating the power of pictures through students' stories



By Selim Njem



Traipsing around campus loaded with her photographic equipment, Noura Andréa Nassar, an LAU graphic design student, is always on the lookout. Ever so attentive to detail and observant of the scenery around her, she walks over to people offering to take their picture. This is not for a photography class project, though. The pictures and their accompanying captions serve to embellish a Facebook page, *Humans of LAU*.

Inspired by the original *Humans of New York* (HONY) project by Brandon Stanton and loyal to it in format, the LAU-bound page features students from around the Beirut campus, with stories to tell. Everyone has an experience to share, even if they aren't always brave enough to relate it. The page provides a platform to encourage students to talk about their lives, as well as their academic and personal challenges, among other topics.

"The point behind the page is to look at someone's picture and read what they have to say. Not to judge based only upon their appearance. Everyone has an experience," said Nassar. "There is always more to someone than what meets the eye." The content of the page may be viewed by anyone, even if they don't have a Facebook account, though commenting on and "liking" the post is only available to those who have signed up.

Nassar is usually drawn to people sitting alone or in small groups, reading a book or perhaps simply walking around. She approaches them and tries to initiate conversation. "Not everyone I try talking to is receptive to the idea of having their picture taken. Degrees of responsiveness vary, for sure." She sometimes wanders around for days before she stumbles upon

a compelling story to share with the online community. "It is hard to read people and know what is going through their heads without conversing with them," she explained.

The page, initiated in October 2013, now has over 1,400 "likes", and counting. It not only serves to give a voice to individuals, but also works to bring people together, sparking new friendships. "Noura once asked me if she could take my picture and post it online, and I said yes," recounted Isabelle Atallah, a first-year LAU student. "Some people really liked what I had to say and reached out to me. I've remained friends with them ever since."

Owner of an autographed copy of Stanton's book *Humans of New York*, a collection of the best and most popular photographs he's taken, Nassar met the street-photographer last September during a trip to New York. The "Humans of..." concept, an offspring of *Humans of New York*, has resulted in nearly every major city in the world having its own page.

Like Stanton, unique, inspirational stories are the driving force behind the effort Nassar exerts to maintain the page. The answers people give to her questions are a celebration of their individualism and offer a glimpse into their true selves. She is considering the possibility of collaborating with someone from LAU Byblos in order to give equal coverage to both campuses.

"Do not judge based only upon appearance."

—Noura Andréa Nassar, photographer

Q&A

Educating future healers

LAU faculty incite excellence as they strive to perfect means of teaching

By LAU staff



LAU Magazine sat down with Dr. Vanda Abi Raad, associate professor of anesthesiology and co-director of the LAU-Clinical Simulation Center, to delve further into medical education and get her assessment of hands-on teaching.

How do we at LAU-SOM teach in innovative ways and how do these methods help the students?

At LAU-SOM, we have embraced an integrated curriculum that is a new model of clinical education based on the educational and developmental needs of the student. This curriculum relies on small group, self-directed and enquiry-structured study strategy, such as case- and problem-based learning. It also favors contextual learning and early clinical exposure, as well as the use of new and innovative strategies including simulation-based education. However, let's not forget that the abiding character of our school is determined by the kind of physician it is graduating, one who is superbly trained in the skills of 21st century medicine, but also believes deeply that above all, s/he is a merciful healer.

What are the benefits of simulation-based education?

Traditionally, medical education has relied on training with real patients in actual clinical settings. While hands-on, experiential learning is indispensable, medical educators are increasingly concerned about, and committed to, the safety of patients. Simulation-based education (SBE) is a rapidly developing discipline that can provide safe and effective learning environments for students. For teaching and learning purposes, clinical situations are created

using mannequins, part-task trainers, simulated patients or computer-generated simulations. At LAU-SOM, simulation-based education is introduced in the first year of medical school in order to supplement and enhance the clinical education of our students.

Where does critical thinking come into play?

An important area of emphasis is the fostering of skills aimed at preparing students to meet the "changing science and practice of medicine as lifelong learners." Self-improvement and critical thinking are crucial for this process, and are also deeply incorporated in the school's curriculum.

How has the profession changed over the years and what are our doctors specializing in?

In a U.S. recent survey, the specialties with the largest numbers of active physicians were the primary care specialties of internal medicine, family medicine/general practice and pediatrics. The distribution is different in Lebanon. At LAU-SOM, we hold an annual career fair, which offers students in every class year the opportunity to explore the different specialties and professional paths. While the faculty presents the various national and international opportunities for specialization, they also direct students about the needed specialties in Lebanon.

Does teaching medicine deter from practicing it?

Adult education expert Stephen Brookfield once said, "We teach what we like to learn" Excellent clinical teaching, although multifactorial, transcends ordinary teaching

and is characterized by inspiring, supporting, actively involving and communicating with students.

Do you see teaching hospitals as an advantage and why?

A teaching hospital is a hospital where the primary mission is to "teach the next generation" in addition to delivering medical care to patients. Studies in U.S. showed that major teaching hospitals produce better outcomes while also conducting topflight research, basic and clinical.

Our teaching hospital LAUMC-RH is currently undergoing major reconstruction and expansion to convert it into a comprehensive university hospital containing several centers of excellence. The plan for this hospital through its new organization is to be able to attract, develop and retain the intellectual capital needed to excel in teaching and research while providing a 21st-century practice role model for LAU-SOM students, residents and fellows.



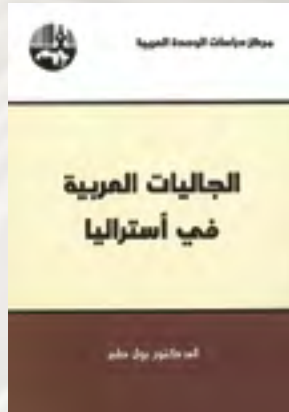
Vanda Abi Raad is an associate professor of Anesthesiology at the School of Medicine and co-founder of the LAU-Clinical Simulation Center.

Hot off the printing press

Leafing through the latest books by the university's faculty

By LAU Staff

LAU boasts one of the most published university faculties in the Arab world. Faculty research regularly appears in academic journals and periodicals, and our experts are regularly solicited by the press. LAU Magazine takes a look at some of the recent books released by our professors.



Arab Communities in Australia

By Paul Tabar

Published by The Centre for Arab Unity Studies

Dr. Paul Tabar, associate professor of sociology and anthropology and director of the Institute for Migration Studies, examines Arab migration to Australia, focusing particularly on Lebanon's sizeable diaspora. In the second book he has written on the topic, Tabar provides a sociological study of Arab settlement and community building in Australia, looking at the group's integration in Australian society and diasporic relations with their homeland. The book explains how Arab migration to Australia has followed the typical process as described by sociologists: once the number of a particular community reaches a critical level, members of the community begin to build their own specific community organizations to better cope with the settlement process and to preserve their own ethnic identities. However, while they hold on to some aspects of their ethnic identities, they are also transformed and reinvented to suit life in Australia. Tabar surveys the religious institutions founded by Arab communities and their significance in their settlement in Australia. The book, which is the first of its kind in Arabic, is meant to put an "end to the folkloric version of Arab migration experiences," Tabar says. He hopes the book could be used by Arab states to effectively connect with their diasporic communities.

The Government and Politics of Lebanon

By Imad Salamey | Published by Routledge

Dr. Imad Salamey, associate professor of political science, has authored a book to explain Lebanon's complicated government and politics to global audiences. Salamey provides an examination of the origin, development and institutionalization of sectarian consociationalism—a term originally coined by political scientist Arend Lijphart, as the manifestation of sectarian politics where power is divided and shared—in Lebanon, revealing it as both a blessing and a curse in the formulation of political settlements and institution building. "On the one hand, and in contrast to many surrounding Arab regimes, consociational arrangements have provided the country with a relatively democratic political life," says Salamey. "A limited government with a strong confessional division of power and a built-in checks and balance mechanism has prevented the emergence of dictatorship or monarchy. On the other hand, a chronic weak state has complicated nation-building efforts in favor of sectarian fragmentation, external interventions, and strong polarization that have periodically brought the country to the verge of total collapse and civil war." The book provides a comprehensive introduction to Lebanese politics for both students and Middle Eastern history enthusiasts.



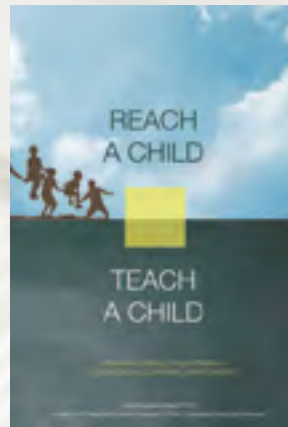


توهج البصرة بغياب البصر

By Nidale Al-Amyouni
Daccache

Published by Dar Sa-er Al
Mashreq

In this book, Dr. Nidale Al-Amyouni Daccache, assistant professor of Arabic literature at the Department of Humanities, reviews some of the contributions to historical Arabic literature made by blind thinkers and poets. She argues despite being blind, these figures made lasting contributions to Arab thought, allowing their readers to inhabit a world that they have experienced in a completely different way. Using the poet Bashar bin Bord as a key example, Daccache contends that many blind people can see with their insight, and many people who have sight are blind. "Knowing the difference between sight and insight and between sight and the light is necessary for anyone seeking physical and spiritual development," says Daccache. She argues that it is also essential to recognize the importance of language in transferring poetry from one era to another, arguing that Bashar bin Bord's enduring relevance as a poet resulted from his ability "to understand the secrets of language."



Reach a Child— Teach a Child

By Irma-Kaarina Ghosn

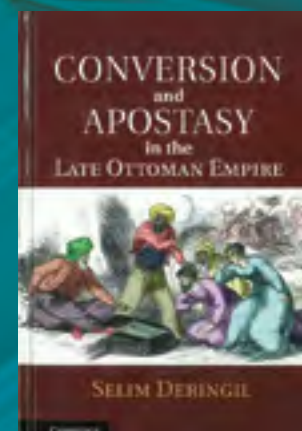
Published by the Institute for
Peace and Justice Education

Dr. Irma-Kaarina Ghosn, associate professor at the School of Arts and Sciences and director of the Institute for Peace and Justice Education, has published a handbook for teachers. The book is the result of a two-year teacher development project involving 30 teachers from schools in North Lebanon. The underlying premise of the handbook is that the basic human dignity of children must be respected at all times, including when they misbehave. It outlines ways teachers can prepare and create learning environments that engage children and minimize disruptions and misbehavior, and that respect the human dignity and rights of the child. The handbook introduces them to simple techniques to deal with disruptive behaviors that have been successful elsewhere. In many cases, behavior problems occur because of the lack of careful planning of classroom management strategies or the teaching itself. "We tried to emphasize that the techniques we taught did not require take extra time but could still change the way things were done," says Ghosn.

Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire

By Selim Deringil | Published by Cambridge University Press

Dr. Selim Deringil, professor at the Department of Humanities, recently published a book that was chosen as the co-winner of the M. Fuad Koprulu Prize, given by the Turkish Studies Association. In the book, Deringil critiques the commonly accepted perception that nationalism replaced religion in the age of modernity. In the 19th century Ottoman Empire, the focus of this book, traditional religious structures crumbled as the empire itself began to decline. The state's answer to schism was to administer controls and regulations, and it was against this background that religious communities negotiated their survival by converting to Islam when their political interests or their lives were at stake. As the century progressed, however, and as Deringil illustrates with real-life case studies, conversion was no longer enough to guarantee citizenship as the state became increasingly paranoid about apostates and what it perceived as their "denationalization." The book tells the story of the struggle for the bodies and the souls of people, waged between the Ottoman state, the Great Powers, and a multitude of evangelical organizations. Many of the stories highlight current flashpoints in the Arab world and the Balkans, providing alternative perspectives on national and religious identity and their interconnections.



YOUR opinion matters



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The sheer determination to help

One student's quest to make a difference

By Leena F. Saidi



Who is Tanya Khalil?

By Selim Njeim

Khalil's life is like a multi-act play, which she manages to direct with precision and dedication. Theater makes up a considerable chunk of the young director's life —she has directed two plays, acted in multiple productions and been cast in a reality TV show. She describes theater as a confrontation that is both comfortable and uncomfortable. For Khalil, acting strips people down so much that it exposes them to the audience, just as if they were standing on stage naked.

A multi-dimensional character, both in real life and on stage, she always tries to develop her skills, paying attention to the minutest details. "Letting my emotions come out so raw, vivid and uncensored proved to be way harder than I had expected," she recounted.

Khalil preferred to remain elusive about her future. "I float, that's what I do. I float and trust that life will take me wherever it wants to take me," she said.



"This campaign has restored my faith in humanity."

What began as donations from LAU student Tanya Khalil, her relatives and some of her friends evolved into a wide-scale clothing drive on Facebook, turned into nationwide event she named "I am not a tourist" in a bid to highlight the collective responsibility of Lebanese citizens to help deal with the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis.

"What is happening in Syria is of particular interest because it has become my reality," said Khalil.

A communication arts student focusing on theater, Khalil is no stranger to volunteer work. A few years back, she traveled to Sierra Leone for a month to help out at the international NGO, the SOS Children's Village, there. She is still in contact with some of the kids and exchanges messages with them from time to time.

"Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, I run into refugee children in the street daily on my way to university or work," explained Khalil. So she decided to stop being a passive observer or what she called a tourist in her own country. "If they are cold, so am I. If they are hungry, I am too," she added.

To Khalil's surprise, more than 4,500 people turned up at BIEL, in downtown Beirut, on a cold Sunday in December donating bags full of warm clothes and blankets, some items they had purchased especially for the collection, amassing 25 truckloads in total.

"The campaign spread through social media and people from different countries started contacting me, asking me how they can help," she pointed out.

The initiative, organized by Khalil with the collaboration of the NGOs SAWA for Syria and War Child Lebanon, was meant to help Syrian refugees, especially after winter storm Alexa hit, increasing the magnitude of their tragedy particularly in the mountainous areas and in the Bekaa Valley.

"We started with about five people collecting clothes, but reached more than 50 volunteers who formed a 'human chain' to load the trucks," Khalil added.

There are around 842,000 displaced Syrians registered with the UN refugee agency in Lebanon but with many unregistered refugees, Lebanese government officials put the true number at around 1.3 million.

Due to the success of the initiative, Khalil said she intends to arrange further collections in the future. "As the situation of the displaced is getting worse, we are thinking of launching a bigger project. "It will be for whatever they need most: medicine, food, water."

Although she has always had faith in people and their ability to make a difference, "This campaign has restored my faith in humanity," concluded Khalil with a smile.



FEATURE

Rebel with a cause

Standing out and inspiring change

By Leena F. Saidi



Martin Luther King had a dream, but if he had not made that dream known, it would have died with him. By performing a simple action change can be brought about and a difference made that will improve the lives of others.

Changing the life of one person is no small feat. Changing the lives of a community is even harder. Throughout history many people have impacted the lives of others. Mother Theresa, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Florence Nightingale —just to name a few—the list is endless. They believed they could make a difference, they created change. And anyone can do so just by changing their thinking from “I’m only one person, how can I do anything?” to “What can I do to make a change?”

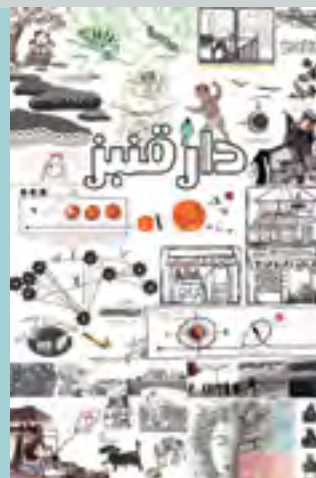
LAU alumna, Hana Abu Khadra Salem, the mother of Zeina, who was born with Down Syndrome, did exactly that. “I faced so many challenges and negative attitudes when I wanted to register my daughter in school,” she recalls. So, at the peak of her career as a highly successful architect managing her own company, Salem left it all behind to enroll in an M.A. in Special Education at LAU.

Salem is one of a group of parents who founded the Lebanese Down Syndrome Association (LDSA), which aims to promote a positive image of persons with the disorder and dispel myths associated with it. “People are skeptical about the aptitudes of our children and do not even try to give them a chance, she says.”

After facing endless difficulties to find a suitable educational environment for her daughter, Salem worked with the administration and a group of teachers from the Heritage College willing to create a program integrating special needs students side by side with “regular students” in a conventional curriculum. “So, we had to meet the challenge and prove them wrong. We believe in their potential and had to convince people around us to give them a chance. We needed to create opportunities for our children,” she stresses. Ever since, Salem continues to fervently promote the inherent right of those suffering from the disorder to be accepted, to have access and the opportunity to quality education and to be included as valued and equal members of their communities. >



Price 208



"I was inspired to make a change."

—Yorgui Teyrouz, founder of *Donner Sang Compter*,
LAU alumnus

One of the first stereotypes that Kouyoumdjian broke was his ethnicity. "I was the first Armenian to be a news anchor in Arabic," he says. "I broke the stereotype that Armenians don't know how to speak Arabic and thus couldn't dream of becoming TV anchors. And from there on my audience expected me to be different."

People who take the decision to be different or aren't afraid of doing something different are the ones who have been able to make a difference. They change how we perceive. Kouyoumdjian was one such person. "I dared to be different. Basically I dared to be myself on TV."

Doing something meaningful, perhaps practical is a better word, is often all that is needed. Sevine Ariss, LAU alumna and co-founder of Dar Onboz, a publishing house that aims to see toddlers, children and the youth enjoying and loving Arabic books seeks to break the cycle of apathy and passive consumption,

Arabic has almost become synonymous with old-fashioned. No longer do we read to our children in the language of our ancestors, instead we use French or English and by doing so introduce them global cultures sometimes at the expense of their own. Dar Onboz

is a platform for critical thinking, development and dialogue around the Arabic language. "It is about infiltrating the written and the visual media with interesting and intelligent programs that will catch the attention of the children and make them enjoy the language," she explains.

To make a difference you needn't be in the limelight yourself. Yorgui Teyrouz, who graduated from LAU in 2012, created a database of voluntary blood donors. He became aware of blood shortages when a close friend's grandfather needed five units and died because he wasn't able to get enough. "Then I realized how much of a shortage of blood donors there was and I was inspired to change that," Teyrouz says. He built a fast-growing network of voluntary blood donors on Facebook through the group *Donner Sang Compter*, created in early 2007, which he ran with six friends of which four are LAU students.

Making a lasting impact requires us to believe that change is possible. It's never too late to leave a mark as every great journey begins with a single step. ■



Campusnotes

Edited by Linda Dahdah

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

Campus news



Taking education to municipalities

LAU's Continuing Education Program and the Muhanna Foundation have launched a five-month program to enhance the administrative and financial capabilities of municipality employees. The Municipal Administration and Finance Diploma was formally launched in October at LAU Beirut under the patronage of former caretaker Interior Minister Marwan Charbel. The certificate, which is being offered in cooperation with the ministry's Local Administration and Councils Directorate, will feature three modules on municipal and state law, administrative procedures and finances. The program's main goal is to strengthen strategic planning and budgeting for municipal activities.

Joining hands to improve university programs

In November, LAU hosted a conference on "Quality and Added Value of Graduate and Postgraduate Programs in Education in Arab Universities" to address the major challenges of university education in the Arab world, particularly with respect to scientific research in theses and dissertations at the master's and doctoral levels. Under the patronage of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Lebanon, the event was organized in close collaboration with the Arab Educational Information Network and the Lebanese Association for Educational Studies. The two-day conference looked at both theoretical and practical issues, including how a graduate program should be structured to ensure quality is upheld.



Simulating the best care

Dozens of practicing doctors from across Lebanon and the region flocked to LAU Byblos in December to participate in a professional simulation training day. "Emergency Situations in Obstetrical Anesthesia", was jointly organized by the Lebanese Society of Anesthesiologists and the LAU-Clinical Simulation Center. Capable of simulating physiological changes, the center's mannequins can be used to mimic a range of scenarios from injections, infant delivery, heart attacks or stab wounds. "LAU is one of the regional pioneers to use simulation in teaching," said Dr. Vanda Abi Raad, associate professor of Anesthesiology at the School of Medicine and co-director of the LAU-Clinical Simulation Center.

ECC reopens at LAU

The Early Childhood Center, a contemporary educational facility for children between the ages of two and four, opened in February. The beautifully-designed center, located on the ground floor of Shannon Hall, is the only childhood center in the Arab world within an academic institution. It offers a high-quality program that nurtures problem solving and critical thinking skills, as well as individual learning patterns in children. It also serves as a teacher preparation and educational research facility for LAU students and international academic researchers.



Careers



A guiding star

A sense of excitement swept through the Byblos campus in January when LAU's Office of the Dean of Students invited renowned Lebanese filmmaker Nadine Labaki to speak to students about a career in film. Rana Sakr, lead career guidance officer and organizer of the event, said that the impetus for hosting Labaki was so that students could have an opportunity to meet her face-to-face and ask film-related questions. During the event, Sakr took the opportunity to recommend LAU's talented communications students for internships as well as volunteering opportunities in her next film, to which Labaki was particularly receptive.

Design

Made in Korea

In December, budding designers at LAU were given a taste of Korean fashion by fashion curator and critic Kim Hong Ki at LAU Beirut. Kim, who is also a journalist and art director, shared his love of the Korean contemporary fashion industry. He has spent many years reporting on Korea's fashion aesthetics, market and designers. "Exposure to different cultures can help inspire new fashion ideas," said Jason Steel, assistant professor at the LAU Fashion Design Program in collaboration with Elie Saab, explaining the impetus for organizing the talk.



Heritage



Encapsulating history

Could Lebanon's amber have been the inspiration for the 1993 box office phenomenon Jurassic Park? In November, experts brought together at LAU's Center for Lebanese Heritage's (CLH) monthly lecture series deliberated the possibility and the country's unique wealth of this fossilized tree resin. Poet Henri Zoghaib, CLH director, brought together Dany Azar, a professor at the Lebanese University's Faculty of Science, renowned film director, Philippe Aractingi and the sales manager of Nsouli Jewelry, Fadi Zein al-Abdine to deliberate the possibility and put this national treasure into perspective in a lecture entitled "Lebanese Amber: A Rare Treasure."

Lebanese cinema through its posters

In February CLH organized a lecture about Lebanese cinema through its posters. While journalist and researcher Mahmoud Zibawi made an overall presentation, director Georges Nasr shared his own experience as a young filmmaker who had studied in Hollywood. Nasr's "Where To?" became the first Lebanese film to be selected in Cannes international film festival ever (in the 1950s). The picture was never shown in his home country, a fact that speaks a lot about the ups-and-downs of a Lebanese film industry in constant competition with the Egyptian giant. Critic Emile Chahine reminded the audience that up until today Lebanese like light movies, calling for the public to support alternative cinema.



Health

Celebrating World Diabetes Day

In November, LAU held several events to commemorate World Diabetes Day – celebrated every year on November 14. In Byblos, the student Nutrition Club in collaboration with the National Diabetes Organization (DiaLeb) provided awareness publications and free glucose testing, as well as a nutritional assessment of diabetes risk factors. The Medical Students Association, under the motto “Are You At Risk”, meanwhile performed check-ups on students, faculty and staff for their vital signs and blood glucose levels. Going beyond the campus, Nutrition Club students from Beirut organized a daylong awareness event at ABC Achrafieh.



Bright future for pharmacy students

In November, LAU pharmacy students gathered at the University Medical Center - Rizk Hospital (LAUMC-RH), to mark the launch of the Student Society of Health System Pharmacies (SSHP). The first of its kind outside the U.S., the society's fruition shows that pharmacy is evolving toward a bright future in Lebanon with LAU leading the way in the region. This initiative will offer pharmacy students a platform to engage within a student society, shape their own studies, connect globally to those in the pharmacy field and build their future careers.

Educating tomorrow's doctors

In November, LAU's Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine (SOM) welcomed Dr. Ara Tekian, associate dean for the office of international education college of medicine at University of Illinois (UIC), to a four-day seminar on the latest trends in medical education. SOM Dean Dr. Youssef G. Comair noted that LAU is a leading contributor to medical education and that such lectures nurture its role as a significant player in this field. “Certainly there is a direct correlation between the quality of healthcare education and that of delivery of care for patients in the country and throughout the region,” he said.



Lectures



MEA back to black: fifteen years of challenges

In October, Chairman and Director General of Middle East Airlines (MEA) Mhammad Al Hout, kicked off LAU's Leaders in Business lecture series with a presentation entitled “MEA back to black: Fifteen years of challenges.” The event was hosted by the School of Business, in line with its mission to encourage students to gain first-hand knowledge of economic development in Lebanon and the region. “It is important for us to give our students access to leaders in the field and allow them to ask questions and share concerns,” said Dr. Said Ladki, the school's interim dean.

Meeting the challenges of international migration

LAU's Department of Social Sciences, in collaboration with the university's Institute for Migration Studies, hosted a seminar entitled "Global Migration Governance in Theory and Practice" by guest lecturer Paul Tacon. The event was held on International Migrants Day, December 18. Tacon stressed on the need for useful dialogue between governments, the relevant United Nations agencies, regional organizations and development partners. "It is important to exchange views and share information on good policies and practices aimed at achieving equity, equality, social inclusion, protection and cohesion, as well as recognizing existing efforts in this regard," he said.



Raising awareness

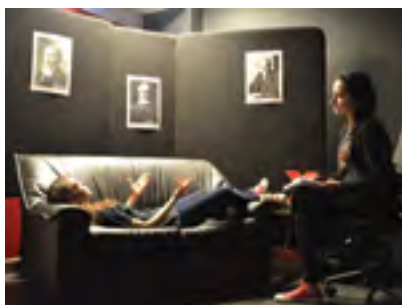


Saving Arabic

On the occasion of UN Arabic Language Day, annually observed on December 18, the School of Arts and Sciences hosted a seminar on the impact of the media on the Arabic language. The event was organized in collaboration with the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO. The experts collectively rejected the idea that Arabic—a language that has been historically associated with technologies and the sciences—could not adapt to and adopt the world of new technologies. They also concurred that the media is not the only party to blame. "Is it a mere language crisis or a whole nation's identity crisis?" That question was raised in one way or another by every speaker at the event.

Peace in practice

In January LAU hosted an awareness-raising event about the serious cultural and social consequences of violence and intolerance in today's society. "Imagining Tomorrow" was organized by the public relations course at the Department of Communication Arts, in collaboration with the university's Outreach and Civic Engagement (OCE) unit and the Permanent Peace Movement (PPM). While a film produced by students and faculty reminded the audience of the need for peace education in Lebanese society, PPM advocated incorporating a culture of peace within the education system.



TEDxLAU Salon V.6 gets participants to open up

More than 150 attendees gathered at LAU Beirut's new student center in February to take part in TEDxLAU V.6.o salon on mental health. According to Reine Azzi, instructor of English and moral reasoning and TEDxLAU curator, "the demand to attend this particular event was incredible. All tickets sold out in less than 24 hours and more than 80 people added their names to the waiting list." In fact, 75 percent of attendees responded that mental illness was a topic they were very much interested in bringing out to the open.

To give is to receive

LAU pays tribute to two of its alumni figures

By Linda Dahdah

Over 180 members from different alumni chapters in Lebanon and abroad gathered for the annual LAU alumni dinner at Le Maillon restaurant on December 18.

The event, which usually takes place during the reunion and homecoming events celebrated every summer, had been postponed because of the unstable situation in the country.

"However, the indefatigable faith in and support to their alma mater that our alumni have shown made us decide to keep with tradition and hold the dinner no matter what," declared Abdallah Al-Khal, executive director of the Alumni Relations office.

"They have proven to be marvelous ambassadors of LAU, with every chapter not only dedicated to their university and to their country, but also ready to help each and everyone of its members," he added.

The 2013 alumni dinner, which was organized in collaboration with the Alumni Association, paid tribute to the work of alumni committee members worldwide and honored Dr. Ghada Hijjawi-Qaddumi with the annual Alumni Achievement Award and Yorgui Teyrouz with the annual Alumni Recognition Award.

Qaddumi earned an M.A. in Arabic Literature from the American University of Beirut in 1975. She joined LAU one year later for a B.A. in Fine Arts before pursuing a Ph.D. at Harvard in History of Islamic Art and Architecture. She embarked on her impressive academic career after getting married and starting a family.

Author of several publications and a renowned international lecturer, Qaddumi is the first Arab woman to be elected president of the World Crafts Council – Asia Pacific region (current term 2013-2016).

"I believe that this award should actually go to LAU for what it has achieved since its foundation," said Qaddumi in her acceptance speech.

Teyrouz, founder of Donner Sang Compter (DSC) – an organization that coordinates blood donation throughout Lebanon and which can lay claim to saving over 25,000 lives since it was established five years ago – dedicated the award to the DSC team.

With visible emotion, Teyrouz recalled how he organized his first blood donation event as a Pharmacy student at LAU Byblos in 2008. "LAU's support was amazing when I was a student and it has been infallible ever since I graduated," he said, adding that DSC will soon be announcing projects it will be implementing with several alumni chapters.

For Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra, president of

LAU, "our alumni are a full part of our university and help to fulfill its mission as an academic institution of higher education. They are a pillar of a society they have pledged to serve and support," he said. "LAU alumni chapters worldwide are charged with reflecting the spirit of their alma mater and of their country, Lebanon."

His message is one that Qaddumi and Teyrouz have taken to heart.

"LAU's support was amazing when I was a student and it has been infallible ever since I graduated."

—Donner Sang Compter founder,
Yorgui Teyrouz



From Accra, with love

LAU's first alumni chapter in Africa celebrates its one year anniversary

By Dalila Mahdawi



Boasting over 33,000 alumni, LAU has chapters throughout the world, in cities as diverse as London and Muscat.

LAU's Ghana Alumni Chapter celebrated its first anniversary on November 30 with a gala dinner in Accra bringing the Lebanese and Ghanaian communities together. The festivities were attended by Lebanese Ambassador to Ghana Ali Halabi, President of the Alumni Association Leila Saleeby Dagher, dozens of LAU alumni, and a number of prominent businessmen and women.

Abdallah Al-Khal, executive director of Alumni Relations, said he was delighted by the chapter's impressive growth. "We have been heartened by the enthusiasm and hard work of our alumni here in bringing the chapter to life. I'm greatly looking forward to getting to know you all better and extending the LAU network even further," he said.

Khal also delivered an address on behalf of Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara, LAU president, who was unable to attend. "Our academic standards are continuing to rise, positioning the university firmly among the world-class institutions of higher learning and catapulting LAU to the forefront of Arab education," he said.

Chapter members Lana Captan Ghandour and Nouhad Daou said the dinner highlighted LAU's important role in connecting the Lebanese in Ghana and strengthening their relationship with Ghanaians. Funds from the dinner will be used to support needy and deserving Ghanaian students looking to study at LAU.

Ambassador Halabi and his spouse Randa had organized an earlier dinner to honor the LAU delegation, where he expressed his willingness to help the university develop its presence in Africa.

LAU established an alumni chapter in Ghana in 2012 to respond to the country's sizeable alumni community. It is LAU's first chapter on the African continent. Boasting over 33,000 alumni, LAU has chapters throughout the world, in cities as diverse as London and Muscat. Given the large Lebanese population in Africa, additional alumni chapters are being planned across the continent, said Khal.



Alumni update

November 2013

Celebrating Halloween

Over 300 children enjoyed a fun-packed Halloween party organized by LAU's Abu Dhabi Chapter at the Abu Dhabi City Golf Club on November 2. The decorations, costumes, games and activities added to the "spooktacular" atmosphere of the event.



Singing from the hearts

While being entertained by karaoke songs and a DJ, alumni spent the evening catching up with old friends and classmates during dinner organized by the Byblos Chapter at the SafraMarine's Copacabana restaurant on November 22.



Bringing families together

A "Family Day" at Nesma Compound in Al Jawhara Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia, organized by the Eastern Province Chapter on November 22 was a great success, attracting more than 300 alumni and their families.



Highlighting the predicament of Syrian refugees

In collaboration with the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World and the Heinrich Böll Foundation, the LAU Alumni Association organized a public screening of Carol Mansour's latest documentary film *Not Who We Are*. The film examines the plight of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and was screened on November 18 at LAU's Beirut campus attracting a large crowd.



December 2013

Ring in the New Year

More than 200 alumni came together on New Year's Eve for a party at the Fairmont Hotel's Cedar Lounge organized by the Abu Dhabi Chapter to ring in 2014 in style.



A lesson in time management – Part II

The LAU Alumni Relations Office lives by the mantra that education is a life-long process. As part of the *Keep Learning* program, the office organized the second of two Time Management lectures. The event took place on December 6 on the Beirut campus and was presented by Hassan Chaker, alumnus and hospitality management instructor.



Christmas dinner gathering

Senior Pacos Mexican Restaurant, in the Adliya district of Manama, was the venue of the Bahrain Chapter Christmas dinner this year on December 6. The event was an opportunity for alumni and their loved ones to come together and enjoy the spirit of the holidays.

Annual holiday bazaar

For the third year running, the Kuwait Chapter participated in the much-awaited annual Holiday Bazaar on December 6. In keeping with tradition, the bazaar kicked off with a tour by the American ambassador to Kuwait. The highly successful event witnessed a huge turnout and was enjoyed by all.

Christmas with a twist

More than 120 alumni and friends enjoyed an evening filled with good cheer and great food at the School of Engineering Chapter's annual Christmas Dinner on December 21 at Che restaurant in Beirut.

January 2014

Celebrating the birth of the Prophet

For the second year in a row and on the occasion of the birth of the Prophet (*mawlid an-nabawi asharif*), the Beirut Alumni Chapter in collaboration with the Shifaa Junior Club, organized "*Kossat seera wa onshouda*" a theater and singing choral production for children in Irwin Hall on January 25, 26 and February 1, 2. All four performances were a great success.

Keeping the spirit alive

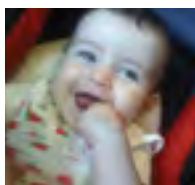
Tania Shaheen, vice president of the Houston Alumni Chapter, and her husband Wissam El-Tayssoun, hosted an alumni gathering on January 5 at their house in Houston, Texas.



Staying connected

Sharon Kay Buess, born Weeks, (A.A. '61) completed a B.A. at Olivet Nazarene College in '63 and an M.A. at Tennessee State University, Nashville, U.S. She is based in Tennessee, where she worked as an English teacher. Now retired, she still works part time for Metro Nashville Public Schools as an assessor of language skills for ESL students. Buess and her husband recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Hasna Reda (B.A. '67) went on to achieve an M.A. in Middle East Studies at the University of London in '71. She is currently the head of the education committee at INAASH, an association for the development of Palestinian camps. Her previous positions include research assistant at the Palestinian Planning Center ('72-'76), director of the Egyptian child literature publishing house Dar Al-Fata Al-Arabi ('77-'93) and director of Nour: Foundation for Arab Women's Research and Studies, Cairo ('94-'03). She is married to Dr. Mohammed Mikdashi and they have three daughters.



Fatima Zuhair Asfour (B.S. '72) completed a postgraduate degree at London University, Bedford College. She has had a varied and interesting career including running a match production factory and founding the fashion house *Kumbaz* with her two sisters. Now running it solo, *Kumbaz* aims to preserve national heritage by giving oriental traditions a modern, elegant look. Celebrities around the world have worn her designs. Currently based in Amman, Jordan, Asfour has three children and will soon be a grandmother.

Nada Loutfy, born Baker, (B.S. '89) completed a science-teaching diploma at AUB, later moving to England to study for a master's degree in analytic chemistry at Loughborough University. Her professional experience includes being a laboratory technician, physics teacher and, currently, a self-employed home tutor in biology, chemistry and physics for students of all levels (www.tutoringscience.co.uk).

Mohamad Fouad Bawaba (B.A. '91) has been based in Kuwait for the past 16 years, where he works as regional communication officer for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) at the International Committee of the Red Cross. His eldest daughter, Jana, has now left home to pursue studies in architecture at McGill University, Montreal. His son, Karam, is due to follow this summer, leaving his other son and youngest daughter still at home. "It is hard to see my children leaving us to settle in another country, yet, it is a feeling of pride and happiness at the same time," he says.

Hassan Khalil Jishi (B.S. '92) has worked as investment consultant for EFG Bank since 2008. Holding the same position, he moved in 2012 from Dubai to Singapore, where he is currently based. He holds an advisory license from the Monetary Authority of Singapore, allowing him to work in the Singapore finance sector. He has three daughters, Nour, Perla and Zeinab.



Rachid Louis Labaky (M.S. '92) lives in Lebanon's mountain town of Baabdat. Having been the agent for numerous European companies, as well as lands and properties, Labaky is currently the agent of Zenner, the German water meter company.

Souheir Ahmad Nassar (B.S. '92) lives in Nabatieh and works as a bank branch manager at Byblos Bank. She has had a career in banking since 1994 and is married to Dr. Mahmoud Youssef Zaher, with three children.



Hilda Abila (B.A. '96) completed a master's in marketing and communications at Ecole Supérieure des Affaires, graduating in 2009. Abila left her job as a communication and HR manager at Pin-Pay, Beirut in 2012 for a complete career-shift, moving to Brooklyn, New York to follow her passion and work as a full time artist (<https://hildos.com>), reclaiming her "sense of purpose and positivity." In September 2013 she gave a TEDxLAU talk.

Samar Makhoul, born Aad, (B.S. '97), completed her postgraduate studies at the University of Sunderland and University of Liverpool. Currently based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, she works as a director of e-learning. She has two girls, Bella and a new addition to the family, Zoe.

Bassam Ghalayini (B.S. '98) is currently based in Dubai, UAE, working as a product and reinsurance manager. He is married with two children.

Rola Hamouda, born Zeidan, (B.S. '99) is based in Dubai, UAE, and works as a human resource manager. She gave birth to a girl in September 2013.



Wissam Zaarour (B.S. '96, T.D. '01) owns his own company, Zaarour Computer Systems in Byblos, which provides software and hardware solutions. He also teaches computer programming at high-school level (Rosary Sisters School and APOTRES College). He was elected as a member of Byblos Municipal Council in 2010 and became the official director for the municipality. He is married to Alberta Saliba (M.B.A. '02) and has two girls and a boy.

Hatem F. Halaoui (B.E. '99, M.A. '01) completed a Ph.D. in computer science at the City University of New York Graduate Center. Currently based in Beirut, he works as an assistant professor of computer science at Haigazian University. In addition to writing a book, his work has been published across 20 publications, including book chapters, journals and conference papers. He is married with three children.

Saed Ajjawi (B.S. '02) is married to Nora Jaber. Graduating in business, with a focus on hospitality management, he moved to Dubai and is now working as head of client relations at the Dubai Multi Commodity Center (DMCC).

Mazen Fouany MD, JFPACOG (B.S. '03) graduated with distinction as a doctor of medicine from the University of Balamand in 2007. He has since trained in general surgery and did an OBGYN Residency at George Washington University in Washington D.C. and has held several positions such as OBGYN physician at Cole Memorial OBGYN at Coudersport, Pennsylvania, U.S., OBGYN medical director at Cole Memorial hospital and director of the maternal/child committee. He is currently director of minimally invasive gynecology at Cole Memorial Hospital and lives in Coudersport, Pennsylvania, U.S. He is married to Rola El Moussawi.



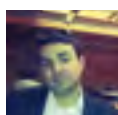
Adelina Fouad Saliba (BS '03, Pharm. B. '03, M.B.A. '04, Pharm. D. '04) currently lives in Abu Dhabi, UAE, where she works as pharmacy manager at Corniche Hospital. She was awarded the Abu Dhabi Medical Distinction Award for Allied Health in 2013, an achievement, she says, would not be possible without her family's support. With Saliba as project leader for implementation of innovative medication technologies, the

hospital was the first in the UAE to adopt such automation. Saliba did her Pharmacy Practice Residency (PGY1) at Sarasota Memorial Hospital and her Pharmacy Specialty Residency in Medication Safety (PGY2) at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, both in the U.S.



Abdallah Izzat Kabbara (B. Arch. '05) went on to complete an M.B.A. at Balamand University. He's now based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, working as a senior architect and project design manager at Projacs International for Project and Construction Management. Earlier in his career, Kabbara established his own office for the provision of engineering and consultancy services and completed the Project Manager Professional (PMP) Course.

Mohammad Saie (B.S. '05) moved to Abu Dhabi after graduation to become the HR manager at the Fresh Express, Company as of January 2014. His professional achievements include a Certificate in Human Resources Practice, level 3 (CHRP) at Bradfield Group Dubai and Chartered Institute of Personal Development (CIPD UK). He also achieved a Certified Human Resources Management Professional (CHRMP level 1) at the Lead Training Institute Middle East.



Nadim A. Nehme (B.S. '07) lives in Jounieh and owns Nadim's Pharmacy in Zouk Mosbeh.

Rana K. Sakr (M.B.A. '07) joined the Office of the Dean of Students at LAU Byblos in December 2009 and was recently promoted to Lead Career Guidance Officer. In September 2013, she undertook a one-month staff exchange program at Sciences Po's Career Center, Sciences Po Avenir, in Paris, France. She also attended the Career Services Summit, organized by Google, in Dublin, Ireland.

Alaa Minawi (B.A. '08) has built a career as a successful visual artist, working in more than 150 performances in the Arab world and international festivals as a lighting designer, technical director and performer. In 2013, he directed a staging of Heiner Müller's "Die Schlacht" (The Slaughter) and has another play in the works. Minawi has an innovative approach to lighting, recently collaborating with Vladimir Kurumilian on the sound and light performance "A Piano in My Pillow".

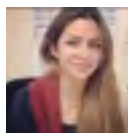


Vicken Bahlawanian (B.S. '04, M.B.A. '11) currently lives in Dubai, UAE, where he was recently promoted from branch manager (Antelias) to regional manager at Formatech (Dubai). He married Cybelle Farha in April 2013.

Hassan A. Hamdan (B.E. '09, M.S. '11) was advisor to the Minister of Energy and Water in Lebanon for three years, working on developing most of the country's latest electric power projects. He recently joined Mott MacDonald Group, a global engineering, consulting and management firm, as their thermals and renewables consultant.



Sarah Alaeddine (B.S. '11) graduated in 2012 with a master's in clinical pharmacy from the University College of London. She currently works as a hospital pharmacist in Rafic Hariri University Hospital.

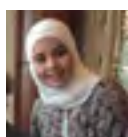


Farah Christina Bassam Osman (B.S. '12) works as a program coordinator in LAU's Continuing Education Program Department. She earned a certificate in Customer Service Excellence and is in the process of completing the Professional Sales Executive Diploma and the Business Skills Diploma.

Mohamad Moh. Nasser Al Mawass (B.E. '12) is currently based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where he works as a mechanical engineer at Binladin Group, working on the King Abdulaziz International Airport project. He married Abeer Makhlof in December 2013.



Rola Adel Chehade (B.S. '12) is completing an HR Diploma at LAU's Continuing Education Program. She lives in Lebanon and works as an HR officer in Makassed General Hospital. She was recently engaged to Ibrahim Komaiha, a romance that first blossomed on LAU's Beirut campus.



Alaa Yassin (B.A. '13) is pursuing an M.A. at LAU while also working as a teacher at Wellspring Learning Community. Yassin has high hopes for the future. "Never underestimate yourself. Try to do your best and have faith and you will reach the best," he says.

Araz Minas Keuroghlian (M.A. '13) is currently based in Beirut. As well as teaching at Sahagian M.L. College, she is also a research assistant at LAU.

Dalia Chawki Haydar (B.S. '13) graduated in clinical pharmacy and was accepted on a Ph.D. program in Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Kentucky, where she is now based. Currently living in Lexington, she is pursuing her studies and research in the Clinical and Experimental Therapeutics Department (CET) and was elected as CET representative. Her research interests are in immunology and infectious disease pharmacotherapy, with a special focus on the role of alternatively activated macrophages in reversing the fibrosis in chronic lung diseases. She works as a clinical pharmacist at the University of Kentucky Medical Center.



Ferial Amro Haidar (M.A. '13) achieved a master's in education before moving to Abu Dhabi, UAE, where she is now head of a science department.

Karim Taleb Al-Khatib (B.S. '13) is currently studying for a Master of Science in innovation, strategy and entrepreneurship at Grenoble School of Management, France. He's looking forward to joining an internship in 2015 and writing his thesis.

Khalil Namro (B.E. '13) lives in Beirut and works as a telecommunication Engineer at Inteltec.

Mohammad Hady Hassib Hadwan (B.S. '13) is currently based in Beirut and works as a Java EE Developer at GIS Domains.

Salim Ahmad Mougharbel (B.S. '13) lives in Beirut and works as assistant IT Specialist at Deloitte and Touche. He also founded Shakkel, a startup software system that categorizes Arabic words to work out the function of each word in a sentence and form it correctly.

http://www.lau.edu.lb/news-events/news/archive/no_talk_all_action/

WHY I GIVE BACK

Gisele (B.A. '84) and Najib Azar (B.A. '83)



What did you study at LAU?

I studied Computer Science and Najib studied Business Accounting.

Where do you live now?

We have been living in the U.S. since 1987. We have a son, Jad, and a daughter, Sasha. When we first arrived, Najib started an auto spare parts sales business and I worked as an information officer for the Lebanese embassy. We purchased our first gas station in 1997, quit our jobs and worked together in managing the station. We've since bought and are managing more stations and auto repair shops.

Why do you give back to LAU?

LAU gave us the confidence to start our own businesses and be successful. We believe that college education gives people a better chance in life and leads to higher standards. We will never forget what LAU gave us. We therefore decided to give back so that other people can have the same opportunities we had.

"We thank LAU for all it gave us and which will always remain with us."

What is your fondest memory of LAU?

When we attended LAU, the campus was very small and enrollment was only a few hundred. We have great memories because we had very qualified and amazing professors. The students were friendly and close to one another. Most of the friends we made there have remained our close friends. When we look at LAU today, we feel so proud of the successes and improvements that have happened. We thank LAU for all it gave us and which will always remain with us.

What message would you like to convey to LAU alumni and students?

Alumni are a very important element to the survival and support of every university. We encourage all alumni to give to LAU because the university gave to them.

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

We support the work that LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara and his team are doing on behalf of LAU and we ask all donors to do the same. We would urge alumni to offer not only their financial support but also share their expertise in other ways, such as through lectures.





Fulfilling the Promise

LAU Campaign for Academic Excellence



FRANÇOIS BASSIL IS FULFILLING THE PROMISE

François Bassil knows that investing in young people brings great social rewards.

A veteran banker, Bassil chairs one of Lebanon's foremost banks, Byblos Bank SAL, and is president of the Association of Banks in Lebanon.

He is one of LAU's most loyal supporters, with a relationship dating back more than 25 years, when he generously established Bassil Hall at the Byblos campus. In line with his commitment to education, Bassil continues to lend his support and expertise in a number of ways. Byblos Bank has established several student scholarships, sponsored special events and made gifts to the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Pharmacy and a number of LAU institutes.

In recognition of his tireless service, Bassil was appointed to LAU's Board of International Advisors in 2007 and received an honorary doctorate in Humane Letters in 2008.



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You laugh
at ME
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and *I laugh*
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you are all
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