

LAU magazine

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& ALUMNI BULLETIN

A Wor(I)d Empire

Preserving languages
is not a matter of words

Simplifying Arabic

A means to combat illiteracy?

Status Quo

Think in Arabic but speak
in English or French

Language in the Digital Age

Is today's casual adaptation
a corruption or an improvement?

Izkeeleh



Hats off to you!
Class of 2015



Embark, explore, discover...



Iz keeleh

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A Wor(l)d Empire

It is expected that almost half of the world's approximately 7,000 idioms will disappear by the end of the century. As the magnitude of the die-off increases in favor of dominant languages in a world where connectivity is gaining the upper hand, *Federica Marsi* ponders whether languages are something we should endeavor to save.

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Could simplifying Arabic help combat illiteracy? *Reem Maghribi* discusses Arabic language, advancement and education with three LAU educators — professor of literature Latif Zeitouni, novelist and critic Elias Khoury and linguistics educator Rima Bahous.



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Status Quo

An exploration of language acquisition and usage in post-civil war Lebanon reveals surprising interconnections between language, religion and socioeconomic status. *Irina Papkova* also delves into ongoing debates within the academic community on the relationship between language and personality and the desirability of switching between linguistic codes.

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A long list of digital media jargon like lolz, ridic and lotsa are among the 6,500 new entries the classic word game Scrabble has added to its dictionary. *Brooke Anderson* investigates whether this is the direction that language is heading.



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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!



LAU's gardeners reading the magazine during their break

Help Tell Our History

We welcome news from alumni, friends, supporters and current and former faculty and staff members representing all of 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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By Palig Haroutunian



From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

In an era where globalization threatens cultural identity everywhere, there is a need to communicate our distinctiveness. It is through language that the traditions and shared values of a culture are conveyed and preserved. Language also plays a pivotal role in removing barriers between people to bridge cultures, an objective at the core of LAU's mission. It is an essential resource that enables our students, scholars, faculty and researchers to explore the universe ever further.

Through its B.A. in Arabic Language and Literature and its B.A. in English, LAU is able to trace how the vital role that language plays in the life of the individual has evolved over generations, both as an educational necessity and as a means of social interaction. As well as being crucial for international mobility, language skills confer a considerable competitive edge in today's job market.

Language also makes us better at resolving cross-cultural conflicts. In learning another language, people inadvertently learn a new way of looking at the world. Conscious of this, LAU encourages multilingualism through its teaching of a variety of languages, including the little-spoken but much influential Latin.

What of those wanting to learn more about our region? For Arabic language learners looking to not only improve their language skills but also to gain a true understanding of the cultural and social dynamics of the Middle East, our Summer Institute for Intensive Arabic Language and Culture (SINARC) has for the past 16 years been and remains a top choice. The SINARC program takes place both here in Lebanon and in the USA at our New York Headquarters and Academic Center.

LAU mirrors the cultural and linguistic diversity that has become a prominent feature of today's societies. Its annual Leaders for Democracy Fellowship program creates a network of young leaders from various cultures, who work together — through commonly spoken Arabic — to build a better future for themselves and their countries. In these circumstances, language no longer remains just a means of sharing one's thoughts and ideas, but becomes a major tool of intercultural communication.

In this issue's exploration of language acquisition and usage in post-civil war Lebanon surprising interconnections are revealed between language, religion and socioeconomic status. The issue also provides fodder for ongoing debates within the academic community on the relationship between language and personality and the desirability of switching between linguistic codes. We also ask the question: In a world where connectivity is gaining the upper hand, should we care if a language goes extinct?

LAU not only keeps up with but also sets local and regional trends. The university's M.A. in Women and Gender Studies is just one such example. Each school at the university is essential in making up a patchwork fabric worthy of an international educational institution. Whether it's through a conference on Syrian refugee policy, a panel discussion on Arab comic arts, an exhibition on stereotypes of Arabs in U.S. popular culture or the launching of a food safety certification, LAU has much to offer.

Our dedication to the highest standards of education and civic engagement leads us to stride ever forward. Join us on our journey of discovery as we trace the important role that language plays in the life of our university and how this role has evolved to benefit both LAU and its community at large.

Joseph G. Jabbra
President



Empowerment through giving

By Dana Halawi

The Adnan Kassar School of Business puts bright young students on the path to success

On April 21 LAU received a generous gift of \$10 million from Adnan Kassar, chairman and major shareholder of Fransabank Group, for the purpose of naming the “Adnan Kassar School of Business.” Kassar’s donation is one of the biggest philanthropic investments in the university’s history.


“This is a wonderful story of a successful Lebanese businessman whose aim is to improve the quality of education in his country,” says Said Ladki, dean of the Adnan Kassar School of Business.

“President Kassar is a pillar of this community and has always recruited our students. He strongly believes in the importance of education and this is why he has committed his money toward the betterment of LAU and Lebanon,” Ladki adds, pointing out that “naming the LAU School of Business after Kassar will produce a positive impact in the community by encouraging more Lebanese leaders to follow in his footsteps and support business education.”



“To become constructive elements in society, education and specialization are essential.”

—Adnan Kassar, Lebanese businessman and philanthropist



Kassar has held several prestigious positions throughout his career both in Lebanon and the region. In 1972, he was elected president of the Beirut Chamber of Commerce and Industry. His success in getting the various Lebanese Chambers of Commerce to cooperate productively led to the establishment of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, which he has chaired since its foundation.

Today, Kassar is chairman of the General Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. Previously, he also served as chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce from 1999 to 2000. During his tenure he worked with the UN to create Global Compact, a framework that encourages companies to adhere to socially and environmentally responsible business practices.

Away from the world of business, Kassar has held key political positions. From 2004 to 2005, he was Lebanon's Minister of Economy and Trade and from 2009 to 2011 he served as Minister of State.

Kassar's long and successful career has not, however, stopped him from engaging in philanthropic activities. He has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars toward different causes. He has also succeeded in highlighting Fransabank's leading role in promoting Corporate Social Responsibility by supporting various sectors, most importantly education.

"Education and specialization are essential for men and women to acquire knowledge that would lead them into life and make them constructive elements in society," Kassar said in his speech during the signing ceremony held on the occasion of the donation at LAU's Beirut campus. "This has been the main reason behind my keenness to offer scholarships to bright young students, in this university and others," added Fransabank's chairman.

"President Kassar is an extraordinary human being. Alongside being a great defender of the private sector, he is an active participant in the advancement of society in Lebanon and in the entire region," said LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra, adding, "today, two institutions steeped in history

— Fransabank and LAU — came together to achieve these common goals," he added.

The Adnan Kassar School of Business is the biggest of LAU's schools and attracts the highest number of students. It is also one of the oldest business schools in the Middle East and is an associate member of the most highly respected global accrediting body, Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), along with the European Foundation for Management Development.

The strong network of contacts within the school, its reputation among regional employers and the widespread LAU alumni system make for a strong combination when it comes to graduates' crucial search for employment. "There is a great demand for LAU business graduates due to the university's high educational standards and prestigious reputation," says Hassan Chaker, who graduated from LAU in 2005 with a master's degree in business studies.

Chaker, who is also founder of recruitment and training company MCA, says that companies in Lebanon actively search out business graduates from LAU more than any other university. He highlights that his education at LAU boosted his self-confidence and strengthened his interpersonal skills. "Even in my business, I always advise my clients to hire people with a positive attitude and great interpersonal skills," he explains.

Likewise, Elissar Al Hajj, regional brand and communication leader at Deloitte&Touche, says that her master's degree in business studies from LAU helped deepen her knowledge about banking. "It also helped me in acquiring a better understanding of financial communication requirements, business planning, change management processes and marketing research," she adds.

"I enrolled in the M.B.A. program at LAU although I had been in the business for almost ten years, but I believe that looking at academia from an executive eye is more refreshing as you pick and choose what you need to learn, and enhance the competencies and skills you want to improve," she explains.

Al Hajj says she was also fascinated by the ten-year plan shared by Jabbra with stakeholders when he took the helm of the university. "I liked the visionary plan and where LAU was heading, and I wanted to be part of it," she says.

Ladki says that the business school is constantly renovating and building itself, which makes it special and outstanding. "Every four years the school has a new strategic plan which matches well with the university's plans," he says.

He adds that one of the most important short-term goals for the Adnan Kassar School of Business is its accreditation by the AACSB, which is expected to take place in spring 2016. "The school is well on its way to being accredited by the AACSB, which is the top premier accrediting body for schools of business around the world," he says. "The school has achieved its first and second progress reports and it is in the process of submitting its self-evaluation report." Ladki describes the step as being "an excellent milestone for the country and for LAU's business school."

According to Ladki, once the accreditation is awarded the school will be offering two new undergraduate degrees: in business innovation and leadership and in operation management. "We will also be offering a new master's degree in human resources and another in finance," he adds.

A Wor(l)d Empire

Preserving languages is not just a matter of words

By Federica Marsi

FEATURE

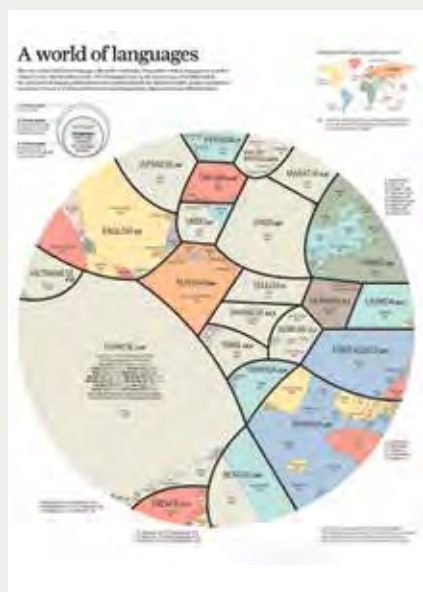


Every two weeks, a language goes silent forever. As the magnitude of the die-off increases in favor of dominant languages, even Lebanon risks losing part of its cultural diversity. In a world where connectivity is gaining the upper hand, should we care if a language goes extinct?

Hazel Sampson had a very strange fate. In February 2014, she died in Washington state as the last speaker of Kallam, a language traditionally spoken on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. Before her, many others had gone through the heartrending experience of having no one left to talk to.

Historically, languages have always come into being and later disappeared, some because of genocide, others because of migration or education policies, and still others for social or cultural reasons. Nowadays, economic development and globalization are pushing toward the global predominance of languages like English, Spanish and Mandarin at an unprecedented pace. It is expected that almost half of the world's approximate 7,000 idioms will disappear by the end of the century, an extinction rate even greater than the one being experienced by animal species.

Infographic by Alberto Lucas López for the South China Morning Post that compares the number of people that speak the top 23 languages in the world as their primary language.



While the case for saving the Amur leopard or the giant panda may seem obvious, whether or not to battle for the Dama or Luo languages is more controversial. On the one hand, the Sapir-Worf hypothesis theorizes that the words we use affect the way in which we conceptualize our surroundings. Consequently, the disappearance of a language is tantamount to the loss of a world-view.

In the Central African Republic, for instance, Aka speakers have no word for 'job,' and yet differentiate between animals that are eaten and those that are not. In Tuva, a language spoken in Siberia, the past is always ahead while the future is behind one's back, according to the principle that, if the future were ahead, it could easily be seen.

On the other side of the coin, the natural process of convergence toward a few dominant languages is enabling unprecedented connections and cultural exchanges. English in particular is riding the crest of technological innovation, as well as consolidating its dominance in fields ranging from science to air traffic control.

In order to save what is savable on the road to globalization, linguists are documenting idioms before they go extinct. Lebanon is no stranger to language endangerment and the various projects presently being conducted with the mission of archiving dying languages include efforts to safeguard the Lebanese dialect itself.

Choosing your language reflects a choice of identity

In 1976, during the Soweto uprising in Apartheid South Africa, around 20,000 students took to the streets. 176 of them were killed while demonstrating against compulsory teaching in Afrikaans, the language of the colonizer. "People choose their language according to the

identity they want to endorse," explains Brian Prescott-Decie, senior instructor of English and Cultural Studies at LAU. Post-colonialism has, for this very reason, been characterized by attempts to reinstitute native languages as an expression of national pride.

Language shifts generally stem from the desire to enhance economic and social status, regardless of whether this may antagonize pre-existing traditions and cultures. Such a process does not occur overnight. As a first step, a speaking community acquires a bilingual fluency in another language. Only later, the original language is dropped in favor of the newly acquired one.

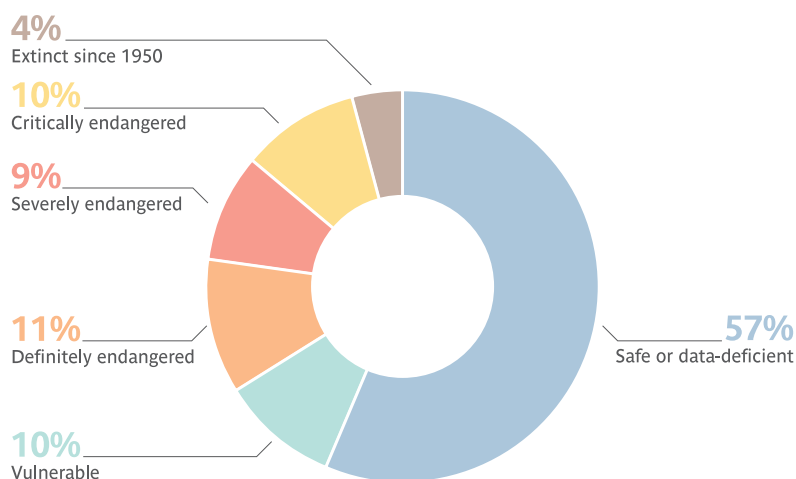
"Languages like English and French are still the best tools for effective communication."

—Rima Bahous, LAU associate professor of Education and chair of the Department of Education

Researchers have also noted that the main factors pushing a community toward the abandonment of their original language include discrimination and exclusion. Linguicism — or linguistic racism — manifests itself against people whose mother tongue is different or against those who have an accent that can be traced back to a certain country or geographical area. Not being able to speak — or speak with the same accent or fluency — often results in people experiencing prejudice and exclusion.

Lebanon is no stranger to such dynamics. The Domari language, spoken by Dom communities scattered across the country, has been officially categorized by UNESCO as one of the world's languages at risk of extinction.

According to UNESCO Atlas of Endangered Languages, at least 43% of languages spoken in the world are endangered



“Language is part of our heritage and, by preserving one, you automatically preserve the other.”

—Joseph Khoury, instructor, Lebanese Language Institute

“Social exclusion and the prejudice against the Dom community, improperly called ‘*nawwar*,’ is leading the younger generations into thinking that their language is useless and not worth saving,” says Bruno Herin, lecturer of Arabic at the French university INALCO.

Thanks to a fund from the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project, hosted by the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, Herin is documenting the last traces of a language that has travelled the world to most probably die in Lebanon. “Lebanese people are not concerned about protecting their own cultural diversity as they are not proud of communities associated with poverty,” says Herin. “They are too busy looking westwards to care about the Domari language.”

Meanwhile in Lebanon

The Lebanese language itself is being exposed to the influence of dominant languages, particularly English and French, both indispensable tools for climbing the social ladder. Despite his role as a senior

instructor of English, Prescott-Decie does not hesitate to say that Lebanese society spends an “inordinate amount of time teaching English and French,” resulting in a lack of fluency in any one language among many Lebanese people.

According to Rima Bahous, chairperson of LAU’s Department of Education, the antiquated way in which classical Arabic is taught, together with the diglossic nature of dialects, has also contributed to the pervasive use of foreign languages. “Lebanese is however still preserving a firm place in our society,” says Bahous. “If, for instance, you give a speech to an audience, you will use Lebanese to build intimacy and then proceed to use English for the technicalities.”

Some linguists have accused English of *linguistic imperialism*, meaning the transfer of a dominant language to other people as a demonstration of cultural and economic dominance. The 950 million people who are estimated to speak English as a second language, in addition to the 427 million native speakers, are participating in ways of knowing that may not conform to their own traditions and cultures or that may reshape the native language itself.

“In Lebanese we say ‘*farmita*’ for ‘format it,’” says the Lebanese Language Institute’s Joseph Khoury, citing one of the many loanwords readapted from English. “Lebanese, like any other spoken language that is not written, is losing its vocabulary on a daily basis. If we do not preserve what



Few elderly speakers are left to preserve Domari, a language that will soon be extinct in Lebanon



we have, the language will evolve too fast in an unhealthy way.”

Together with his colleagues Hicham Bourjaili and Antoine Faddoul, Khoury has initiated projects aimed both at recording the Lebanese language and providing the means to accomplish this task, which include creating a well-defined and consistent phonetic system, organizing words into a comprehensive dictionary and teaching Lebanese online to the country’s numerous expatriates. “Language is part of our heritage and, by preserving one, you automatically preserve the other,” Khoury says.

The Lebanese Language Institute however has no intention of insulating Lebanese from foreign languages. “We do not want to make people speak the way their grandparents spoke, but we want them to remember it,” says Khoury.

While finding ways to record the evolution of Lebanese can be beneficial in terms of enhancing knowledge, Rima Bahous does not envisage the possibility of a full educational shift toward the use of this language. “We need people to be able to communicate effectively. Languages like English and French are still the best tools to reach this target.”

Preserving the past and enriching the future

At present, some 85% of languages spoken worldwide have yet to be documented, and archiving them can enrich our understanding of what is



Children from the Dom community are dropping their traditional language to escape social exclusion.
Photo credit: Terre des Hommes



● AT RISK ● ENDANGERED ● SEVERELY ENDANGERED ● VITALITY UNKNOWN

“People choose their language according to the identity they want to endorse.”

—Brian Prescott-Decie, LAU senior instructor of English and Cultural Studies

universal to all. Together with the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project, other organizations are taking action to save unwritten idioms from dying an irreversible death. UNESCO is offering at-risk communities services such as policy advice, technical expertise and training in order to assist them in preserving their ancestral knowledge. Similarly, the Alliance for Linguistic Diversity is putting technology at the service of language preservation by creating an online

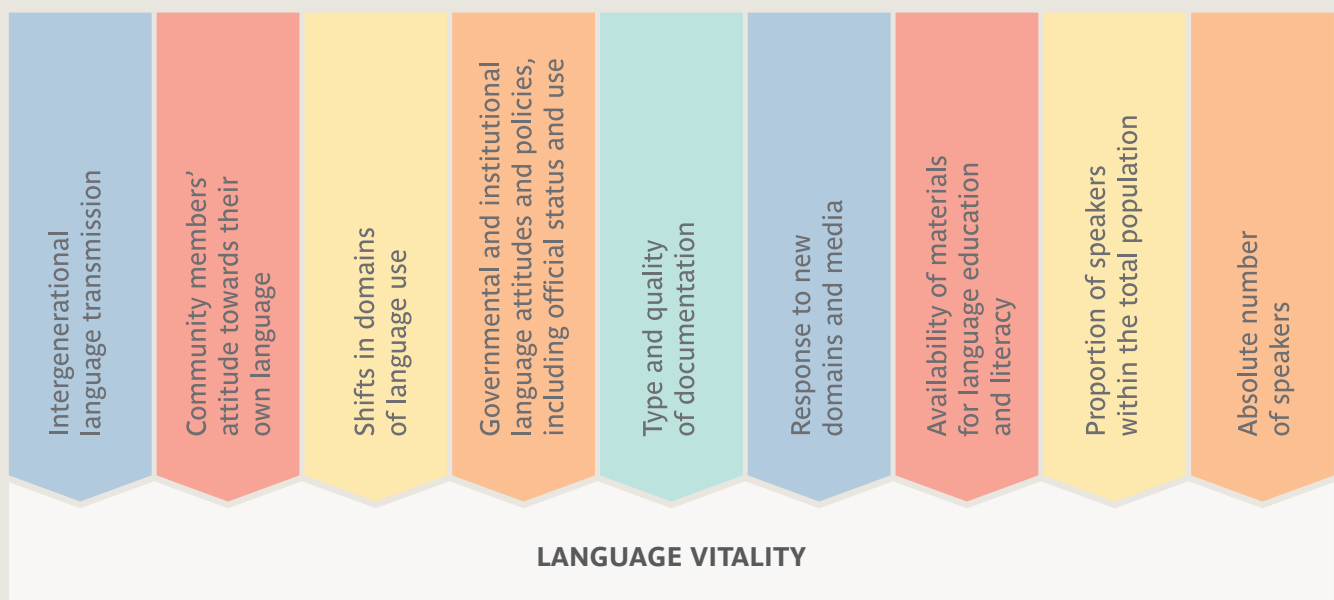
resource where communities can upload samples and exchange advice on how to strengthen linguistic diversity.

On a governmental level, best practices include national policies that encourage multilingualism. As the attitude of the dominant speaker community is among the main triggers of a language shift, positive reinforcement and a more accommodating legislation towards minorities are fundamental.

The idea that English will become the world language, however, is mostly regarded as a myth. Throughout history, dominant languages have reached their apex and then drifted into oblivion. According to Prescott-Decie, the endorsement of dominant languages and the extinction of weaker ones is a natural phenomenon that cannot and should not be countered.

Documenting idioms before they are lost can mitigate the loss of knowledge and, in some cases, even make this process reversible. “For instance, Hebrew is an example of a quasi-extinct spoken language that has been revived and expanded in order to match the needs of a newly created national identity,” says Prescott-Decie. “A language is a tool of communication and, if people do not need it anymore, it is physiological for it to die.”

This sad truth was well known to the poet Edmund Waller, who in the 17th century feared that his English words might soon not be intelligible to anyone. He wrote, “Who can hope his line should long last, in a daily-changing tongue? While they are new, envy prevails; and as that dies, our language fails.”



Training translators to meet regional priorities

By Irina Papkova

LAU's B.A. in Translation responds to the demands of the regional and local job market

"What we are doing now addresses the job market needs."

—Nuwar Mawlawi Diab, LAU assistant professor of English and Applied Linguistics



"Translation is not about writing words and sentences, it's about hard research, focusing and taking into consideration the audience you're translating for," says sophomore Mariam Yasmina Alameh. As a translation major, Alameh is part of the first cohort of students in LAU's B.A. in Translation program, launched in 2013.

While academic translation is often associated with the translation of literary texts, LAU's program has a more pragmatic focus. "We are faced with different types of texts and we should be able to translate a text perfectly no matter what its type or language is, because our clients will expect a perfect job," says sophomore Ghiwa Abi Haidar.

Indeed, "our students are trained to do audiovisual, legal, technical and other kinds of translation," confirms Nuwar Mawlawi Diab, assistant professor of English and Applied Linguistics and coordinator of the B.A. in Translation. "A few people might be interested in literary translations but what we are doing now addresses the job market needs," she adds.

And what the job market currently needs, according to Diab, is specialists qualified to translate from English (and to a lesser degree, French) into Arabic. "There is a great demand for this not only in Lebanon, but in the Arab world. Particularly with the Arab Spring, a lot of translations into Arabic are needed to explain to local populations what is going on," she elaborates.

Although Lebanon is part of the "Arab world," preparing local students to translate texts into the Arabic language turns out to be a challenging task. "Unfortunately the new generation's mother tongue, Arabic, is not as strong



Nuwar Mawlawi Diab, LAU assistant professor of English and Applied Linguistics

as it used to be," laments Diab. Students matriculating at LAU tend to be either English or French-educated in high schools, where they "take Arabic as a foreign language." To compensate, the B.A. in Translation program offers its students remedial Arabic courses, free of charge, in order to ensure that they are able to graduate with well-honed skills translating into their native language.

Upon graduation, students have the opportunity to go on to further graduate studies at the University of Manchester, with which LAU has a Memorandum of Understanding guaranteeing its students places in the three translation and interpretation M.A. programs offered by the British university.

In addition, while still at LAU, translation students must take a practicum course that includes real-world experience in various offices of international organizations and governmental ministries. "If they prove their worth, they will of course be offered jobs," says Diab, underlining one of the major strengths of the LAU program that positively distinguishes it from similar curricula in the region.

Do rankings matter?

By Reem Maghribi

Embrace rankings, but do not be guided by them, advises international expert



After decades focusing on accreditation, universities in the Middle East will now shift their attention to ranking indices. So says Executive Director of LAU's Department of Institutional Research & Assessment (DIRA) Diane Nauffal, who has been actively involved in the accreditation and reaccreditation of the university and its various departments and programs.

"We don't plan strategic policy based on ranking criteria."

—Diane Nauffal, executive director of LAU's Department of Institutional Research & Assessment

DIRA recently hosted a three-day regional conference at LAU's Byblos campus that brought together assessment and institutional research specialists to discuss a plethora of topics. With three leading global organizations releasing their first MENA ranking indices for higher education in the past year, the issue was unsurprisingly a focal topic at the conference. The event welcomed speakers from across the globe, among them Ellen Hazelkorn, head of policy research at the Dublin Institute of Technology.

While measuring performance, productivity and student learning outcomes is unquestionably important, Hazelkorn stressed that rankings should not be used to inform policy or resource allocation decisions at universities. "Quality is a complex concept and there are no internationally agreed upon definitions. Ranking indices are not

objective, they can't be, because they rely on indicators and weightings that reflect the value-judgments of the ranking organization," she explained.

That said, Hazelkorn believes that rankings have had many advantages in the field of higher education, not least of all as a tool for increased accountability. "They also accelerate the modernization agenda in young or immature universities, emphasizing the importance of strategic decision-making and data collection and analysis," she pointed out.

While accrediting bodies demand that a university meet certain criteria before giving it a seal of approval, ranking organizations focus on a set of attributes that they deem a reflection of the university's quality, and measure performance accordingly. All three ranking organizations in attendance at the conference confirmed that they would be altering their criteria before compiling their next index of top universities in the MENA region. A change in indicators will inevitably lead to a change in the rankings, whether or not performance at the listed universities has actually changed.

Given the great number of prospective students who consider university ranking important in deciding whether or not to attend a particular institution, ranking organizations have quite a responsibility.

Students, however, are not the only group to use rankings in their decision-making. "When we launched our first rankings ten years ago, our focus was solely on students," said John O'Leary, executive board member at the U.K.-

based QS World University Rankings. Their target audience now includes academics, alumni, prospective partners, prospective employers and scholarship providers.

"We were certainly not happy when the Singapore body scrapped scholarships to low ranking universities," said O'Leary, highlighting the responsibility and risks posed by the indices.

Based on a recent survey, QS found that the reputation of a university accounts for 40 percent of decision-making among prospective students. Given that universities are in the business of attracting students, it is understandable that — according to Hazelkorn — over 60 percent of universities formulate targets in terms of their position in national or international rankings.

Among the actions often taken by institutions of higher learning is increased research output, with a focus on quality and citations. "We had already established the office of graduate studies and research before the ranking indices were released," explained Nauffal, referring to the newly-established body that works to nurture and support research at LAU, and which recently ranked second in the THE index of MENA universities for research impact.

"The rankings may have accelerated our work and encouraged us to work more vigorously, but we don't plan strategic policy based on ranking criteria," said Nauffal, adding that "LAU has a mission centered on civic engagement and diversity and while rankings provide motivation, the university will always prioritize its core values and mission."



SINARC forms everlasting bonds

By Federica Marsi

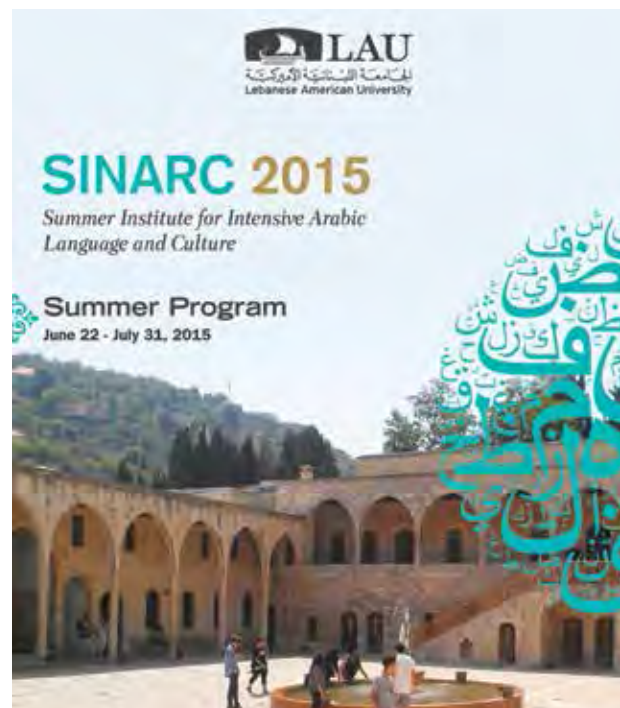
LAU's intensive Arabic
language program goes from
strength to strength

Another successful spring semester at the Summer Institute for Intensive Arabic Language (SINARC) has just come to an end. Its international participants benefited from a combination of high-standard teaching in Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic and Lebanese dialect, as well as optional courses in translation and Arabic writing skills. As LAU is a fully accredited institution, its academic credits are transferable to most institutions across the globe.

According to Mimi Milki Jeha, who has led the program for the past ten years, SINARC's strength is its ability to bridge the gap between classical Arabic and the local dialect. "Students read the newspaper proficiently and then comment on the news in the Lebanese dialect," she says. Her greatest satisfaction is encountering her former students reading the news in the cafes of Beirut's central district and being greeted by them in colloquial Arabic.

Proven to be one of the best and most effective study abroad programs in the area of Arabic language and Middle Eastern culture, SINARC offers courses at various levels of proficiency. With twenty hours per week of intensive classroom instruction and the attention given to translation, students are able to fully understand and master the many facets of the Arabic language. Classes can be tailored to fulfill the requirements of individual students as well as professionals from an array of disciplines. Throughout its history, SINARC has trained high-ranking diplomats in need of a fast track to language proficiency.

A unique cultural immersion program enriches the language training. "Students hike in the highest mountains of Lebanon and dive into the deepest waters of the Mediterranean," says Milki Jeha, director of SINARC. "The cultural immersion helps students absorb the language and apply it to their everyday lives." Cultural activities



"The cultural immersion helps students absorb the language and apply it to their everyday lives."

—Mimi Milki Jeha, director of LAU's SINARC

include weekly lectures on topics related to Arab and Lebanese politics, history, society and culture.

Trips to Lebanon's historical cities, together with additional workshops in traditional dance (dabke) and cuisine, make the program a comprehensive cultural and educational experience. LAU professors are also invited every week to hold discussions on unfolding events in the region, offering students an opportunity to interact with renowned experts in a variety of fields.

"The best part of the program is the teachers," says Mikael Maerker, an exchange student from Sweden who took part in this year's spring semester. "They are experienced in teaching Arabic and an extra hand has been offered from day one to help us progress."

Participants also have the chance to meet other students from the four corners of the world who share the same

passion for the Arabic language and culture. "For me, this was more than just a cultural experience," says Scott Preston, a student from Michigan. "We have lived together as a community and developed strong bonds that will last over time."

This summer's intensive program has already a large number of applicants, who are waiting to begin this life-changing experience in June.

The SINARC program is also offered in the heart of New York, where it has become renowned as one of the only fully accredited courses in the U.S. to offer Lebanese dialect at every level. Its classes are designed to bridge the geographical gap by generating a heightened awareness of the cultures and politics of the MENA region.

Students from many universities, in addition to professionals who travel and work in the Arabic speaking world, can benefit from Modern Standard Arabic courses, as well as Lebanese

Dialect, in small classes designed for maximum engagement. In a globalized world, Arabic is a critical language for policy makers, activists, journalists and businessmen. SINARC can tailor courses and private tutorials to meet the goals of individuals with specific aims and time constraints.

"Americans, as increasingly global actors, benefit enormously by learning such a widely spoken and geo-politically strategic language," says Samantha Kostmayer of the New York SINARC office. "We've had older beginner students for whom the language was a scary goal. At SINARC, we have managed to transform this into an attainable and animated commitment."

For more information: <http://www.lau.edu.lb/centers-institutes/sinarc/index.php>

Pharmacy Program returns to roots of profession

By Linda Dahdah

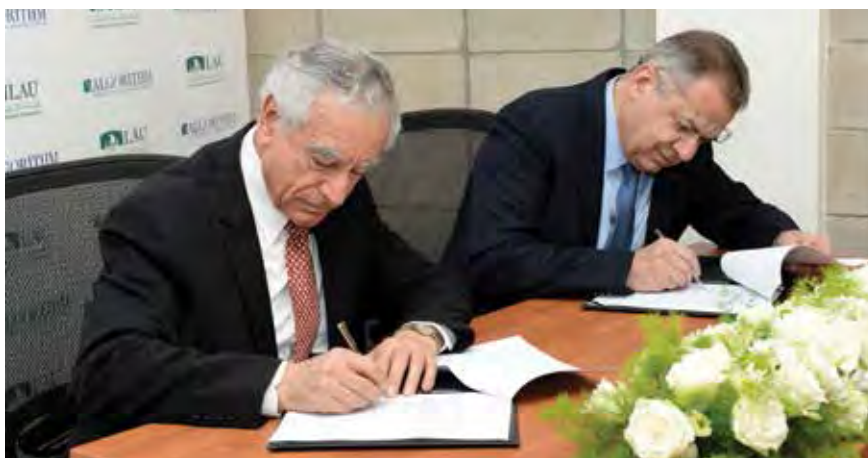
LAU's agreements with leading pharmaceutical companies allow its future pharmacists to undergo real life experience

"It is high time we re-balance our programs to include a part dedicated to the pharmaceutical industry."

—Imad Btaiche, interim dean of LAU's School of Pharmacy



Pharmacy students at Benta's labs



LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara and Algorithm's CEO Selim Ghorayeb sign partnership

On February 5, 2015 LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara announced to the LAU community that the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) had extended the university's Doctor of Pharmacy program's accreditation for eight years. LAU's Pharm.D. program first gained ACPE accreditation in 2002 and still remains the only program outside the U.S. to be ACPE accredited.

But LAU's School of Pharmacy refuses to rest on its laurels. Armed with the excellent reputation of its clinical pharmacy program, it has been going purposefully steadily back to the roots of the discipline. "Globally, there has been a clear focus of pharmacy curricula on the clinical aspect and it is high time we re-balance our programs to also include a part that is dedicated to the pharmaceutical industry," says Imad Btaiche, interim dean of the school.

"While it is important for the students to know which treatment their patients should follow, it is also crucial for them to know everything about the drug they wish to use in the treatment, from its inception to its delivery," Btaiche adds.

Putting words into action, LAU has signed agreements with leading pharmaceutical companies that allow its budding pharmacists to practice in the most modern settings with state-of-the-art equipment.

In April, as LAU celebrated a partnership with the pharmaceutical manufacturer Algorithm, Jabbara underlined that such initiatives go beyond the purely academic and professional framework. "Such partnerships don't only provide young people with the opportunity to succeed, but also to serve society and build our country," he said at the signing ceremony.

This sentiment was echoed by Algorithm's CEO Selim Ghorayeb, who thanked LAU for allowing his company to contribute to the university's mission to further spread knowledge among youth and the community as a whole.

Indeed, LAU first launched its industrial pharmacy program with a joint Experiential Education Agreement that it signed with Benta SAL in June 2012. For Moussa Moussa, plant director at Benta Pharma Industries, the main value the company instills in the students is that of delivering high quality products.

Nadim Atallah, who completed his one-month rotation at Benta in February, couldn't agree more. "This experience in such a professional environment has basically completed the pharmacy education I get in class. I have learned so much about industrial pharmacy mainly in terms of production, but also as far as logistics and regulatory affairs are concerned," Atallah says. The Pharm.D. student goes on to declare, "I got to learn about job opportunities in the field I didn't even know existed in Lebanon."

In line with the school's strategic directives and in response to emerging market needs, the School of Pharmacy is considering establishing a graduate program (master's level) in pharmaceutical sciences, with a focus on industrial pharmacy.

"Such a program will provide pharmacy graduates with added knowledge and skills that prepares them for future career opportunities in the pharmaceutical industry," says Btaiche, adding, "The endeavor will also present a unique opportunity to foster the relationship between academic and industrial pharmacy."

Sidon acquires its own academy

By Reem Maghribi



The LAU-Hariri
Foundation partnership
is yielding quick results



"In less than three months, our strategic partnership has benefited hundreds of school students and dozens of schools," said Elie Samia in May of the Outreach & Leadership Academy (OLA) inaugurated by LAU and the Hariri Foundation in Sidon in February.

Speaking at the university's NGO fair, Samia, LAU AVP of Outreach and Civic Engagement, congratulated MP Bahja Hariri, the head of the Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development, and gave an overview of OLA's activities in front of an audience of NGO representatives.

Three non-profit organizations have participated in the various activities and training sessions held at the academy located among the old houses and souks of Sidon. In its first ten weeks of operation alone, the academy welcomed over 400 students from 40 of the city's 112 public, subsidized and private schools.

Connected to over 50,000 students and 5,500 teachers in the southern city through the Sidon school network, OLA aims to provide ongoing opportunities for civic engagement to each and every one of them. "Lebanon's youth must be cherished so they can illuminate Lebanon and the region, through civic engagement, inclusiveness, and respect for human dignity," said LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra at the academy's inauguration.

Hariri went one step further. "We can no longer educate our youth only to see them leave Lebanon when faced with the strangeness of our nation's reality," she pointed out.

Soon after, students from LAU and Sidon's schools came together at OLA to receive entrepreneurship training conducted by the Central Bank during Global Money Week, in cooperation with local NGOs.

The academy also offers training sessions in a variety of topics, including public speaking and conflict resolution and negotiation. "Courses are also being developed tailored to the needs and requests of the schools and students," says LAU postgraduate student Hrag Avedanian, who has trained over 100 students from at least ten schools in the power of diplomacy and diplomatic composure.

"We organize the groups to ensure students from both private and public

schools attend together. They come from different backgrounds and interpretations, and we want to encourage them to have healthy debates," he adds.

Avedanian believes that the academy has succeeded in its mission and looks forward to more weekends in Sidon training exuberant high-school students. "They all want to be ambassadors, of Sidon, of their schools, of their families," he enthuses. "It's wonderful engaging with a classroom full of people who are so passionate."



The classrooms themselves are fully equipped to support the activities of the multi-layered sessions. "The facilities are the best I've seen. OLA is housed in a beautiful historical structure, a monument, with state of the art facilities," Avedanian adds.

While hundreds of students have benefited from the workshops, the training day with the largest turnout was certainly that of the Model Arab League program. 170 students from 19 high schools descended on OLA, housed in the former school premises of former prime minister Rafik Hariri, to learn the art of diplomacy.



Simplifying Arabic

A means to combat illiteracy?

By Reem Maghribi

"Illiteracy in the Arab world is related to a lack of education, not the difficulty of the language."

—Elias Khoury, Lebanese novelist and critic

Three LAU educators — professor of literature Latif Zeitouni, novelist and critic Elias Khoury, and linguistics educator Rima Bahous — discuss the Arabic language, advancement and education

Languages develop and progress naturally over the course of time, agree LAU professor of literature Latif Zeitouni and celebrated Lebanese novelist Elias Khoury. "Language is transforming, changing and alive. It's fascinating and probably the most amazing thing there is," says Khoury, who teaches literature at both LAU and New York University.

While the two educators believe a simplification of the Arabic language is in order, their approach differs somewhat. "The Arabic letters are problematic and Arabs have noticed this for some time. Since the 19th century, there have been requests to write Arabic in the Latin alphabet," explains Zeitouni, noting that the establishment of modern schools and the development of schoolbooks brought the issue to the forefront.

"The Semitic languages — Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac, all of them — do not include all pronounced letters in the written words. Instead we use what are called long and short vowels," Zeitouni continues. In most written Arabic texts, short vowels are not written or printed.

"So we read our sentences twice, while other languages need only read once. This is a difficulty in the language."

This ability of short vowels to change the meaning of a word completely is, however, one of the many things Khoury finds attractive in the Arabic language. "When my books are translated, they always take up more pages. Arabic is a concise language and the short vowels are one of its special features," says the novelist.

Another source of richness for the Arabic language, says Khoury, is the multiplicity of dialects it embraces. "I was in Yemen while writing my book *White Masks*. They use the word '*shaneen*' there to describe pouring rain. I found it such a beautiful word, so I used it in the book."

Khoury often writes parts of his novels in dialect, seeing it as a natural progression of the language. "Reading contemporary literature, you'll see how much the vocabulary and syntax of dialect has entered into Arabic writing. Language is renewed through literature. This is its main role."

“Since the 19th century, there have been requests to write Arabic in the Latin alphabet.”

—Latif Zeitouni, LAU professor of Arabic Literature



Rima Bahous, chairperson of LAU's Department of Education



Latif Zeitouni, LAU professor of literature



Elias Khoury, LAU visiting professor

He is quick to point out, however, that the way in which he and other contemporary Arab writers are infusing dialect into their scripts is unlike the fashionable advertising plastered across many Lebanese billboards. “You can’t write words exactly as they are said, it is unreadable. And writing Arabic using Latin numerals is simply vulgar,” says the novelist. “In literature, we bring in dialect as a natural form of expression, but still respect and follow the rules of the language.”

There remain, however, many who object to the cross-pollination of dialect and *fōsha* (also known as Modern Standard Arabic). “Who complains? Traditionalists and religious men. But there is a problem that needs a solution,” says Latif Zeitouni. He refers to the adoption of European digits and Latin letters by Arab youth writing dialect as an improvised reaction to the problem and to Said Akl’s books of the 1960s — written in Lebanese dialect using Latin letters — as one example of various attempts over the decades to address a clear and apparent problem.

Khoury, however, views the work of the Lebanese poet and playwright as intrinsically flawed. “Said Akl did not try to simplify the Arabic language. He worked off the assumption that the Lebanese dialect is a separate language, not an Arabic dialect. His book was a shocking failure.”

Lebanese is a dialect of the Levant, says Khoury emphatically, and that itself is a dialect of Arabic. “If we want to write like Akl, we will have 25 languages in Lebanon alone. If you write exactly how you speak, we will be lost. There will be no language.”

Forced or institutionalized attempts to simplify Arabic do not interest Khoury. “This discussion about developing language

is futile. They didn’t sit around a table after Shakespeare’s day and decide how to change the rules. There are no linguistic rules that were developed and then applied to language; it is the language that creates the rules.”

While he clearly believes that institutional simplification of Arabic is unnecessary, Khoury does object to the lack of institutions that exist in the Arab world to document and study both the language and the natural progression and simplification it has undergone. “In France, they spend billions on their language, they work hard on it and have government institutions. They update their dictionary every two years with hundreds of words. The Arabic dictionary has not been updated since the beginning of the last century.”

The main culprits, he says, are “the monstrous regimes that are enemies of the people. Illiteracy in the Arab world is related to a lack of education, not to the difficulty of the language.”

While Chairperson of LAU’s Department of Education Rima Bahous agrees that a flaw in the teaching of Arabic is the main problem, she does believe the language is more difficult than others. “Arabic is a diglossic language. The way we speak it and the way we read it are very different; it’s akin to learning two languages.”

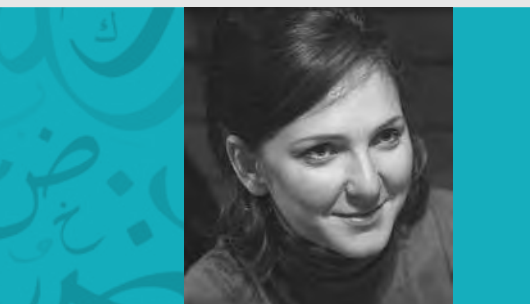
Students can, however, master both languages — the dialect and *fōsha* — if they are encouraged to enjoy the language. “We teach them Arabic, English and French in parallel now and they don’t get confused, so they are capable. The problem is that the European languages are taught in a much more engaging way,” says Bahous, who specializes in linguistics education.

Most European languages are first taught in a basic form, with students progressing up in levels, allowing writers to use the form of the language that suits the level of the audience they are writing for. “There have been ongoing studies in Europe and elsewhere about how to make language attractive for learners, but we haven’t done that,” says Zeitouni. “There is a complete lack of mobilization by politicians who do not want to address a problem that involves 22 countries.”

The inhabitants of those countries, says Elias Khoury, understand each other enough to enable each dialect to find its way into books, traditionally written purely in *fōsha*, and not negatively impact a reader’s ability to understand. “Dialects may differ, but they are all understandable if you focus a bit. The majority of the words and syntax across the dialects is the same,” says Khoury, adding that even Arabic texts that pre-date Islam are still understandable today. “This is an advantage, not a short-coming.”

The dialects of the *maghreb* (west) were influenced by Berber, while the dialects of the *mashreq* (east) borrowed many words from Syriac. “This enriches our language. And within a few days, you can understand them all.” This is particularly true if there is an appreciation or a desire to enjoy culture delivered in a different dialect, of which Fayrouz and Oum Kalthoum are but two outstanding examples.

Ultimately, education is key. “All citizens should have the right to education until baccalaureate,” stresses Khoury. “If we don’t study, we won’t know how to read anything, not dialect, *not fōsha*, not a newspaper.”



Typographer Yara Khoury

Lebanese architect and typographer Nasri Khattar developed a unified Arabic type that enabled youngsters to learn to read Arabic in one day



Reforming Arabic type

In the previous century, while some Arab authors began incorporating the vocabulary and syntax of dialect into their texts, architect and typographer Nasri Khattar was working on simplifying the Arabic letterforms.

"Nasri Khattar was the first reformer that did something very graphically valid with Arabic type," says typographer Yara Khoury, explaining why Khattar was chosen to be the first typographer featured in the *Arab Design Library*, published by LAU alumna Huda AbiFares Smitshuijzen (A.A.S. '84). Khoury, who has taught at LAU since 2005, wrote the book.

"Huda chose me to write the book because I was very familiar with Khattar's work through my postgraduate studies, and I knew his family, so had access to his archives," explains Khoury. "His work certainly paved the way for the vanguard Arabic typefaces being developed today, so it needed to be archived."

Khattar's primary goal, however, was to introduce what he called a unified Arabic type to the mainstream. Arabic characters have many different forms, depending on their place in a word. Some letters have up to seven different forms. Khattar developed a type that unified each character into one form, regardless of its place in a word. "His type could have changed our world completely and the way we appreciate the language," says Khoury, who believes her fluency in reading Arabic would have greatly benefited from reading books written using only 32 letterforms.

"Frank Laubach, the champion of literacy in the U.S., sent Khattar on a mission to Egypt because he believed

his typeface could improve literacy levels dramatically." Laubach testified to the fact that within one day a young girl was able to learn Khattar's letterforms and read books written using those forms. However, despite huge support from IBM and the Ford Foundation, the only publications ever published using Khattar's type were his own.

"Some companies and organizations used his type as a graphic element or in their titles only, but it never took off," laments Khoury. "There was a lot of resistance, from nationalists and religious conservatives." Nationalists felt Khattar's type was too western, while others resisted any change to the script in which the Quran was delivered.

"Latin base scripts began using a unified typeface for print centuries ago. That jump didn't happen here. We try to twist the arm of technology to try to cater to the letterform, rather than the letterform changing for the technology. They are more pragmatic and practical in the West, while we here linger on to the beauty and poetry of things. That's our nature." ■

"The way we speak and read Arabic are very different; it's akin to learning two languages."

—Rima Bahous, LAU associate professor of Education and chair of the Department of Education

LAU Department of Design's instructor of typography Pascal Zoghbi recently digitized Khattar's typeface, adding different weight options and preparing the type for modern use in the digital age.

المبادئ لا تتجزأ ولا تتبدل، وليست رهن
المودة أو الوقت أو الأشخاص المتبدلين
وتوجهاتهم، المبادئ الإنسانية شاملة،
عامة، متحررة من كل تقاليد أو أنظمة،
مؤلفة من ثوب الإنسان في أنقى وأبسط
صوره دونما قيد أو شرط أو توصيف.

إن أخذ أي كلمة منها
أبطلها الخطيب



LAU NY Gala 2015 dinner

Ambassador Gilbert Chagoury and his wife Rose-Marie, recipients of Sarah Huntington Smith Award, with LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra, Gala Chair Manal Saab and Master of Ceremonies Jeanine Pirro



PROCEEDS EARMARKED FOR WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT

From Beirut to New York, LAU's fundraiser highlighted the university's mission to propel women's rights

On May 11 LAU New York held its fourth annual gala at the New York Athletic Club, overlooking Central Park. With more than 160 attendees, the gala was an astounding success, the proceeds of which were earmarked for LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW). Established in 1973, IWSAW is a pioneer in academic research on women in the region and seeks to empower them through development programs and education.

Three honorees received the Sarah Huntington Smith Award for their generosity to LAU and for their

philanthropic efforts. The recipients included Ambassador Gilbert Chagoury and his wife Rose-Marie, as well as LAU alumna Aminy Inati Audi, CEO and chairman of L. and J. G. Stickley, Inc.

LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra extended a hearty thanks to the Gala committee members, New York staff, and donors large and small. He reminded guests of Sarah Huntington Smith's long journey from Norwich, Connecticut, to the shores of Beirut in 1836. "When she got there, the first thing she wanted to do was to establish a school for the education of women in

the Ottoman Empire, before anyone in the world thought about the rights of women," he exclaimed.

The evening began with guests enjoying cocktails to sounds of dulcet jazz music. Renowned talk show host Jeanine Pirro kept the audience entertained as the master of ceremonies, as did a stellar performance of Lebanese tenor Amine Hachem, who received a rousing standing ovation. The night ended with dancing to the melodies of the Alex Donner Orchestra and a post dinner cigar bar on the terrace for those who wished to indulge.



Alumna Aminy Inati Audi, recipient of Sarah Huntington Smith Award



Amine Hachem receives standing ovation



Alex Donner Orchestra plays into the night



Women take center stage

By Reem Maghribi

IWSAW launches Lebanon's first degree in gender studies



INSTITUTE FOR
WOMEN'S STUDIES
IN THE ARAB WORLD

"We want to see that gender is tackled in all departments."

—Samira Aghacy, interim director of
LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the
Arab World



"It's a natural progression and one that will enable us to delve deeper into our research," says Samira Aghacy, interim director of LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), of LAU's new M.A. in Women and Gender Studies.

The Institute was born in 1973 after the university, first founded in 1927 as a college for women, went co-ed. "It was symbolic of the university's roots and focused at that time mostly on development and fieldwork," says Aghacy.

With the advent of *Al Raida*, a quarterly journal whose mission is to enhance networking between Arab women and women all over the world, IWSAW began its work on research in 1976. Over time, its activities came to include the development of a multitude of research papers and the delivery of gender-focused training to social workers and female detainees, among others.

"Now we want to develop further, publishing books and serious academic research, and the Women and Gender Studies master's program will play a central role in that," explains Aghacy, who currently teaches a course in theories of gender and global feminism to students of comparative literature, one of the program's core components.

While theories in gender and global feminism, gender and public policy and Arab and Islamic feminism are among other core courses, electives include international relations, gender and migration and masculine identity.

"It is the natural institution in the region to establish a graduate program to both develop and ground this dynamic field. Graduates of the program will be trained for diverse professional careers as well as for interdisciplinary research

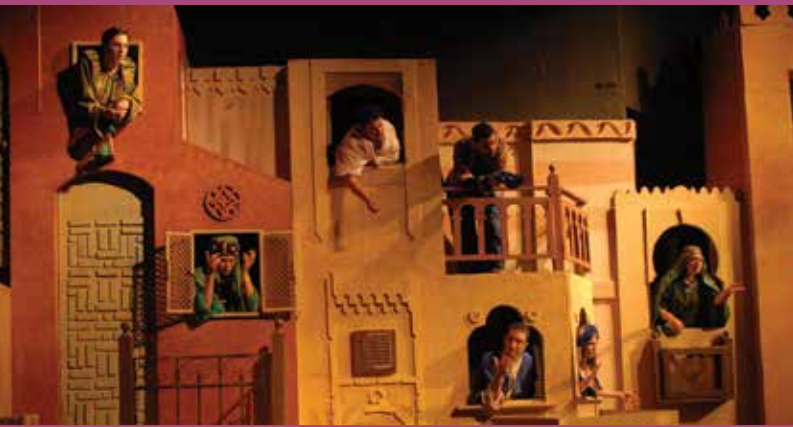
and teaching," says Jenine Abboushi, LAU professor of comparative literature. Abboushi was part of the committee that created the graduate program. She also teaches a course about women in literature, film and culture.

As part of the program, each student will complete a thesis, adding to the body of research-based work produced by IWSAW over the years, the most recent of which is a study of the law regarding young marriage, produced in collaboration with the National Commission for Lebanese Women.

"We have been increasingly collaborating with other organizations over the years," says Aghacy. "Our conference of last year on gender rights and constitutional reform was organized in partnership with Egyptian, German and Danish organizations, and this year's conference about gendered peace at a time of war was the result of a collaboration with the Women in War Foundation and Beit Al-Hanan."

Also in the spirit of unified collaboration is IWSAW's newly established liaison committee, which includes professors from LAU's seven schools. "We want to see that gender is tackled in all departments," explains Aghacy. "The personal status law in Lebanon places women as second class citizens, and it is important to make students aware of this issue."

Can a master's program in gender studies change the status quo? "Whatever the graduates go on to do after obtaining their master's degree in Women and Gender Studies, they will have an impact at the level of attitudes and awareness and respect," says Aghacy. "I hope they will also become activists."



Polished Performances

By Federica Marsi

LAU's new B.A. in Performing Arts to be another pioneering achievement by its well-established School of Arts & Sciences





"Its graduates will become the leaders and critical thinkers of society."

—Lina Abyad, LAU assistant professor of Communication Arts



The Department of Communication Arts, which has trained experts in the field for over fifty years, is about to launch a new B.A. in Performing Arts. The new program is the culminating step of a long process aiming to rearrange the current more general B.A. in Communication Arts into three separate programs with different emphases.

The degree in Performing Arts provides an in-depth education in theater, dance and music performance. LAU is already a pioneer in this area, as there are no similar undergraduate programs in English offered in Lebanon. According to Lina Matta, senior channel manager of the MBC TV group, "receiving a CV from an LAU graduate means I am guaranteed a very well-grounded person who has had experience both in the classroom and outside."

The new B.A. will make LAU's degree an even greater guarantee of excellence. Together with a selection of courses already offered in Communication Arts, classes will include new offerings such as Body in Performance, Eastern and Western Music Composition, Dance Improvisation and Dance Composition.

"The current B.A. in Communication Arts allows for a wider scope," says LAU graduate Rami Saidi (B.A., '12), who now works as a scriptwriter. "However, if you want to go on to acting school, they require a degree in performing arts; communication means nothing to them."

Students will have the opportunity to follow a range of introductory core courses before specializing in their preferred field — theater, dance or music. Elective courses will also leave the door open for more educational variety across the board. Those currently enrolled in the B.A. in Communication Arts will also benefit from the new classes, which will be part of their elective modules.

"What is unique about this course is that it prepares students for a wide spectrum of employment opportunities, including tailored courses for those who

want to go into teaching," says Nashaat Mansour, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. Recently, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Society of Performing Arts (SPA), Mansour presented the B.A. program to an audience in Nigeria, securing pledges for two sponsorships.

In order to guarantee the highest possible standard of teaching, the B.A. courses will be taught by leading figures in the field of performing arts. Together with Mona Knio, board member of Al-Medina Theatre and the Arab Theatre Training Center, and Nadra Assaf, founder of *Al-Sharab* Alternative Dance School, LAU plans to extend its faculty to include experts in the new fields of study.

"We want to form fully-fledged artistic figures who will be able to encompass the different skills required by the modern show industry," says Knio, acting chair of the Department of Communication Arts. "Times are ripe for such career path, as the show market requires professionals who are able to perform both on and off stage."

According to Assaf, assistant professor of English and Dance at LAU, this B.A., the first of its kind in the region, "serves to enhance humanity and the struggle to survive." On the same note, Mansour praises the ability of the degree to attract talents from all parts of the world, united in their dedication towards the performing arts. "This academic field is an antidote to extremism, bigotry and divisive ideas," he says. "It reminds us that we are all sons and daughters of Mother Nature."

"Its graduates," says Assistant Professor of Communication Arts Lina Abyad, "will become the leaders and critical thinkers of society."

The B.A. in Performing Arts has been successfully processed within university channels all the way to approval by the Council of Deans. It will be launched following the Board of Trustees' approval and registration with the N.Y. Department of Education.

LAU establishes a new legacy

LAU Global Classrooms
Model United Nations
program recognized
as one of the most
successful in the world



"It was a great experience! You get to meet people from around the world and learn something new. It's just so amazing, I didn't want to leave the conference room," said an enthused Miriam Aoun at the General Assembly hall of the UN headquarters in New York.

The sixteen-year old high-schooler from Saint Coeur Kfarbab near Ghazir in Lebanon had just won the award for best delegation at the 16th Annual Global Classrooms International Model UN in Midtown Manhattan. She had also witnessed LAU's takeover of two major Model UN events, an unprecedented new ownership for the university and its affiliates.

Held at the UN Headquarters and the nearby Grand Hyatt Central, the conference, together with its sister event, the Global Classrooms Middle School MUN conference, attracts some 4,000 students and faculty members yearly from over 250 schools of 20 different nationalities. The events also welcome top UN and international leaders and high-ranking opinion makers, all while garnering significant media attention both online and through traditional channels.

and the increasingly present sectarian and tribal dimension of conflicts.

"We need to fight this and create an atmosphere of working together," he said, stressing the importance of human rights and the dangerous "emotional element of seeing conflict through an ethnic prism, utilized by extremist groups to their advantage."

Addressing the future young diplomats in the room, LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara pointed out that former UN Commission for Human Rights rapporteur Charles Malek had an instrumental role in establishing the Universal Declaration of Rights. "He worked closely with Eleanor Roosevelt," Jabbara said. "This is reflective of Lebanon's commitment to human rights," he declared with pride, before passing the microphone to Lebanese radio and TV show host Marcel Ghanem, who also shared life advice with the gathered young people.

Following an address by LAU Vice President for Student Development and Enrollment Management Elise Salem and after three days of intensive deliberations in a simulation that mimicked the real life General Assembly and Security Council meetings, the winners of the competition were announced. Of the 10 participating students from high schools throughout Lebanon, not a single one went home empty-handed. Representing Mali, LAU took home eight Best Delegate and two Honorable Mention Awards, rendering it the most victorious team of the event.

"We were able to prove that no matter what the country is going through, the youth, community service and education are in good hands," said Yasmeena El Sabeh, editor-in-chief of GC LAU Model United Nations, one of 16 LAU student "staffers" from both the Byblos and Beirut campuses who traveled to New York as part of the GCLAUMUN Secretariat.

"We had the privilege of not only attending the conference, but also being present as our university created an international legacy," she said.

El Sabeh went on to describe LAU MUN Global Classrooms and Model Arab League program director and university Assistant Vice President for Outreach and Civic Engagement Elie Samia as "a father and spiritual leader."

"He teaches the students not about winning MUN but about succeeding in a new life," she said.



*"We had the privilege of being
present as our university created
an international legacy."*

— Yasmeena El Sabeh, student and editor-in-chief of GC LAU Model United Nations

During the opening ceremony, Chris Whatley, executive director of the United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) announced that, from now on, LAU would assume responsibility for the two international Global Classrooms Middle and High School Conferences.

His announcement followed an inspiring keynote speech by UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, who reaffirmed the importance of young diplomatic efforts today. He acknowledged the challenges facing Lebanon and the rest of the region, highlighting the threats of organized crime



A model university

Elie Samia, LAU assistant vice president for Outreach & Civic Engagement and program director for Global Classrooms LAU MUN and Model Arab League, talks about the university's achievements in the field.

What is so special about the Global Classrooms program?

It is the largest Model UN network in the world, engaging more than 25,000 students and teachers annually in over 20 countries at conferences and in classrooms. Widely recognized as a leader in the Model UN sector, the program has a 16-year track record of success. In 2014, it offered programs in 10 U.S. cities, and in five international affiliate cities.

The middle school program takes place in collaboration with school districts in various American states, some of which have adopted the Global Classrooms curriculum as mandatory for graduation. The UN also refers Model UN inquiries to the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA) and our Global Classrooms program. The program has established a partnership as Model UN content provider for the U.S. Department of State, Department of Defense and Foreign Service Institute.

How will LAU benefit from all these distinguished traits?

LAU's participation in the Global Classrooms program marks the university as a renowned institution of higher learning in the realm of educating, empowering and engaging student leaders in leadership programs. It will lead to an exchange of expertise and respect between LAU students and students from Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Chicago and other Ivy League universities in the U.S., as well as from Germany, Italy, Japan, China, Mexico and other parts of the world. It may result in the recruitment of participants from schools in the MENA region, who will look up to LAU as an internationally credible university in the areas of diplomacy training and MUN conference organization.

What role will LAU NY play in the holding of these conferences?

The fact that LAU has a strategically located state-of-the-art academic center a few blocks from the UN Headquarters played an instrumental role in the success of negotiations with the UNA-USA. As a NEASC accredited university, LAU spoke the language of academic excellence and of mutual interests with our American partners. UNA-USA experts will be cooperating closely with the Outreach and Civic Engagement unit and will be conducting weekly meetings with specialized LAU staff to plan for the MUN conferences.

How has the program succeeded in transcending the boundaries of Lebanon?

LAU's executive management and the university community at large both gave the MUN program full support to conduct its activities with vigor and creativity. But first and foremost credit goes to the passion of our students, who come from different majors and each year deploy monumental efforts to organize an impeccable program. For the last 15 years, LAU's Department of Political Science has also been participating in the Harvard World Model United Nations.

Your final word as the program director

When we have a vision and we deploy specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound efforts to ensure its success, we can say that we have moved from action plan to legacy. "What the mind can conceive, committed and competent people can achieve" is the new motto of the Outreach and Civic Engagement unit.

"LAU's participation in the Global Classrooms program marks the university as a renowned institution of higher learning in the realm of educating, empowering and engaging student leaders in leadership programs."

— Elie Samia, AVP, Outreach & Civic Engagement





A change for the better

By Raja Riachi

LAU teaches young future leaders democracy

"I have established strong bonds with future leaders that will go beyond our time here," enthuses Yemeni Awad Alwan about his Leaders for Democracy program experience. "It has been both valuable and exciting. The friendships forged here with the various members of our region's political community can only be beneficial."

The second annual Leaders for Democracy Fellowship (LDF) successfully brought together prospective leaders from 10 Arab nations for four weeks of courses at LAU followed by a six-week internship of choice in Lebanon. Funded by the U.S. Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), LDF is subcontracted by Syracuse University (SU) and coordinated by LAU's University Enterprise Office (UEO) in close collaboration with the Department of Social Sciences.

"I am going back to Algeria with a great added-value," says Sihem Hemmache, an Algerian lawyer, human rights activist and founding member of a new political party. "My time here has taught me a lot about the region and the common problems our countries face," she adds.

Several days before the culminating ceremony to celebrate the end of the fellowship, the 18 participants held a program evaluation session. Walid Touma and Nabelah Haraty, the LAU-LDF program director and manager respectively, were praised not only for their administration of the fellowship but also for their receptiveness to students' suggestions. For the former, this was a hands-on example of "democracy in motion."

The discussions touched on the program's strengths as well as on any problems the soon-to-be LAU-LDF



"With these tools we will strive to effect change in our communities."

—Awad Alwan, Yemeni Leaders for Democracy Fellowship alumnus

alumni encountered. LDF is designed to teach its participants to identify problems in their communities and work out solutions. Their precise and cogent suggestions to improve the program clearly showed that they were already implementing lessons learned.

One unanimously-backed suggestion was to create a union consisting of LAU-LDF alumni and to annually elect a representative to participate in the organizing of the program in a consulting capacity.

"It is an enriching experience for all parties involved," says Haraty. "We also find ourselves learning a lot from the participants about their heritage, experience, culture and ways of communication."

After the completion of the fellowship, the participants will implement projects in their own communities, also funded by MEPI. For example, this year's three Yemeni participants — Awad Alwan, Al-Qadri Baghdad and Marwan Al-Hakimi — will be incorporating the fundamentals of freedom of speech and expression, as well as the importance of human rights, into school curriculums while also establishing academies that convey these messages.

"What we've seen through this program, and our time within our own communities, is that although human rights are a hard earned accomplishment, they are essential to the success of any society," points

out Alwan. He goes on to explain how the LAU-LDF program has helped him prepare for this project: "The program's rich curriculum helped us prepare the A-Z of this project from research to negotiation to proposal writing. It also put us in touch with experts who were able to give us invaluable guidance for our planned project in Yemen."

The fellowship has equipped the young leaders with the tools to establish goals with sustainable change in their communities in mind. "With these tools we will strive to effect change in our communities," concludes Alwan.

Imad Salamey, LAU-LDF program coordinator, echoes these sentiments. "Watching these leaders learn, exchange and interact makes me believe that they will prevail over the extremism and violence our region is witnessing," he says, adding, "This is where investment needs to be allocated."

"It is an enriching experience for all involved."

—Nabelah Haraty, LAU-LDF program manager

Four years on

By Federica Marsi

As the Syrian refugee crisis continues to break international records, host countries are examining new ways to cope with the inflow



“The key to improving the refugees’ situation would be to include them in the solution.”

—Sami Baroudi, LAU professor of Political Science and assistant dean of the School of Arts and Sciences

Paul Tabar and Sami Baroudi were among the guest speakers at a two-day conference titled “The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Policies of Receiving Countries and Crisis Impact on Displaced Syrians and Receiving Societies,” organized by the Institute for Migration Studies at LAU in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss and Paul Tabar were the primary organizers of the event.

As a result of the inflow of over 1.2 million Syrians, Lebanon has become the country with the highest per-capita concentration of refugees recorded in recent history. Almost half of Syrian refugee families live below the poverty line and 55 percent of them include a member with special needs. The latest Regional Refugee and Resilience Plans (3RP) forecast that the humanitarian emergency is nowhere close to an end.

Against such a backdrop, host countries are examining new sustainable ways of coping with the demographic strain. Turkey, the nation hosting the largest share of Syrians fleeing the war, is surrendering to the idea that its “guests” are there to stay and is envisaging integration policies in order to shift from a humanitarian approach to a self-sustainable one.

In Lebanon, such a road is paved with peril. “The key to improving the refugees’ situation would be to include them in the solution,” says Sami Baroudi, professor of Political Science and assistant dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at LAU. “Refugees should be agents, not objects, but empowering them entails a whole array of problems.”

Allowing Syrian refugees the right to work — let alone full-fledged citizenship — could shake Lebanon’s already precarious sectarian grounds. “Lebanon is a house of many mansions built on quick regional sands,” says Baroudi, citing Kamal Salibi. According to Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss, assistant professor of Political Science and International Affairs at LAU, the situation is further complicated by the fact that

“Lebanon is seeing in the Syrian crisis the echo of its history with the Palestinians”.

Offering Syrian refugees a self-sustainable solution entails the risk of encouraging permanent resettlement, which might be detrimental to political stability in the long run. On the other hand, empowering refugees would lift the burden off the shoulders of a battered civil society.

“The state’s inability to separate the humanitarian aspect of the crisis from the political one has obliged civil society to bear the greatest strain,” points out Paul Tabar, chair of the Department of Social Sciences at LAU. “The reality of the situation is such that it is difficult to disentangle,” he says. At present, Lebanon’s preferred solution would be refugee repatriation or resettlement into safe areas within Syria, a solution that requires long-term planning in conjunction with the international community.

In the meantime, the pressing need is to ensure an environment where both communities are able to endure the situation. According to Skulte-Ouaiss, while sectarian considerations make the situation unique, this should not hold Lebanon back from confronting itself with other host countries, as well as with its own internal issues.

“Lebanon should take advantage of the good will of the international community to solve once and for all its structural economic problems,” says Baroudi. Whether the country will be able to turn this crisis into an opportunity is its biggest challenge.



Fight food hygiene at home

By Reem Maghribi

LAU professor Hussein Hassan offers advice on how we at home can improve the hygiene and safety of our food

While the establishment of an independent food safety authority would contribute greatly to the fight against poor food hygiene, citizen attitudes and actions are of utmost importance, says Hussein Hassan, LAU professor and food safety specialist. "Citizens are essential warriors in food safety," he emphasizes. "We can't blame everything on the government. The information to improve the safety of what we put in our mouths is readily available."

Over the past decade, the UN and relevant NGOs have conducted various studies on the subject. "The reports are alarming. It's this information that Public Health Minister Wael Abu Faour used to motivate his recent nationwide campaign," Hassan points out.

"Citizens are essential warriors in food safety."

—Hussein Hassan, LAU assistant professor of Food Science and Technology

"It's about time. I read the list of markets he highlighted in his report and if any had been shops I buy food from, I would have stopped shopping there for sure," says M.B.A. student Jessica Koueik in reaction to Abu Faour's campaign.

A quick review of reactions posted online however suggests that Koueik may

have been in the minority. Despite the media attention, ministerial warnings and restaurant closures, many tweeters said that they would continue to eat at their favorite restaurant, but would now simply feel guilty about it.

"The problem is that people think food poisoning is a short-term thing that lasts only a few days, but prolonged exposure to poorly maintained and washed food causes a bio-accumulation of toxins that can lead to cancers, liver failure and other diseases in the long term," Hassan explains.

The best way to combat food poisoning is to cook at home. "Home cooking is the exception nowadays, but if we understood the severity of the problem, we could find time for it," says the food safety expert, noting that home kitchens do not suffer from the insects, pests and contaminants present in many restaurants.

What many a kitchen in Lebanon does suffer from however is a poorly maintained fridge. A recent study ("Survey and analysis of internal temperatures of Lebanese domestic refrigerators," *International Journal of Refrigeration*, 2015) conducted by Hassan with LAU professors Rafal El Amin and Hani Dimassi about the effect of power outages on home fridges revealed many disturbing facts. The recommended maximum temperature for a fridge is 6°C. Their study of 147 domestic fridges found an average temperature of 8°C, with two fridges reaching 37°C.



Hussein Hassan, LAU assistant professor of Food Science and Technology and food safety specialist

According to the study, "there are many factors at play here. Poor income families, who can't afford a generator subscription in cities that suffer long power outages are more at risk of overheated fridges."

That said, attitudes toward refrigeration were also significant. "Ten percent of our participants said they unplugged their fridges when they were on generator, because they prioritized air conditioning over a cold fridge," the study revealed. Paradoxically, six percent of participants unplugged their fridges when they were receiving government electricity because of concerns that fluctuations in the electricity power would damage their fridge.

A new program for food safety professionals

Growing reports about food spoilages, contamination and poor food safety at restaurants — coupled with the increased interest of the Ministry of Health to improve food safety standards and higher public awareness — have spurred LAU to launch two food safety certification programs. Hussein Hassan will lead the programs.

One program will be on the essentials of food safety and the other on food safety management systems. Each program runs over six weeks, with one teaching day per week. Both offer certification. The first of a series of ongoing sessions will begin in July.

For more details and dates of future session, visit the website of LAU's Continuing Education Program at cep.lau.edu.lb.





FEATURE

Status Quo

Think in Arabic but speak in English or French

By Irina Papkova

"The one language that brings the Lebanese together, no matter what the dialect, is Arabic."

—Nola Bacha, professor of Applied Linguistics and acting chair of LAU's departments of English and Humanities

"I think in Arabic when I'm angry," says 28-year old Lebanese business development manager Philippe Jamhuri. "For me, it's effective as a language of confrontation, since I associate it with wars and other problems in the region." Otherwise, Jamhuri finds himself thinking in English, particularly when he is in what he calls "global, business contexts." "I don't think in French at all," he says, although it was his first language and is still the language he speaks most fluently.

Jamhuri spoke French at home, followed by English at school and university, graduating from AUB in 2009 before moving for several years to Brazil, where he added Portuguese to his linguistic arsenal. It was only in Brazil, however, that he felt the importance of reconnecting with what he calls his "core culture," enrolling in a Modern Standard Arabic course in Beirut upon his return to Lebanon in the spring of 2015.

Jamhuri's story, which is rather typical for Lebanon, defies neat outside stereotypes of the country as a fluidly bilingual society in which French and Arabic coexist as they would in any other part of the world previously dominated by France. It turns out that the linguistic situation here is much more complicated

than this image would suggest.

An exploration of language acquisition and usage in post-civil war Lebanon reveals surprising interconnections between language, religion and socioeconomic status. It also provides fodder for ongoing debates within the academic community on the relationship between language and personality and the desirability of switching between linguistic codes.

According to Nola Bacha, professor of applied linguistics and acting chair of LAU's departments of English and Humanities, under the French Mandate the "Christian population spoke French because they went to French schools, whereas the Muslims went to schools where English was the medium of instruction." However, the apparently clear-cut relationship between religion and language is in fact blurry, particularly as English brings its triumphal march across the planet to Lebanese territory. "We still have more French-language schools in Lebanon than English ones," says Bacha. "But the English medium schools are increasing quite a lot, because people want to emigrate to England, the States or Australia," all countries where speaking English is a must for successful integration.

As far as Arabic is concerned, Ayyash-Abdo suggests that its very structure directly affects the mentality of its speakers. In her view, as a language that allows pronouns to be dropped, Arabic fosters a collectivistic culture, as opposed to languages in which the use of pronouns is obligatory (such as English and French) which are associated with high levels of individualism. LAU Associate Professor of Education Mona Nabhani proposes a modified version of the same idea, where it is possible that the culture within which the language is spoken is “taught indirectly with the language, and this affects one’s thinking patterns and perhaps personality.”

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, however, has many opponents within the field of linguistics. They argue that the situation is in fact reversed, i.e., that it is culture that influences language and not the other way around. And this is not merely an academic debate: xenophobic politicians around the world have often used the claim that language creates separate mentalities to lobby for the superiority of their own group over others and to harden borders between communities. The relationship between language and mentality then becomes a highly volatile political issue.

For example, if Ayyush-Abdo is correct and Arabic speakers tend to have a more collectivist mentality than speakers of English and French, then the Lebanese linguistic situation is highly combustible: If a certain percentage of the population is primarily Arabic speaking while significant proportions of society prefer English and/or French, then one might expect Lebanon’s already deep divisions to be exacerbated even further, as differences in language intersect with already existing socioeconomic and religious divides.

But here again, as in so many other ways, the Lebanese situation does not fall into easy stereotypes. Two factors appear to be preventing language from becoming a contentious issue in the country. The first is the fact that, according to Bacha, “the one language that does bring the Lebanese together is Arabic, no matter what dialect it is.” Even if, like Jamhour, a significant portion of the population is not fluent in Modern Standard Arabic (otherwise known as *fusha*), the Lebanese all do generally speak colloquial Arabic, though to varying degrees of fluency.

The result seems to be that, “even if

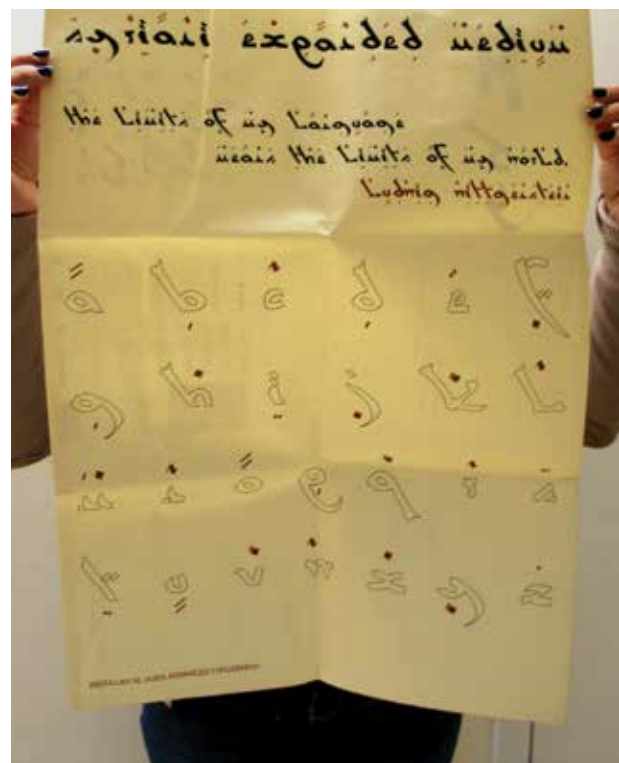
a Muslim meets a Christian or Druze, or whatever, if they know Arabic, they quickly come together,” says Bacha. “All their differences go away because of the language.” Oddly, it’s the language most strongly spoken by the lower socioeconomic classes that bridges the social divide and gives the Lebanese a sense of national unity.

The second factor at play is that to some degree most Lebanese are bilingual or, somewhat less frequently, trilingual, a fact that spills over into a phenomenon known as “code switching,” where speakers intersperse English or French — or both — with Arabic during the same conversation or vice versa. This functions even on the level of the individual sentence, meaning that is quite common to hear phone conversations along the following lines: “Bonjour, keefeek, what time are we meeting, yallah ‘bye.”

In this way, while Arabic serves as the language cementing the national community together, the ease with which most Lebanese code switch between it and at least one of the other two dominant languages suggests that the population has internalized multilingualism as a positive — and, paradoxically, unifying — national characteristic. This does not make code switching a universally valued characteristic, however, since academic debates continue about its positive or negative effect on language learning.

For example, Ayyash-Abdo and Bacha disagree on whether or not code switching helps young people acquire a second (or third) language or, on the contrary, inhibits learners from speaking either language well. Ayyash-Abdo comes down squarely on the side of immersion as the best method of language learning, which would mean banning code switching from the classroom. Bacha begs to differ, pointing to research that suggests that, in fact, code switching between languages may actually help with language acquisition, since teachers of a foreign language can use certain words in their mother tongue to explain the meaning of new vocabulary.

At the end of the day in Lebanon, it is parents who may have the greatest determining role in the way their children learn language skills. LAU Marketing and Communications Department’s Senior Writer Reem Maghribi consciously refuses to code switch with her 11 year old daughter Maya, instead preferring to “speak with her in either English or Arabic



By Abdullah Al Jajeh (B.S., '15)

“Culture is taught indirectly with the language.”

—Mona Nabhani, LAU associate professor of Education

— sticking to one language throughout each conversation.”

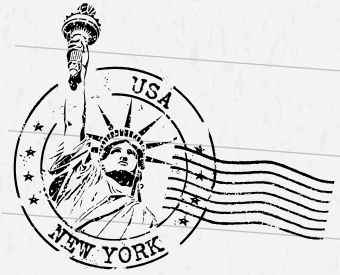
But refusing to code switch does not mean rejecting multilingualism — far from it. Maghribi firmly believes that speaking several languages fluently will bring her daughter “the ability to integrate, live, study, work comfortably and effectively in different countries and regions,” as well as “the ability to make friends more easily” wherever she goes.

The benefits don’t end there. According to an April 30, 2015 headline from *EliteDaily*, multilingualism is also “associated with higher intelligence and better sex.” If that is the case, then Lebanese citizens are better equipped than most people for a bright and sexy future. ■

Postcard from New York

By Paige Kollock

While our bodies froze with record low temperatures brought on by the coldest February in 80 years, our minds warmed up this winter with thought-provoking lectures, courses and events. Here's a glimpse of what happened at LAU NY.



Rethinking Remittances

A panel of nine experts from various fields gathered for a workshop titled “The Lebanese Diaspora, Remittances and Economic Development: Engagement and Policy Reform.” Co-sponsored by the Consulate General of Lebanon in New York and held in collaboration with the World Bank in March, the event’s goal was to think about how the Lebanese diaspora, estimated at upwards of 15 million, could contribute more effectively to Lebanon’s economic development.

The panel’s recommendations focused on further investments in the fields of business, banking, industry, real estate, women and youth initiatives, education, and scientific and technological development. There was much discussion about preserving the country’s talent in the face of a significant and ongoing brain drain.

“Diaspora has its positive effects,” said Consul General Majdi Ramadan, “but too much emigration comes at a cost. Some 80 percent of Lebanese graduates apply for visas to work abroad.”

Circular 333, a Central Bank initiative that gives Lebanese startups an economic boost, was touted by several of the panelists, while expatriates’ right to vote sparked lively debate.

Anthony Guerbidjian, currently pursuing a master’s degree at Columbia University, suggested that municipalities could be empowered to play a more direct role in development.



Developing Global Reach

In March, a group of LAU M.B.A. and E.M.B.A. students crossed the Atlantic for a 10-day trip to New York to attend the first-ever Global Marketing and Finance course at LAU NY. The course covered the dynamics of the city’s economic system, and included lessons on American leadership style, the role of New York’s history and culture in business, and the uniqueness of its entrepreneurship. Braving the bitter cold, the students enjoyed site visits, including a private two-hour tour of Wall Street.

“In Lebanon, our financial markets are not developed,” said Elias Raad, associate professor of finance at LAU. “Here, they were exposed to one of the most efficient financial markets in the world and saw how those markets contribute to economic productivity.”

Students had the chance to network with New York-based alumni and visiting lecturers — such as Mohamad Yatim, vice president at Wafra Investment Group in New York — who spoke about stock market investment strategies, the volatility of financial markets and the need for caution amidst unstable economic environments.

Marketing Professor Nadia Shuayto, who teaches both in the U.S. and in Lebanon, packed in two days of global marketing lessons for the group. “The world is one market now,” she said, “so what we need to develop in these students is the cultural awareness to be able to develop products and services with a global reach and to tap into markets outside of Lebanon.”



Exploring Urban Spaces

A March workshop titled “Crowddesigning: Exploring Urban Spaces for Collective Action” investigated ways in which architecture can give back to the city — New York City in this case. Led by Spanish architect, designer and independent researcher Lys Villalba, it included lectures, presentations and field trips around the city, all in an effort to get students to think about future cities and how ever-growing populations will be integrated into them. “We’re supposed to solve problems, not create them,” said Soumaya Salloum, one of 16 students from LAU’s School of Architecture and Design (SArD), who took part in the workshop.

Hours of classroom conceptualization were accompanied by visits to some of NYC’s key attractions, including the Guggenheim Museum, Central Park and MoMA. But it was the famous 1.6 km High Line — an elevated freight rail line pitched above Manhattan’s trendy Meatpacking district and transformed into a free public park — that captured the hearts of most students.

Using a famous stretch of Broadway as a canvas for experimentation, the group brainstormed ideas over the course of three of the five-day trip and ultimately presented their models to a jury that included SArD Dean Elie Haddad, architects Paul Lewis and Ana Peñalba, and Professor Villalba. In previous years, SArD students had attended short courses in Europe, Tokyo and New York.

Arab stereotypes dispelled

LAU NY hosts Arab-American Experience exhibition and lecture series

"The subject of stereotypes is timely and relevant."

—Lina Beydoun, academic executive director of LAU NY's academic center

On April 8, following a screening of his 2006 documentary *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, professor and media critic Jack Shaheen kicked off a month-long series of events titled *The Arab-American Experience* at LAU NY. The goal of the program, which was co-sponsored by the American University of Beirut (AUB), was to dispel stereotypes and promote cross-cultural understanding. To that end, the program included lectures and film screenings, as well as a traveling exhibit based on Shaheen's latest book, *A is for Arab: Archiving Stereotypes in U.S. Popular Culture*.

"The subject of stereotypes is timely and relevant," said Lina Beydoun, academic executive director of LAU NY's academic center and one of the chief organizers of the event. "The present crisis in the Middle East and the rise of ISIS and other radical ideologies reinforce harmful stereotypes in the American media."

In his film, Shaheen cited 300 examples from Hollywood films in which Arabs are portrayed as buffoons, extremists, belly-dancers or are hyper sexualized. He theorized that three critical events have helped shape the West's perception of Arabs: the Arab-Israeli conflict, the 1973 Arab Oil Embargo and the Iranian Hostage Crisis of 1979.

"The characters have lacked humanity," he concluded, stressing that Washington, D.C. and Hollywood share the same agenda and warning against today's rampant Islamophobia while calling for some form of media control of the images coming out of the Middle East, such as those propagated by ISIS.

In the second lecture of the series, titled "Daring to Differ," political analyst and *Al-Hayat* senior diplomatic correspondent Raghida Dergham spoke about her personal journey as a female Arab-American journalist, before giving a brief overview of the situation in the Middle East.

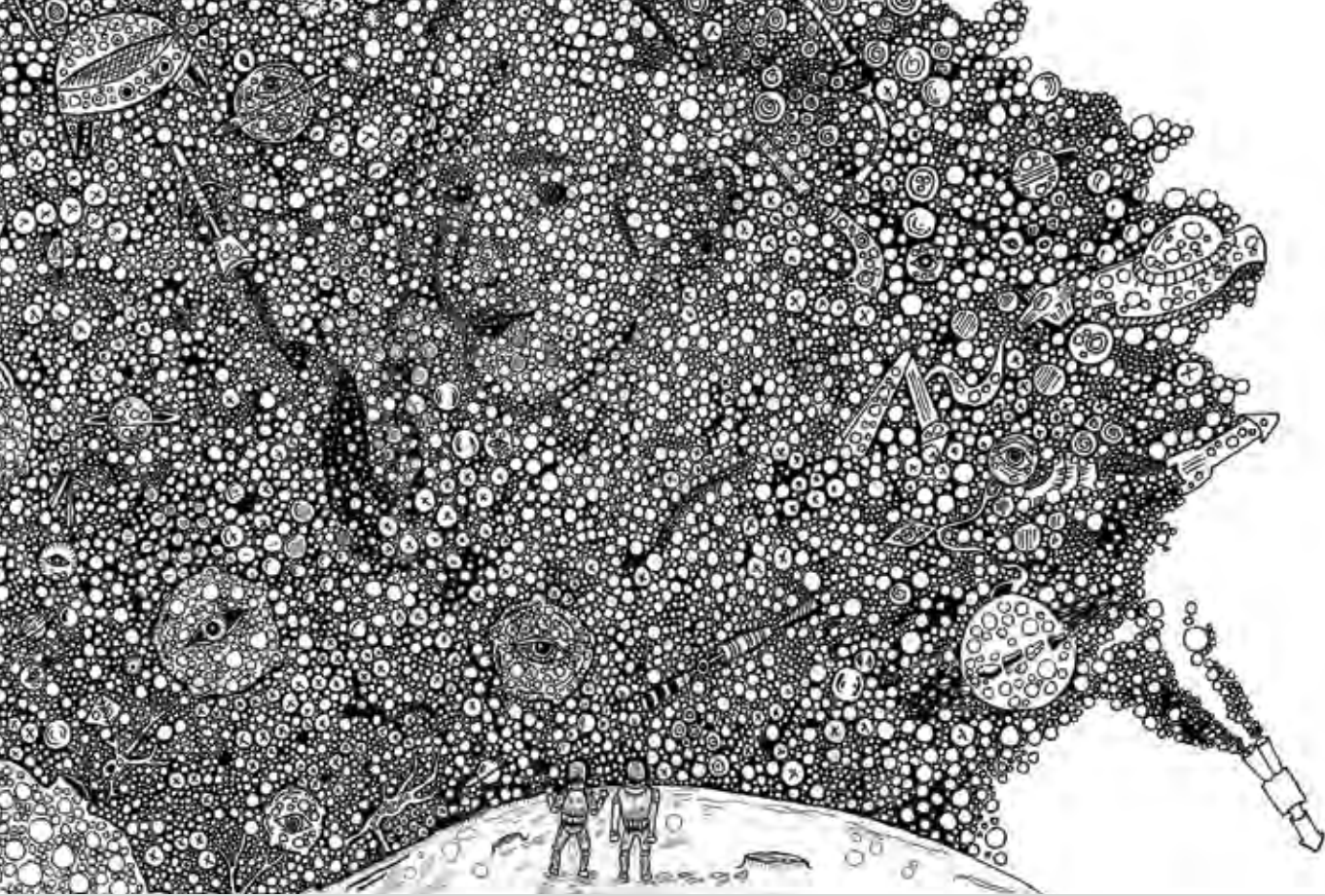
Dergham addressed both the challenges of growing up Lebanese in the U.S. and of being a woman, stressing that it was through perseverance and "daring" that she has evolved into the person she is today. "You don't see many female political analysts ... I am one of the few respected ones," she said.

Responding to a question from a young student about the advice she would give to young women today, Dergham recalled an interview with a foreign minister in which she had to ask her respondent the same question 11 times to get him to reply. "I would not take no for an answer," she explained, urging other young women to follow her example.

The exhibition and lecture series concluded with a night of music and poetry. Nathalie Handal, a French-American poet and playwright of Palestinian origin, read from her body of works exploring themes related to identity, tolerance, co-existence, as well as Arab influences on Iberian culture. Violinist Hanna Khoury and percussionist Hafez Kotain accompanied her.

"The idea of ending on a high note with poetry accompanied by a violinist and a *tabla* player was aimed at transcending boundaries and celebrating Arab culture and heritage," said Beydoun.





1

The art of the story

LAU to offer an evolutionary approach to storytelling on a graduate level

By Leena Saidi

With its new proposed M.A. in Visual Narrative, the School of Architecture and Design (SArD) continues to establish itself as a first-rate institution for education in the arts, design and architecture. The new program is the culminating step of a long process that aims to encourage a creative, open and proactive design culture.

"The proposed M.A. in Visual Narrative will expand the options of students who wish to develop their competence in a field that combines graphic and narrative skills," says Elie G. Haddad, professor in Architecture and dean of the School of Architecture and Design, describing the specialty as "a field in expansion."

"During the Arab Comics Symposium —organized by LAU's Department of Design — a huge number potential of students showed interested in joining a program that deals with comics," says Yasmine Taan, associate professor and chair of the Design Department, adding, "But we didn't want to restrict the M.A. to sequential art, as comics illustration is known. We wanted it to be broader, to encompass today's trend toward visual storytelling and communication."

The symposium addressed the need to

institutionalize the comics art profession by discussing education and training in illustration and graphic storytelling in the region. Taan took advantage of the 200-strong audience present to circulate a survey testing the interest of the students in joining an M.A. in Visual Narrative. She found the result to be extremely positive and encouraging.

The new master's degree will cover comic book production, visual narration, visual storytelling through advertisement and visual communication. "Students will have the opportunity to delve into the history of visual storytelling, learn about storyboarding and how to develop their characters, enhance their narrative and script writing, and, of course, expand their drawing skills," Taan explains.

Visual storytelling is a key component for a visual communicator. Today, in any visual promotion — such as advertising — designers are utilizing visual storytelling. And with many graphic designer students being interested in developing their skills as visual communicators in illustration, the new graduate program is more than timely. It will be open to graduates with a B.A.

or B.S. in disciplines related to graphic design, fine arts and illustration.

"Now that I'm working in the field, I realize the value of visual storytelling as the core element in every brand and brand strategy, as well as it being an essential component to build experience and capture the mind of consumers" says Jad Abou Zeki, who graduated this year with a B.S. in Graphic Design. "This is why such a master's in Lebanon is very important."

At the moment, graphic novels are



3

gaining in popularity. The Arab Spring and the changes happening in the region have provided much material for visual narrators to explore. "These graphic novels and comics allow artists and social activists to voice their opinions at a grassroots level," explains Taan.

Comics art has been used as a medium not only to record history but also to capture personal memory. It is a fertile ground yet to be fully explored and opens up the opportunity for a literary visualization of the lived realities of people in general and of marginalized communities in particular. It allows for the highlighting of political and social issues in a lighthearted and free-spirited manner. At the same time, it can be a deeply personal endeavor, according to Georges Khoury, founder of the Beirut-based Jad Creative Workshop and graphic design instructor at the LAU.

"Visual, skillful interpretation is of primary concern," Khoury says. He founded his workshop in the late 1980s, when the timing for apolitical and non-commercial artistic output seemed most propitious. What followed was the successful attempt to establish a truly local comic culture, whose exhortations against violence would be heard in neighboring countries rife with conflict.

In setting up the M.A., Taan and her team researched several existing programs in the States as well as one program offered by a leading institution in France. How will the LAU degree differ from its predecessors? While other institutions offer a master's in comics production, LAU's degree is broader. According to Taan, "We want students to be able to use visual storytelling in their chosen professions, whether as graphic designers, visual communicators, art directors or simply comic illustrators."

"Along with this M.A. we are working on

a minor in animation that will hopefully be implemented by next year," she says. "We know many students are interested in taking more technical courses that will support their skills in animation and in animation production."

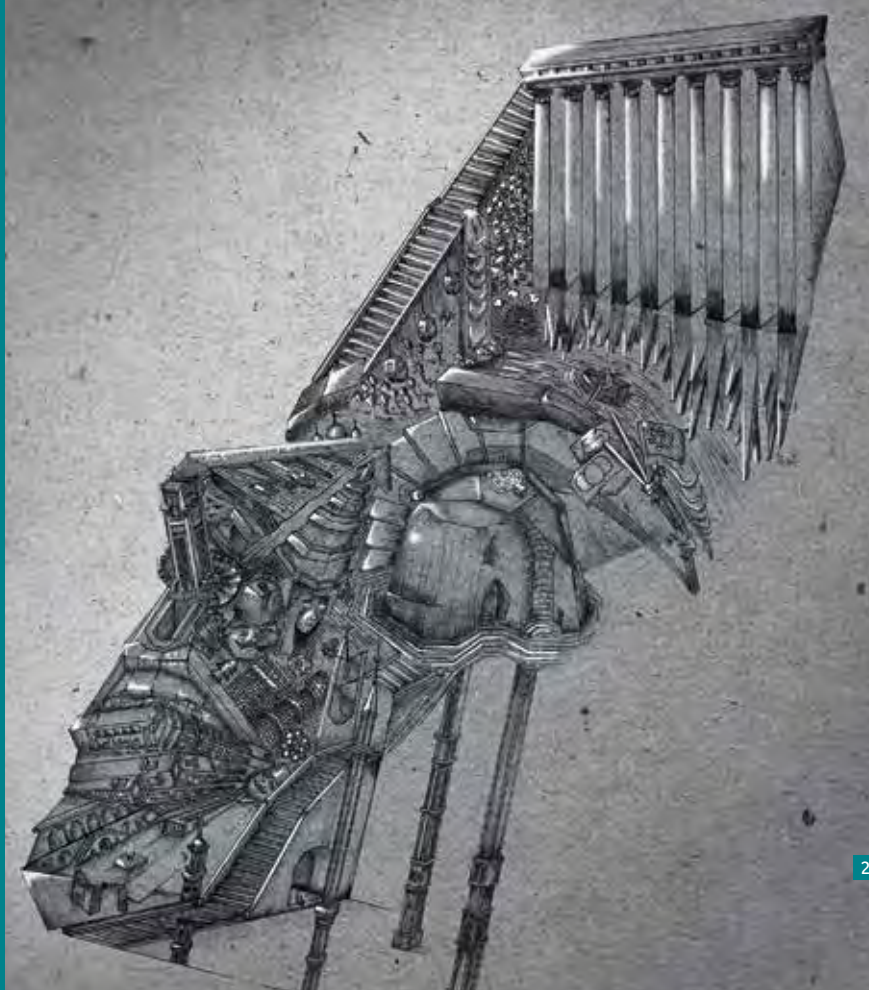
"Many students are good illustrators but don't have writing skills and don't realize how difficult it is to write a story," points out Tiffany Moujaes, third year Graphic Design student.

"This degree will present an ideal occasion for them to round up their skills and have more job opportunities."

The program's curriculum incorporates a semester abroad. Students will have the chance to travel to New York City, where they will spend a semester learning from experts in the field.

"The new master's program will provide an in-depth education and add to the growing number of graduate programs offered by the school, which will eventually help to position LAU as a leader in graduate education in Lebanon and the region," points out Haddad.

The M.A. in Visual Narrative has been successfully processed within university channels all the way to approval by the Council of Deans. It will be launched following the Board of Trustees' approval and registration with the N.Y. Department of Education.



2

1 Introspection

"The illustration is based on the theory 'The universe is made up of fractals.' I used circles to represent the fractals; using fluid and rounded shapes is usually very evident in my drawings. If you look close enough you would find many elements hidden in the illustration itself, such as my face, planets..."

— Tiffany Moujaes,
3rd year Graphic Design student

2 Vestiges

"Created during a workshop with the Hungarian artist Istvan Orosz, this illustration is a self-portrait formed by several Lebanese cultural elements that additionally form the map of Lebanon. Several illusions and paradoxes exist throughout the illustration, most of which were inspired by Istvan's work. It was quite puzzling to bring all these elements together, but in the end I felt like everything settled pleasantly."

— Mohammed Houhou,
3rd year, Graphic Design student

3 Abtal El Share3

"A story stemming from the scarcity of Lebanese role models, Abtal El Share3 is an interactive digital comic through which these Lebanese super heroes become role models for Lebanese adolescents, urging the youth to become socially active and engaged in civic duties. Abtal El Share3 are individuals not chosen for their status or affiliations, they reversed their reality and chose to actively seek solutions to the many problems they face living in Lebanon."

— Jad Abou Zeki (B.S., '15),

aspiring concept artist or character designer, who hopes to open his own design studio in Lebanon that will focus on illustration and animation.



Phoenicians inspire new LAU Byblos library

By Georges Hamouche, LAU AVP, Facilities Management & Anna Torriani, A*PT Architecture (Atelier Pagnamenta Torriani)

The design of university libraries is evolving and LAU's new library on its Byblos campus is no exception to this phenomenon.

Whereas in the past collections formed the nucleus of a library, today it is people who are at its heart. This plays into the seismic change in the way students, researchers and academics are accessing and studying information. Communal spaces for social and group learning are now essential and the transformation in library building design reflects this new reality.

In conceiving the new Byblos library, design concept architects Anna Torriani and Lorenzo Pagnamenta of the New York-based A*PT Architecture started by researching the history and culture of the area. The Phoenicians were never far from their thoughts. As the greatest ancient world seafarers and traders, they understood the importance of an efficient and global communications system. In place of a complex cuneiform system relying on hundreds of signs, the Phoenicians devised an alphabet of 22 letters: one sign for each sound.

The creation and transmission of the Phoenician alphabet happened 3,000

years ago, but it is just as relevant today. In our world, technology constantly enhances and shapes the way we communicate with each other. Inspired by the Phoenicians' dynamic spirit and today's technology, the designers expressed the concepts of movement, communication and language in the buildings' volumes and open spaces, as they conceptualized the new 9,000 m² Byblos Library and Central Administration complex.

The buildings are conceived as dynamic forms and shapes; their exterior skin is progressively layered, providing a shading system according to the orientation. The concept of movement reverberates in the rhythm of the curtain wall and the second skin. The Phoenician character decorative pattern of the second skin is a reminder of the central role of Byblos's maritime trade and local culture in the spread of written language across global civilization. The carved letters along the concrete wall overlooking the amphitheater represent four alphabets used historically through the region: Phoenician, Greek, Latin and Arabic.

While it's important for libraries to stay ahead and provide users with access to the latest online resources and technologies,

research shows it's also about being able to provide a delicate balance of "blended learning" — study that takes place in both the digital and physical space. The interior spaces of the new library are designed to reinforce users' fluidity and communication, through the transparency and openness of the study areas, the many possibilities of chance encounters and exchanges along the open staircase, the lounge corners and the café, as well as the visual connection to the surrounding landscape.

In line with LAU's goal to foster "sustainable and green" initiatives in its campuses, local consultant Rafik El Khoury & Partners engineered the project's design in accordance with the LEED-Gold pioneering standards set by the US Green Building Council. The project is currently in its tender phase and is planned for completion in two stages: the Library building in Spring 2017 and the Central Administration building in Summer 2017.

While libraries used to be known as places of silence with pockets of group work and activity, in the 21st century university they are becoming places of learning activity with pockets of silence.



Building a culture of organ donation

By Irina Papkova

LAU hosts a first-of-its-kind workshop work to tackle Lebanon's low donor culture

"To protect the integrity of the organs, doctors treat the body with respect and care."

—Dr. Wissam Faour, LAU assistant professor of Pharmacology

"There is a universal shortage of donors," says Dr. Antoine Stephan, vice president of Lebanon's National Organization for Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation and nephrologist at LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital. According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, every day sees an average of 21 patients in the U.S. in need of transplants dying because of the scarcity of donated organs. In Lebanon, the problem is further aggravated by locally specific factors.

While in principle it is possible to harvest organs from both patients who are brain-dead and those who have suffered cardiac death, current levels of medical technology in Lebanon allow only the first kind of procedure. "Transplants from patients whose heart has stopped beating requires equipment that we don't yet have in this country," explains Stephan. But this is not the only challenge to ensuring that Lebanese patients with failing organs receive life-saving transplants.

Dr. Wissam Faour, assistant professor of pharmacology at the LAU Gilbert and Rose Marie Chagoury School of Medicine and the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing, cites a number of cultural and emotional factors contributing to the country's low culture of organ donation. "There are mistaken beliefs about religious restrictions," he explains. "And families are afraid that their loved one's body will be mutilated, not understanding that in order to protect the integrity of the organs the doctors will treat it with respect and care ... there is also the emotional relationship with the body, where it's difficult to agree to the removal of a part of the beloved person after they die."

However, Faour — who is the Lebanese coordinator for the European-Mediterranean Postgraduate Program in Organ Donation and Transplantation — sees a hopeful future, in which LAU's



School of Medicine (SOM) plays an important role. This past January, Faour helped organize a first-of-its-kind workshop at SOM's Clinical Simulation Center on the Byblos campus, during which 30 doctors and nurses from all over Lebanon rotated around three stations reproducing the stages involved in the evolution of a critical care patient into an organ donor.

After the rotations, in which the hypothetical patient was represented by life-like mannequins hooked up to state-of-the-art medical equipment, the workshop attendees took part in an exercise meant to explicitly confront the country's low donor culture. Participants worked with what are known as "standardized patients," actors playing the family members of a brain-dead patient, who had to be convinced to sign off on their loved one becoming an organ donor.

In the exercise, the doctors had to bring bad news to the patient's family and ask them if they would accept to donate organs. According to Dr. Nadia El Asmar, director of SOM's Clinical skills and OSCE program, "This was followed by the most important part, the debriefing," during which workshop participants discussed what they had learned about the best techniques for convincing grieving families to take the step of going beyond their own tragedy to donate their loved one's organs to save other lives.

"LAU's is the only School of Medicine that has such an elaborated standardized patient program," emphasizes Dr. Vanda Abi Raad, associate professor of anesthesiology and director of the simulation center. As such, the Byblos facilities are key to LAU "becoming a regional center for this kind of workshop" and for improving the culture around organ donation in Lebanon, hopefully leading to an increase in donations and saved lives.



Language in the Digital Age

Is today's casual adaptation a corruption or an improvement?

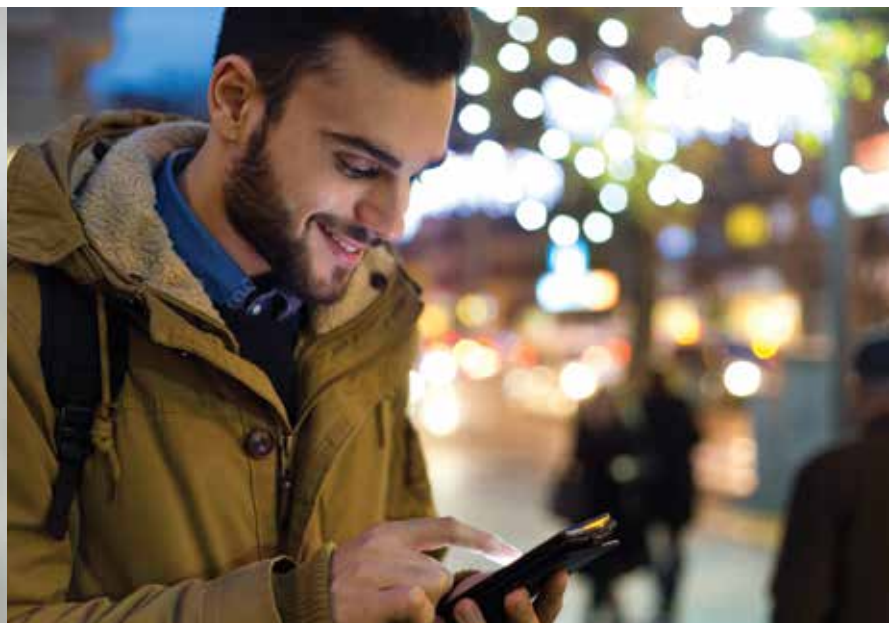
By Brooke Anderson

FEATURE

The classic word game Scrabble added this past spring 6,500 new entries to its dictionary, including a long list of digital media favorites like lolz, ridic and lotsa, irking possibly just as many players and also raising the question: Is this the direction in which language is heading?

“The more languages and language varieties we are familiar with the richer our linguistic knowledge is.”

—Rula Diab, LAU associate professor of English and Applied Linguistics.



With our ever-increasing fast pace of life, we have come up with ways to express ourselves using a variety of shorthand forms — including, in some cases intentionally incorrect spelling — for the sake of catchy advertising or personal language between friends.

Is this an inevitable evolution of language in the digital age? Or is there a danger of losing that richness and complexity of our languages that allows for subtle nuances that can be so important in conveying sensitive information?

Most linguists — at least those interviewed for this story — seem confident that the casual ways of expressing one’s self in a digital medium will not affect our more complex formal languages. Still, they see the fast evolution of informal language as an important phenomenon in itself.

“Even though some scholars argue that using *Arabizi* may negatively influence proficiency in Arabic or may even ‘destroy’ Arabic, not much research has explored this issue and the little that has been conducted hasn’t produced any conclusive findings,” says Rula Diab, LAU associate professor of English and Applied Linguistics.

“I personally don’t mind that students use *Arabizi* on social media and in texting, as long as they are fully aware that it is a variation, which is different from both Arabic and English, and has its own social

uses and purposes,” she says.

Yasmine Dabbous, LAU assistant professor of Journalism and Media Studies, decided to conduct a study on *Arabizi* after seeing one of her students taking notes in the “language.” Though the habit once concerned her, she now considers it interesting and harmless, and not a threat to formal language.

But a growing pool of studies on social media habits point to a loss of attention span associated with prolonged use of these tools, and, as a result, less of a willingness or ability to express one’s self and read in long form, says psychologist Daniel Goldman in his 2013 book *Focus: The Hidden Driver of Excellence*. Goldman, known for his bestseller *Emotional Intelligence*, argues persuasively that now more than ever we must learn to sharpen focus if we are to survive in a complex world.

For some people, the conciseness that comes with the digital age is a welcome change from the previously more common banter in days past.

“It’s about how we use it,” says Ayman Itani, digital and social media strategist for Think Media Labs (TML) and former media professor at LAU. “Someone recently told me they were very happy with WhatsApp because previously people would waste time with small talk, whereas now they get straight to the point. It’s a good way to stay in touch with people who are relatively busy.”

Worldwide, language has gone through a simplification towards the casual mode of expression. Although more pronounced in the digital age, this phenomenon had been going on to a lesser degree long before computers existed. Sometimes the format involved using numbers; sometimes it meant relying on abbreviations – for example ur gr8 (you're great in English), K7 (cassette in French) and i7keeli (tell me in Arabic).

Some Arabic language programs for foreigners have in recent years been teaching *Arabizi*, the practice of writing Arabic with Latin characters mixed with numbers to represent Arabic. While some purists argue against teaching a non-academic style of language, there is clearly a demand from students who want to learn the way many young Arabs communicate among themselves.

The Saifi Institute for Arabic Language in Beirut teaches beginner-level students *Arabizi* — or “chat Arabic,” as they call

it — while the students are learning the Arabic alphabet. The institute's pedagogues believe this is an effective way to become familiar with the language.

Rana Dirani McClenahan, director of the Saifi Institute, says that her institution does not plan on offering more advanced classes in “chat Arabic,” because over the past few years she has noticed a decline in *Arabizi* with the increase in the use of the Arabic alphabet online.

“Over the last 15 years I have observed the diminishing of words and expressions that I had expected would not be used in the future. The same thing with ‘chat Arabic.’ It has over the last several years evolved to its peak and about three to four years ago it started to drop,” she says, adding, “I see more people writing in Arabic on Facebook and instead of chatting, they are using WhatsApp's voice recording, so people can just speak without having to write.”

Some might say certain forms of digital text could be considered languages unto themselves with specific abbreviations, spellings and emoticons having meaning to only certain circles, particularly tech-savvy youths.

“When I was a teenager, I got to learn what was at the time the new Internet language with short abbreviations and statuses, like BRB (be right back) and AFK (away from keyboard). It was a pretty exciting secret language,” recalls Beirut-based social media consultant Darine Sabbagh. “The Arabic abbreviations like 7bb for *habibi* were a bit hard to decipher and understand. To be honest, people have different versions of adapting *Arabizi* to typing.”

These days, she finds herself coming across a growing number of examples of people using digital language in their everyday lives, for example using “Facebooked” and “WhatsApped” as verbs, or using emojis instead of words. More recently, she has noticed people using hashtags in everyday conversation.

“I would notice for example my sister saying out loud something like: ‘I am going to wear these pants with this for my #OOTD (outfit of the day) that would be #cool.’” Sabbagh sees the growing use of emojis as one way to connect people who don't speak the same language, especially now that the hashtag for descriptive images is being used on Instagram.

“Emojis are one way to connect people who don't speak the same language.”

—Darine Sabbagh Beirut-based social media consultant



By Reine Alameh (B.S., '14)

But despite all this fast change and advancement, Sabbagh reflects ironically, “Maybe we are evolving back to hieroglyphics.”

Aside from the younger generations, nowhere has this trend been more visible than in the advertising industry. Perhaps taking cues — or even learning — from their young customers' love of tech and their ever-decreasing attention spans, many companies have introduced the use of emojis.

Recently, the U.S. food giant Taco Bell campaigned to have its own official taco emoji, arguing that nearly all other foods had theirs. In Lebanon, a B.L.C. advertising campaign shows an emoji representing hands clapping to reach their audience.

“The advertising and marketing industry at large is driven by the target audience it is reaching out to,” says Beirut-based advertiser Omar Habib. “Sometimes we adapt the way we say things to fit these audiences, let it be by language, slang or even spelling.”

The changes in written expressions that came about with the digital age have developed organically as people invent common shortcuts to communicate quickly. This often includes leaving out vowels in European languages and using numbers within words when using the Latin alphabet in Arabic for letters that can't be transliterated.

It should be noted that the use of abbreviations and initials such as LOL, as well as *Arabizi* in Arabic, existed long

Lectures

Lifting the lid off NSA

Whether your calls, email and web browsing are being routed through microwave transmissions, satellite signals or undersea cables, the National Security Agency (NSA) has a way to intercept, store and analyze them. This was the message of journalist and NSA specialist James Bamford to dozens of LAU students at a special lecture in March. Having written three books on the NSA, Bamford is an expert on the subject, and was able to trace the institution's history for the students, from its beginnings as an instrument of the Cold War to its post-9/11 reinvention as an anti-terrorist squad with almost unlimited capacities to spy on people in and out of the U.S. Even with all the data collected in the name of security, he warns, NSA has been able to thwart very few attacks on its own territory.



Veteran CNN reporter shares skills with students

In March, LAU's Department of Communication Arts, in collaboration with the May Chidiac Foundation, hosted veteran broadcast journalist Jim Clancy to speak on the A-Zs of the profession. A former CNN reporter, Clancy has four decades of experience as a broadcast reporter and has covered many conflicts worldwide, including many in the Arab region. When asked about the influence of lobby groups in reporting, he admitted to pressure but reiterated that a journalist's job is to present a story from multiple viewpoints and that those groups "do not dictate the story." Clancy addressed concerns about impartiality and accountability in media, criticizing the link between political parties and media outlets.

Regional minorities and their many challenges

In early April, the Department of Humanities' History program hosted a panel discussion on the challenges faced by native Middle Eastern minority communities. Professor of History Selim Deringil presented an overview of the treatment and political disparity Armenians and Greeks faced in his native Turkey over the past century, which led to a drastic reduction in the Christian population. Professor of Political Science Sami Baroudi focused on the unique position of Christians in Lebanon as well as the factors that have led to a loss of their influence since 1943. Associate Professor of History and Cultural Studies Habib Malik raised a point of contention in his talk on the historical experiences of Christians under Islamic rule, by arguing for federalism in the region and claiming it was not incompatible with unification but rather "incompatible only with a unitary state of enforced heterogeneity."

Theater

LAU hosts internationally acclaimed performance

LAU Professor of Theater Lina Abyad's latest production, *Where Can I Find Someone Like You, Ali?*, was written and performed by Raeda Taha, the eldest daughter of Ali Taha who was killed by Israeli agents during a plane hijacking in 1972. After a sold-out run of performances at Beirut's Babel Theater and impressive media acclaim, the one-woman performance was staged at LAU's Gulbenkian Theater in March. Throughout the play, Taha spoke directly to the audience as if in conversation, telling stories about the women of the Taha family and through them about the struggle of Palestinian women in general. The strength of the writing and Taha's performance were matched by the quality of the direction and production undertaken by a team of LAU graduates under the direction of Abyad.



Wannous' "The Rape" opened at LAU

In December 1987, tens of thousands of Palestinians were detained, tortured and murdered by Israelis for protesting against the occupation of their homeland. Set against this landscape, Syrian playwright Sa'adallah Wannous' *The Rape* is as relevant today as it was 28 years ago. In a collaborative effort between AUB and LAU, the play was performed at LAU Beirut in March. The text was co-translated by Robert Myers, professor of English and Creative Writing at AUB and Nada Saab, assistant professor of Arabic Studies at LAU. With performances by LAU alumni, the play was a spectacular success, something director Sahar Assaf attributes to the enduring validity of the humanitarian message, as well as the complex portrayal of both Arab and Israeli characters.

Improving Skills



Marianne Hraibi returns to LAU

"At the turn of the new century, countries were asked to name five geniuses. Martha Graham was the only woman among them," Marianne Hraibi told LAU students gathered for her "Movement for Actors and Dancers" workshop. Organized by the Communication Arts department, the workshop took place in the Gulbenkian Theater last April. Having learned the Graham Technique with Graham herself in New York, Hraibi subsequently came to Beirut in the 1970s, where she taught composition and dancing technique at LAU when it was still known as the Beirut University College (BUC). She also choreographed several theater productions for the university. As part of the workshop that marked Hraibi's return to her old LAU stomping grounds, students were given pieces of music and asked to perform their own improvisations in front of the group using the tools they had learned from her.

LAU a platform for peace building and dialogue

Forty years after the beginning of the Civil War, LAU Byblos hosted a one-of-a-kind debate under the title "Remembering to Move Forward." Sitting shoulder to shoulder were Ziad Saab, former commander of the Lebanese Communist Party, Assad Chaftari, who served as a senior intelligence official in the Lebanese Forces, and Wadad Halawani, president of the Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared. A group of selected students was given the opportunity to interrogate the panelists on the bloodstained period. According to student Ali Taha, at the end of the debate students showed regret, and expressed their determination to work within Lebanese society in order to prevent similar civil conflicts in the future.



Student Achievements



Senior graphic design students showcase their talent

This year marked the launch of Discover, a first-of-its-kind Graphic Design senior student exhibition that showcased the work of the students since their first year. Chair of the department Yasmine Taan explained that "we want to celebrate the graduation of our students and to promote them and support them in seeking jobs," adding that potential employers were among the invitees to the launch of the exhibition at both campuses. Designed by artist and faculty member Niloufar Afnan, the exhibition space was created in such a way that each student had their own space on the walls, while an island in the central area presented senior year projects.

LAU Byblos continue their reign

LAU Byblos basketball team defeated the Université Saint Esprit de Kaslik to win the Lebanese University League Championship in a thrilling basketball title contest. The basketball team's victory, which came after an incredibly close 74-70 game at the American University of Beirut in April, brought LAU the championship title for the fifth time in a row, a historic achievement. According to Joe Moujaes, director of Athletics at the Byblos campus, the win is vivid proof of LAU's successful basketball program. According to team captain Johnny Nemr, "We always stand next to each other, no matter what! That's why we have an amazing team spirit. This team feels more like a family."





Students take first place at national competition

Mechanical engineering students Nicolas Zaatar and Charlie al-Khoury took first place in the national Microsoft Imagine Cup in April with their Quadrofighter, a flying robot firefighter. The device flies autonomously along preprogrammed routes and is capable of detecting fires from a cruising altitude of 100 meters. It then relays the fire's exact coordinates to the appropriate authorities before landing. The project was initially developed during the students' Capstone Design Project and later entered into the Microsoft Imagine Cup, which is regarded as the world's most prestigious student technology competition. The students are now preparing to represent Lebanon at the regional Imagine Cup in Bahrain.

Community Engagement

Joining hands to eradicate discriminatory laws

LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) and the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) joined hands to organize a national campaign titled "Look Where We Are, Still." Launched on International Women's Day, the aim was to eradicate discriminatory laws against women in the economic and social domains in Lebanon. Director of the NCLW Fady Karam began by giving an overview of the legal status of women in the country before concluding on a positive note, saying that seven discriminatory laws have been amended, with ten to go. Samira Aghacy, interim dean of IWSAW, urged collaboration between all parties in order to make further changes because "on our own, I don't think we will succeed."



The wives of the missing suffering in silence

"When you think of these women, you see them holding photos of their loved ones at a sit-in, but you don't think of their lives and their struggles," said Christella Yakinthou, co-author of a collaborative report by LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) and the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). The product of two years of work, the report — titled *Living with the Shadows of the Past* — describes the impact of disappearances on the wives of the missing in Lebanon. The April launch showcased a six-person panel that presented data, research and personal testimonies about the families of the over 17,000 people who went missing during Lebanon's civil war. An unfortunate conclusion reached by the experts was that women who demand that the history books be opened often face a society that wants to forget the war for fear that opening old wounds may lead to a return to insecurity.



Strengthening tourism through knowledge sharing

This April, LAU's Urban Planning Institute (UPI), in conjunction with the Safadi Foundation and the Municipality of Byblos, hosted a diverse range of professionals connected with the Umayyad Route project. The four-year ENPI-funded initiative brings together partners from seven Mediterranean countries to implement an integrated strategy for the enhancement of cultural tourism between East and West. Presentations and workshops by over sixty professionals and academicians in the fields of tourism, hospitality, archeology and media were held at LAU's Solidere Executive Center in downtown Beirut. Project milestones include the implementation of the Umayyad Museum in Anjar, something UPI director Rachid Chamoun believes will "underpin and launch the cultural itinerary and the promotion of thematic tourism packages." Before leaving, the experts and partners who had flown in for the occasion were treated to a walk through part of the Umayyad Route in Lebanon, passing through towns and villages celebrated for their cultural and environmental wealth.

Road safety boosted

By Reem Maghribi

LAU assesses the options for improved traffic flow and safety in Beirut

When one thinks about transport and Lebanon, many things come to mind. Extreme traffic, poor road safety and the lack of an effective public transport system are but a few.

"You can't address one issue without addressing them all," says John Khoury, LAU assistant professor of Civil Engineering. "I would prioritize the establishment of a nationwide planning agency whose role it is to first and foremost gather data we are lacking in Lebanon. Once we have the necessary data, we can then set up planning processes, assign priorities and find solutions."

Among them was an infrastructure management project that entailed the production of a device that attaches to cars and enables the collection and delivery of data in real time. "Pot-holes and bumps are bad for cars and increase fuel consumption," he explains. "Having vehicles collect data that enables a central agency to collate the information and identify the location of problem points could improve road safety and lessen fuel consumption."

Along with Azzem Mourad and Ramzi Haraty, respectively LAU assistant and associate professors of Computer Science, Khoury is part of a team that recently received a grant to assess the options for traffic reduction in cities with limited resources. "We know the government doesn't have money for intelligent transport systems," says team leader Mourad, "so we're going to see what we can achieve without having to ask them for anything."

The transportation system, says Khoury, is about more than traffic and safety. It is a huge part of infrastructure. "It tells you how a country's economy will flourish, as it's responsible for the movement of everyone and everything." Because of this, cities cannot be considered in isolation.

"You can't decide to reopen the railway between the north and Beirut, for example, without assessing the impact that it may have on the number of visitors to the capital and hence additional transport needs," he says, adding that transport and urban planning need a coordinated approach.

"In the States, for example, before they do anything related to highway development, an extensive process of assessing the impact of the road on public users and the environment is followed," explains Khoury, who worked on the development of a highway connection in San Diego in the States after graduating from LAU. He added that such analyses often take up to five years and involve the development of cost-benefit analyses, simulations and consultations with city councils and the public.

"If there is a will to improve the transport sector in Lebanon, it wouldn't be difficult. We wouldn't be reinventing the wheel, we need only copy or adopt well-developed processes. We know that and we have some expertise," he says. "We just need decision makers to go with it."



"The road itself is not safe."

—John Khoury, LAU professor of Civil Engineering

What does the professor make of the new traffic law, introduced in April, that heavily penalizes drivers for various infractions? "The government is marketing the law under the umbrella of safety enhancement, but the road itself is not safe," he says, before listing a few examples: "Non-existent lighting at critical roadway junctions, improper horizontal curve designs, faulty drainage systems, a lack of crash cushions on bridges and highways, severe capacity limitations along most roadways causing chronic congestion and driver frustration ... the list is endless."

Khoury has taken part in a number of studies that aim to improve road safety.

John Khoury, LAU professor of Civil Engineering



Alumni update

December

Film Screening of Scheherazade's Diary

On December 9, LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) and the Alumni Relations Office hosted a public screening of Zeina Daccache's award-winning film *Scheherazade's Diary* on the Beirut campus, in collaboration with the BCW Alumni Chapter. Filmed throughout a ten-month drama therapy/theater project set up by Daccache in 2012 in Baabda prison, the gripping and tragicomic documentary features women inmates who challenge the society that oppresses women. Activists and NGO members, as well as LAU alumni, attended the event. A lively discussion followed the screening. Lama Daccache from the Lebanese Center for Drama Therapy, Catharsis, answered questions raised by the audience, along with an ex-inmate who took part in the film.



A New Committee

On Monday December 8, the Alumni Relations Office and the Jordan Alumni Chapter organized a gathering in Amman, which included the election of a new committee for the chapter. The event took place at La Clava Orthodox Club and was attended by a group of 40 alumni. Both the Director of Alumni Relations Abdallah Al Khal and the President of the Alumni Association Doha Halawi joined from Beirut.



Christmas Spirit

The Bahrain Alumni Chapter organized its Christmas Dinner on Friday December 12 at Señor Pacos Mexican Restaurant, Adliya. Ghada Majed from the Alumni Relations Office in Beirut flew in for the event, which was an opportunity for alumni and friends to get together and enjoy the spirit of the holidays.



Spot the Ball

The Montreal Alumni Chapter gathered for a fun game of indoor "Glow-in-the-Dark" mini-golf.



A Time to be Merry

The School of Engineering Alumni Chapter organized its Christmas dinner on December 20 at Garcia's, Hamra. More than 200 alumni and friends got together to celebrate the season of joy.

January

It's All About Language

Energetic and versatile life coach, trainer and consultant Johnny El Ghouel talked about how to avoid miscommunication as part of the Alumni Relations Office's *Keep Learning* alumni lecture series. The talk, the second for this academic year and titled "Exiting Babylon — Speak my Language" took place on January 30 at the Adnan Kassar School of Business, Beirut campus. This interactive and highly practical session helped the audience members understand the causes of miscommunication, discover their own behavioral style and that of others. It also provided them with a road map for how to deal with differences and foster and build harmonious relationships and resolve conflicts.



Director in the Big Apple

Phillippe Aractingi visited LAU NY before the film screening of *Heritages*.



Celebrating the Prophet

For the third year in a row the Beirut Alumni Chapter, in collaboration with Shifaa Junior Club, organized *Onshoudat Mahabba wa Salam* on the occasion of the Prophet's birthday, *Eid Mawlid Annabawi Asharif*. This theater and singing choral production for children took place at the Beirut campus' Irwin Hall Auditorium on January 24, 25 and 31 and February 1. All four performances were a great success.

February



Desert Odyssey

On February 1 everyone enjoyed a day full of fun events and activities for adults and kids during a desert camp outing organized by the Bahrain Alumni Chapter at the Al Wazeer camp.



Keeping Healthy

The Northern California Alumni Chapter hosted a lecture and book signing in San Francisco, together with the San Francisco Chapter of World Lebanese Cultural Union and the Lebanese American Association. Featured authors Rabih Ballout (*Homo Electus*) and Dr. Tali Bashour (*The Broken Heart: Protect Your Heart from Daily Stress and Emotional Upheavals*) led the discussion.

Staying in Touch

M.B.A. and E.M.B.A. students visited New York and connected with the New York/ New Jersey Alumni Chapter.



Watching the Match

The Seattle Alumni Chapter enjoyed brunch on Super Bowl Sunday.



March



Getting Together

Friends and members of the Toronto Alumni Chapter gathered for their annual dinner at the Mazza Garden restaurant in Ajax, Ontario.

Hospitality Lebanese Style

The Southern California Alumni Chapter enjoyed a potluck dinner at the home of Susan and Dr. Paul Qaundah. Leila Blackstone co-chaired the gathering and will host a similar get-together at her home in the fall.



Alumni update

Annual Open Day

More than 700 alumni accompanied by their families and friends enjoyed a fun day packed with activities for both adults and kids. The Kuwait Alumni Chapter organized the event on March 6. Lebanon's Ambassador to Kuwait Khodor Helwe attended the event, joined by a delegation from LAU that included President Joseph G. Jabbra, Assistant Vice President of Development Nassib Nasr, Legal Counsel Nour Hajjar, Director of Admissions Nada Hajj Hatoum and Associate Director of Alumni Relations Ghada Majed. Prior to the Open Day, Kuwait Chapter President Youmna Salame organized a dinner at her home during which Leila Saleeby Dagher, former president of the Alumni Association, was presented with a souvenir in her honor.



Rin Rin ya Jaras

Six celebrities collaborated with LAU alumna and children's book author Rania Zaghir on a new CD of her stories presented at the LAU library. Fifty percent of the proceeds from the CD — titled *Rin Rin Ya Jaras* — will go to the Brave Heart Fund, a charitable fundraising initiative that helps cover the medical and surgical expenses for underprivileged children suffering from congenital heart disease. Zaghir chose LAU's Riyadh Nassar Library as the venue for the launch because she wanted to highlight the treasure it holds in its collection of more than 30,000 children's books, with the oldest book dating from 1939.



A Night at the Movies

The Jordan Alumni Chapter organized a movie screening by Elian Badr about the life of the Palestinian poet Fadwa Toukan. The event took place on March 28 at La Clava Orthodox Club in Amman, with more than 100 alumni and friends attending.

Music to the Ears

On March 12, an audience was treated to an enthralling Chopin piano recital performed by one of its own alumna, Arminée Choukassizian. The concert was organized by the BCW Alumni Chapter and took place at the Alumni and Faculty Lounge on the Beirut campus.



Meet and Greet

More than 70 alumni and friends gathered for an evening of meeting new friends and reminiscing with old ones during a cheese and wine dinner organized by the Byblos Alumni Chapter on March 28 at Super Shtrumpf in Jounieh.



Star Attractions

To make this year's event special, the Oman Alumni Chapter's Annual Ball committee flew in entertainers from France and Canada. Over 300 alumni and friends attended the 7th Annual Ball 2015 on March 6 at the Grand Hyatt in Muscat. The dinner was held under the patronage of Lebanon's Ambassador to Oman Houssam Diab. Executive Director of Alumni Relations Abdallah Al Khal flew in from Beirut, together with the Alumni Association's President Doha Halawi, Executive Director of Public Relations and Media Christian Oussi and Executive Director of Student Recruitment Michel Najjar.



A New Alumni Chapter

To launch the new Alumni Paris Chapter, LAU's Alumni Relations Office — headed by the Executive Director Abdallah Al Khal — organized a gathering at the French capital's Bon restaurant on March 13. The reception was attended by over 40 alumni in the presence of LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra, Alumni Association President Doha Halawi, Assistant Vice President for Development Nassib Nasr and Executive Director of Public Relations and Media Christian Oussi.

April

Abu Dhabi Promotes the Health Sciences

To promote LAU's schools of Medicine, Pharmacy and Nursing, this year's Abu Dhabi Alumni Chapter chose the theme of Health Sciences for its Annual Ball. The star-studded event took place in the Al Thuraya ballroom of the Rotana Beach Hotel on April 16 and was held under the patronage and in the presence of the UAE Minister of Culture, Youth and Social Development Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan. Guest of honor Lebanese Minister of Health Wael Abou Faour flew in for the occasion and was joined by LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra. Jabbra headed a delegation representing the university's offices of Alumni, Development, Public Relations and Admissions. Lebanese singers Asmara and Patrick Khalil entertained over 500 alumni and friends who attended the event.



Les Diseurs Come Back

More than 300 alumni and friends thoroughly enjoyed the comedy show "Les Diseurs-Come Back (16-17)" organized by the BCW Alumni Chapter on April 2 at Irwin Theater in LAU Beirut. Their laughter could be heard ringing throughout the campus!



On the Right Track

More than 500 seniors attended the 13th "Senior Students Orientation Activity" organized by the Alumni Relations Office on April 22 at the Byblos campus and on April 27 and 28 at the Beirut campus. The students were introduced to the Alumni Association and the benefits of being members. Refreshments and cookies were served. Each senior was offered a leather business card holder decorated by a brass plaque with "LAU Alumni Association Class of 2015" engraved on it as a souvenir.

Dubai & Northern Emirates Raise Money for Scholarships

This year's Dubai and Northern Emirates Alumni Chapter Annual Dinner was an astounding success, raising a record number of scholarships. Instead of a regular gala, the chapter decided to hold a dinner party at Dubai's famous nightlife club Music Hall on April 18. In line with the chapter's tradition of honoring prominent Lebanese nationals on this occasion, this year's event honored the Lebanese members of the Dubai Design and Fashion Council Ali Jaber, Reem Acra, Raja Trad, Ghassan Harfoush and Patrick Chalhoub. Also for the first time, an auction was held for a work of art representing the Lebanese flag inscribed with symbolic first names of the financial aid students who have benefited from the chapter's donations over the years. Over 500 alumni and friends attended the dinner and were entertained by Music Hall's vibrant show. LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra and a delegation representing the university's offices of Alumni, Development, Public Relations and Admissions attended the event.



The Art of Networking

Recent graduates and HR directors of key companies from Lebanon and the Middle East came together to discuss the current job market and employment issues. Organized by the Alumni Relations Office and the Offices of the Deans of Students (Career and Placement), the 9th Annual Alumni Business Networking Reception drew a crowd of more than 200 persons, including companies, alumni and LAU officials. The event took place in an informal setting on April 20 at Le Maillon restaurant, Achrafieh. It was also an opportunity for LAU officials to get critical feedback on the performance of their graduates in the market.



Read my body

By Dania Hawat



LAU alumnus, Imad Mekahal, offers advice for improving work and social exchanges

"With a little bit of knowledge about body language, you can do anything, anything at all!" said body-language expert Imad Mekahal as he introduced his lecture.

Mekahal enthralled alumni, students and faculty, teaching them about body language and its role in our everyday lives. Organized by LAU's Alumni Relations Office, his "Speak my Language" lecture was a part of the *Keep Learning* series. Each year, four or five lectures with carefully chosen topics, usually suggested by alumni themselves through evaluation forms distributed after every lecture, bring alumni together.

"We want our alumni to continue visiting their campus and keep connected with the university to build a strong network they are proud to belong to," says Alumni Relations Office Director Abdallah Al Khal. "The *Keep Learning* educational program does just that by bringing back between 800–1,000 alumni to campus annually, not to mention those who watch online."

"It wasn't your typical lecture. There was less talk and more action. The speaker's approach was really very interesting," said LAU alumna Cecilia Mudabber (B.S., '82).

During the lecture Mekahal invited an alumna from the audience to stand

in the typical Super Man position and then asked her how she felt. "I'm feeling a rush of confidence," the alumna said, proving his point. Mekahal explains that if a person were to stand in this position for a few minutes just before walking into an important interview or event their testosterone and hormonal levels will increase leaving them with more confidence.

Throughout the lecture, Mekahal created stimulating scenarios allowing the audience to explore and immediately experience the result of the body language techniques.

According to Mekahal, every action you make projects its own interpretation and result. He explained that body language is a researched field that goes far beyond speculation. It is based on statistics and science just like any other study. Speaking to the young males in the audience Mekahal said, "By extending your step, you will reveal more confidence and thus attract more women."

The audience appreciated Mekahal mixing humor with the message he was trying to deliver. To him, body language affects us not just on a personal but on a public and corporate level.

Another way to take advantage of your body language, Mekahal pointed out, is through your charisma. It is both innate and taught. "Charismatic people can't but be noticed when they move. Building up your charisma and controlling it is your key to keeping all eyes on you," he explained.

"I noticed you're all interested in this talk by your body language," remarked Mekahal. "I can see it through your numerous nods all over the room."

Mekahal was able to grasp the audience's attention for nearly two hours. "I've never seen a speaker with an audience this size able to keep each and every one of them engaged," said LAU graduate Abdulrahman Osta (B.S., '04).

It was the first alumni event Osta had attended since he's graduated and he will most definitely attend future events. "I hope there will be a follow-up lecture on this. A more advanced workshop on body language would be interesting," he suggested.

Fake it until you make it was Mekahal's motto throughout. "You'll deliver your message best if you're aligned with your beliefs and are passionate about what you're saying. Your moment to make the biggest impression is when your heart, mind and body align on something you're passionate about," he concluded.



Staying connected

Arminée H. Choukassizian (A.A. '61) went on to obtain postgraduate degrees in English and Anglo-Irish literature from AUB and Queen Mary College, University of London, respectively. Arminée currently lives in Beirut, where she is an academic, writer and musician. She has just published her first collection of poems in English and French entitled *Memories and Cities*, dealing with the effect places and experiences have had on her.

Noha Tabbara Hammoud (A.A. '75) lives in Beirut and is both a writer and an artist. A member of the Lebanese Board on Books for Young People, the Union of Arab Writers and the Union of Lebanese Writers, Noha's writing is wide-ranging and includes novels, stories, poems, puppet plays and songs. She has also worked as an editing consultant and critic of children stories for the literary magazine *Atfal*. As a painter she has held several solo exhibitions and participated in a number of collective ones.

Rabab F. Saab (B.A. '78) lives in Washington D.C., where she is an independent evaluation consultant. In April 2015, Rabab became a grandmother for the first time.

Cecilia Moudaber (B.S. '82) went on to obtain an E.M.B.A. in Organizational Management from the Université du Québec. Cecilia currently teaches part-time at Haigazian University and at USJ. She is also a senior trainer and consultant specializing in human resources, soft skills and strategic planning. She lives in Beirut and has two adult sons, Hassib and Makram.

Roula El-Asmar (B.S. '86, A.A. '83) lives in San Jose, California, where she is a Program Manager at the Stanford Neurosciences Institute, Stanford University. She had previously received an HR Certificate from UC Santa Cruz and management training from Stanford University. She is a mother to two adult daughters, who recently graduated from San Jose State University.

Sami Bazzi (B.S. '84) lives between Italy, Dubai and Kuwait. He is the CEO of Joint Projects International Trading & Contracting Co. Sami founded the company, which specializes in multi high-end clothes brands for women and children, in Kuwait in 1992. The company is also responsible for the opening of the first-ever Roberto Cavalli Junior at the Dubai Mall and of the first Young Versace in the Middle East. Sami is married to Maya Majzoub and has three children, Rami, Sami Junior and Lara.



Sami Bazzi



Fadi Hammoud



Adnan Tarabishy



Nisrine Machaka-Houri



Zeina Hariz Khaddaj



Farah El Kadi

Salim Takieddine (B.S. '86) lives in Edmonton, Alberta, where he works as a RCIC Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant. He established the immigration firm GLI General Lines of Immigration in Canada with an agent office in Beirut. He recently became an advisor for Global Citizenship by Investment Programs in St. Kitts & Nevis, Bulgaria, Hungary and Cyprus. He is also an authorized international student-recruiting agent for McEwan University in Canada.

Houda Naccache Akkari (B.A. '87) is the General Manager of G Force Trading for Import and Export and General Manager of K&A Services for Housemaids, as well as being an interior designer. She is married to Bassam Akkari, with whom she has a six-year-old boy.

Mohamad Haidar (B.S. '92) currently lives in Dubai, where he is the Chief Operating Officer for Middle East Communication Network, a leading communication and advertising group in the MENA region. He is married to Bana Kazem and they have two children, one at Sussex University in Brighton (U.K.) and the other still at school.

Rabih Halawi (B.S. '92) lives in Lebanon, where he is the Director and Country COO at Credit Suisse (Lebanon) Finance SAL. Rabih was previously Operations Manager at Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner & Smith SAL. He is married to Mirna Al Khalil.

Raed Al Souki (B.S. '93) lives in Dubai, where he is Global Ventures Manager and Asia Team Lead with Shell. He is married to May Mousharrafieh with whom he has twin babies. A new addition to the family is expected this July.

Rana Karaki (M.B.A. '98, B.S. '94) lives in Beirut, where she is Head of Delivery Channels and Relationship Management for Electronic Payment and Card Services at Bank Audi. Rana completed the Advanced Management Program at AUB in 2014 with Bank Audi. She has two young children, Zina and Hassan.

Anas El Balaa (B.S. '96) lives in Dubai, where he is the head of IT MENA at UBS AG.

Zeina Hariz Khaddaj (B.S. '96) gave birth last year to a baby boy, Karim.

Randa El Zein (B.A. '97) went on to obtain her postgraduate degree in Florence, Italy. She currently lives in Abu Dhabi, where she founded and is a life coach at Be You International. Previously she was a design consultant in Canada for almost 10 years. Randa is passionate about working with women and youth to get them to "unleash their potential so as to live powered by passion."

Anthony Sten Hoglund (B.S. '97 Regent University) went on to obtain a master's degree in International Business from the Copenhagen Business School in 2004. He currently lives in Singapore, where he is a Sales

Staying connected



Mona Kamand



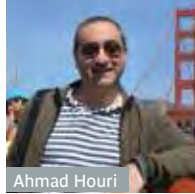
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Ghaith Samhoun



Hadi Al Souki



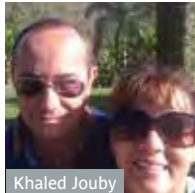
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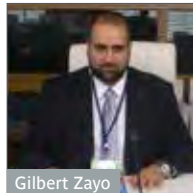
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Malek Mawlawi



Khaled Jouby



Gilbert Zayo

Executive at Schiavello Singapore Pty. Ltd., having previously been General Manager at Regus One Fullerton Singapore. His personal interests include dragon boating, outrigger canoeing and traveling around the world.

Khaled Jouby (B.Arch. '97) lives in Lebanon, where he works as a general project manager. His recent projects have included engineering management of the CampusVille project at LAU Byblos. Khaled has established his own contracting company, Jouby-Zakaria for Engineering & Contracting. He is married to Paola Fondeur with whom he has two boys.

Hadi Mezawi (B.S. '97) went on to obtain a CMA degree and currently teaches CMA courses part-time. Hadi lives in Dubai, where he works as a Finance Director with Del Monte. He has been married since 1999 and has 11-year-old twins.

Adnan Tarabishy (M.B.A. '08, B.S. '99) lives in Beirut, where he works in marketing and communication. He had previously worked in Iraq with Y2Ad-Impact BBDO. He is a father to two young children, Nasib and Lara.

Laetitia El Khoury El Khazen (B.S. '00) went on to obtain a master's degree in Marketing from ESA. She lives in Lebanon, where she is the Aptamil Brand Manager at Danone Nutricia Early Life Nutrition. She is married with two children.

Amani Sabaayon Saad (B.A. '00) is currently finishing her master's degree in Science of Arts at the Lebanese University, having

obtained an M.B.A. from AUCE in 2004. Amani currently lives in Sidon and is mother to a daughter and a son.

Nisrine Machaka-Houry (B.S. '01) went on to receive her Ph.D. in Ecology in 2013 from the University of Reading in England. She then did her postdoctoral studies at UC Berkeley, where she received a scholarship from the Heckard Endowment Fund to support her research on plants. Nisrine currently lives in Beirut, where she is a part-time instructor at USJ and also works as a freelance environmental consultant. In recognition of her research in biodiversity conservation and management, she received the "Women in Science Hall of Fame 2015" award from the U.S. Embassy of Beirut. She and her husband have published a third guide to the flora of Lebanon, titled *Wild Flowers of Lebanon with Special Focus on Key Biodiversity*. www.nisrinemachaka.com

Wadih Jreidini (M.B.A. '04, B.S. '01) lives in Lebanon, where he is the regional manager for an international printing and publishing house. He is also currently attempting to publish his first book. Wadih is married with two young daughters.

Malek Mawlawi (B.S. '01) lives in Doha, where he is Head of Program Acquisitions for Al Jazeera Media Network. He chooses the best documentaries from all over the world to buy, then translates, dubs and edits them for broadcast on Al Jazeera. He is married to Ghida Sinno, with whom he has two young boys, Faysal and Ziad.

Elissar Saddy Nassar (B.S. '01) went on to obtain her M.B.A. from the École Hôtelière de Lausanne in Switzerland. She currently lives in Beirut, where she is a Senior Consultant at Lumen Hospitality Consultants. Elissar is a mother to two baby boys, Yann and Noah.

Ali Haidar (RCD B.Sc. '02 Excelsior College) went on to obtain a master's degree in Technology Management from George Mason University. He currently lives in Virginia, where he is a National Director of IT and Managed Services. Ali is also CIO Certified by the U.S. Federal Government. He is married to Fatme Atie with whom he has a daughter, Alma.

Amin Bawab (B.S. '03) lives with his wife Robina Sadaka in Dubai, where he works as a marketing and communications director.

Ghaith Samhoun (B.S. '03) began his career in 2006 in Saudi Arabia as a Product Specialist with NAPCO. In 2012 he shifted from being a Marketing Manager with non-food FMCGs to the same position with food at Abbar Trading. In 2014 he became a product manager for the company. Ghaith is married and has a nine-month-old daughter.

Claire Amer (B.A. '04) lives in Lebanon, where she and her sister Jessy co-own PLUR, a music-recording studio and event planning company. Claire is a singer and pianist herself, and she will soon be recording her own album in collaboration with the Elias and Ghassan Rahbani. She also works in real estate, investing inside and outside of Lebanon.

Mohammad Badran (M.S. '08, B.S. '04) lives in Beirut. He is an IT Systems Engineer at Dar Al-Handasah, where he has gained extensive experience in the field of unified communication and collaboration.

Fadi Hammoud (M.B.A. '04) lives in Ghana, where he is Azadea Group's General Country Manager. Fadi first joined the company in Beirut as a management trainee after graduating. He was then dispatched to the U.A.E. and Qatar, where he held a variety of positions before he returned to Beirut as Regional Markets Manager. He took up his current post in July 2014. He is married to Farah Mousawi with whom he has a 4-year-old boy.

Sereen El Hussari (B.S. '07) used to work with international NGOs. She currently lives in Sidon.

Staying connected

Haitham Ghaddaf (M.B.A. '09, B.S. '06) lives in Byblos, where he is a Business Instructor at LIU Professional Developments.

Farah Al Hashem (B.A. '09) went on to obtain her M.F.A. in Filmmaking and Cinematography at the New York Film Academy. She currently works as an independent filmmaker and writer, and lives between Paris and Beirut. She has just finished her feature film Breakfast in Beirut, which will be circulating the international film festivals arena this year.

Ahmad Zaarouri (B.S. '09) currently lives in Dubai, where he is Business Development Manager at Royal Ahrend, a leading European expert in the field of professional work environments. Ahmad was previously an Account Manager for BAFCO in Abu Dhabi.

Cherine Zayour (B.S. '09) went to the USA, where she obtained her CPA. She currently lives in Beirut, where she opened her own travel agency, Sara Tours and Travel, located in Jnah. She is engaged to a fellow LAU alumnus, Hisham Atat (B.S. '06, M.B.A. '11).

Nada Barbir Ghalayini (M.B.A. '10) lives in Beirut, where she is a Branch Coordinator at Rasamny Younis Motor Co., having previously been a sales consultant with the company. She was married in February.

Mirna Itani (B.A. '10) has established her own design house, Manus, specializing in handmade furniture and accessories. Manus has a line of customized corporate gifts, as well as one for individual personalized ones. www.facebook.com/ManusHandmadeCrafts. Mirna is a single mother of two children.

Gilbert Zayo (B.E. '10) went on to the Chartered Institute for Procurement and Supply in London to become a certified procurement engineer. He currently lives in Beirut, where he is the CEO of the Department of Jeita Grotto and the rest of Lebanon's caves at the Ministry of Tourism. He has represented Lebanon at several conferences and is a permanent member in the ministry's Administrative Development Committee.

Serge Abi Haidar (B.S. '11) obtained his postgraduate degree from the Grenoble École de Management in France. He currently lives in Paris, where he works as a business consultant.

Mona Kamand (B.S. '11) started her career as a wedding organizer assistant. In 2014, after three years of experience, she established her

own event planning company called FIFTEEN with her partner Rhea Hindi. As a gesture of gratitude to LAU, she voluntarily organized the Oman Alumni Chapter charity ball in March.

Ahmad Al Sabbagh (B.S. '12) lives in Dubai, where he works as a Technology Consultant with Deloitte Consulting.

Nelly Awad (B.A. '12) went on to obtain a postgraduate degree in Global Citizenship, Identities and Human Rights at the University of Nottingham. She currently lives in Amman, where she is a National Project Coordinator at the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch of the International Labor Organization.

Ehab Abdallah (B.E. '13) went on to obtain an M.Sc. in Management (Energy Business) at Imperial College London, where he currently lives and works as a building services engineer.

Hadi Al Souki (M.B.A. '13) is currently living in Dubai, where he works as a senior training analyst at Chalhoub Group. He is passionate about learning and development.

Imad El Yassir (B.S. '13) lives in Kuwait, where he works as a Channel Sales Development Manager for Cloud Portfolio. Imad is mainly responsible for driving and growing cloud business across two major channels: the distributors, partners and resellers channel and the telecommunication channel that deals with major companies such as Zain Kuwait.

Mahmoud Kabbani (B.E. '13) went on to obtain an M.Sc. in Project and Program Management and Business Development at the Skema Business School in France. He currently lives in Lille, France and works part-time as a site engineer at Nesma & Partners in Saudi Arabia.

Darine Kuteish (B.S. '13) moved to Dubai to work as a research consultant for Hall & Partners, a research consultancy agency at Omnicom Media Group.

Abbas Sabbagh (B.E. '13) lives in Beirut, where he works as a software engineer.

Nicolas Sahadi (B.S. '13) moved to the United Kingdom and pursued a master's degree in Information Systems: Organizations and Management in the University of Manchester. He has now been offered a job in Qatar as an Applications Specialist at the International Centre for Sports Security.

Farah El Kadi (B.S. '14) currently lives in Riyadh, where she is a graphic designer with Leo Burnett in Saudi Arabia.

Ahmad Houry (E.M.B.A. '14) also holds a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Boston College and an M.Sc. in Renewable Energy from the University of Ulster. He lives in Beirut, where he is an associate professor at LAU. Ahmad was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to study biomass as a potential energy source at UC Berkeley for the year 2013-14. He is married to Nisrine Machaka-Houry (B.S. '01) (see above).

Hanaa Hussein (B.S. '14) is currently a research assistant at the University of Uppsala in Sweden, where she is studying for a master's degree in International Health.

Issam Kabbani (B.E. '14) currently lives in Dubai, where he is a Mechanical Engineer at Six Construct.

Sarah Zgheib (B.E. '14) currently lives in Dubai, where she is a Business Development Engineer at Grey Matters Consultancy.

LAU Alumni's NEW mobile application

- Stay connected to LAU & fellow alumni
- Discover the latest LAU & alumni news
- Find out about alumni events at LAU and near you
- Search the alumni directory
- Link up with alumni chapters
- Receive event notifications

Download it now and start making contact!



WHY I GIVE BACK

Elias Abou-Rustom (B.S. '86)



Businessman and motorcycle enthusiast Elias Abou-Rustom graduated from LAU in 1986 with a B.S. in Computer Science. He went on to obtain an M.B.A. and a Ph.D. in Business Administration from California's Trident University International. Although he established a company of his own, Elias also served as president of ABM Group-Middle East, a part of the Midis Group. He has also spent a stint at Touro University International, where his responsibilities included teaching undergraduate and assisting graduate classes in business related courses.

Why do you give back to LAU?

I chose to donate and give back to LAU because it was the academic institution that shaped me as a young man. The effect of LAU goes beyond academia, reaching one's inner personality and leaving a permanent mark. The donation is a small gesture of gratitude.

What is your fondest memory of LAU?

My fondest memory is without a doubt meeting my wife on campus in 1982. Despite the war, campus life was an experience that I will always cherish.

How do you perceive LAU today compared to when you were a student?

LAU has come a long way since the early 80s. Its progress, expansion and dedication are phenomenal. The recent *Times* ranking of the university is both an endorsement and clear proof of its success.

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

I urge my fellow graduates not to spare any effort in helping our university excel further. As for the students, I tell them you are blessed to be part of this prestigious academic institution. So, enjoy campus life while you can and carry the LAU flag wherever you go. Be proud always.

What would you like to see LAU achieve in the near future?

I would like to see LAU establish campuses in the Gulf region.

Why are you interested in supporting education, especially in Lebanon?

My interest arises from the fact that the main asset of the Lebanese youth is education, specifically higher education. Lebanon's export of brainpower over the last century is staggering and vital to our economy. The Lebanese are in demand because they are educated, possess skills and have been exposed to Western values. I believe that supporting education is vital and should be performed without compromises.



Fulfilling the Promise

LAU Campaign for Academic Excellence



RIZK RIZK IS FULFILLING THE PROMISE

Making sure that Lebanon is firmly on the world's winter resort map, Rizk Rizk, chairman, major shareholder and member of the board of directors of Tourisme et Sports d'Hiver Mzaar, Mzaar 2000 and Mzaar InterContinental Hotel, gives his guests a ski experience that is nothing less than excellent.

The same principles apply to education. For over two decades, Rizk, who is also co-owner/partner of the Rizk Foundation and Sanine, has been making donations to support LAU in its committed to academic excellence, student centeredness, civic engagement, the advancement of scholarship, the education of the whole person and the formation of leaders in a diverse world.

As of 1997, he started generously contributing toward the Therese Nehme Tohme & Sonia Rizk Rizk Building at LAU-Byblos campus, in memory of his late wife Sonia. Then, in June 2012, he established the Nehme Tohme & Rizk Rizk Endowment Scholarship Fund, which is distributed annually to deserving students at LAU. A great believer in the importance of higher education, Rizk also donates regularly to Gala Dinner Endowment Scholarship Fund.



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For more information, please contact:

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