

# LAU magazine

VOLUME 18 | issue n° 1 | Spring 2016

## & ALUMNI BULLETIN



*(dis)connections*



**Steering towards a brighter future.**

**Empowering our students to take the helm.**

## **A CIVIC MISSION WITH GLOBAL RECOGNITION**

As a leading regional academic institution, the Lebanese American University strives to shape a generation of ethically-minded individuals committed to social change and conflict resolution. Through its holistic approach to education and civic engagement, LAU nurtures well-rounded discerning individuals respectful of diversity, tolerance and the needs of their community.

The entire LAU community is involved in countless philanthropic initiatives from volunteer clinics in underprivileged areas and scholarships for disadvantaged students, to empowerment through sustainability projects.

An active proponent of human rights, LAU spearheaded the Global LAU Model United Nations program in Lebanon (MUN) and the LAU Model Arab League (MAL) within its Outreach and Civic Engagement Unit (OCE) to train its students in all aspects of diplomacy and negotiation while interacting with top UN representatives and high-ranking opinion makers. The university's Global Classrooms program has been recognized for its spectacular and unmatched work in the largest Model UN program worldwide which engages more than 25,000 students and teachers annually in over 20 countries at conferences and in classrooms and holds a 16-year track record of success.





(dis)connections

FEATURES

6 The art of reconciliation



A growing body of research demonstrates that a variety of creative engagements can positively impact emotions, attitudes and beliefs, contributing to greater individual health and wellness. While the connection between art and healing is well known, few have delved into the reasons behind its psychological benefit. *Federica Marsi* investigates why theater can trigger change, even in communities torn apart by decades of bloodshed and conflict.

16 Ceilings and barriers

Women have historically been plagued by insecurity and injustice as a result of gender-defined roles that dictate their place within society. Some have fought against the patriarchal and oppressive system while others remain shackled by it. *Reem Maghribi* explores the various cultural, organizational, legislative and familial barriers that impact the relationships between women and work, men and society.



26 Going with the flow



Migration has been a hot topic lately, with the hundreds of thousands of refugees and economic migrants heading for Europe this past year. But in this global world, the phenomenon is not limited to Europe and involves more than just poor and frightened people looking for a better life. *Irina du Quenoy* takes a look at the different categories of migrants that exist and asks what conditions are most conducive to smooth relations between new arrivals and the host society.

36 Family matters

The most prominent family structures of today are nuclear, blended and single parent but same-sex and adoptive families are definitely on the rise. So, in the year 2100 a family might be described as a group of people who relate to and share a mutual affection for each other. *Rami Saidi* discovers how the changing roles of the individuals in a family unit have altered the relationships between them.



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## Wherever You Go

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



## Help Tell Our History

We welcome news from alumni, friends, supporters and current and former faculty and staff 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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## Letters to the Editor

I must commend you on the latest issue of the Magazine. I found it full of truly interesting articles. I think it is the best of all I have read! Truly interesting and inspiring!

—Irma-Kaarina Ghosn, associate professor of English/TESOL

I just want to congratulate you on your Fall 2015 issue. Of special interest, to me at least, were the articles: It's All Relative, Older and Wiser and The Key to Saving Time (about my dear ex-colleague Ahmed Kabbani). I would very much appreciate your printing the e-mails with the authors' names so we can write to them directly if it is possible.

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

I am writing today to thank you for keeping me connected to my alumni with your publication. I am an A.A. graduate of BCW, who immigrated to the USA, where I got a degree in art history in 1984 from the University of Maryland. I was very pleased to read in the fall issue an article written by Zalfa Halabi titled "Art Is Timeless." Indeed art transcends geographical, political and religious boundaries. It is eternal ... I love this magazine immensely.

—Leila Ankar Deeb, Maryland, USA

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**Direct comments and letters to the editor may be sent to:** [marcom@lau.edu.lb](mailto:marcom@lau.edu.lb).

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## From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

*Social dynamics, best described as the behavior of groups as a result of the interactions of their individual members, may build or destroy a society. Constructively, the process cements diverse societies together; misused, it disintegrates them into chaos and conflict. The crises in Libya, Syria and Iraq are prime examples of the latter outcome, while the success of South Africa's Anti-Apartheid Movement illustrates just how beneficial social dynamics can be.*

*Due to conflicts raging across the globe, 2015 saw nearly 20 million refugees seek sanctuary outside their homelands. This movement of populations has been of vital concern to host countries that have been seeking effective ways to integrate — through positive social dynamics — the newcomers without putting their own stability at risk. With the help of our Institute for Migration Studies, we take a closer look at how the integration of migrants, including recent ones, has affected their interaction with the host community.*

*At LAU we believe that a community becomes viable and rich through the sharing of common values and a spirit of true commitment to the wellbeing of all, complemented by the integration of different cultural dynamics. This is reflected in our Interprofessional Education program, a joint initiative by the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Pharmacy, the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine, and the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing. It illustrates perfectly how each member of a team is influenced by the others' behavior and — through new kinds of interaction — acquires specific communication skills relevant to patient safety.*

*Our long history in theater is another example of social dynamics both within and outside the university. On the one hand, our student and major productions, including last fall's play Limaza— which was written to reflect and perhaps engage apolitical Arabs following the 1967 defeat — resonate widely in the community. More broadly, individual-level artistic expression is known to have a therapeutic effect and plays a role in healing existing rifts, a topic we delve further into by examining national and international success stories.*

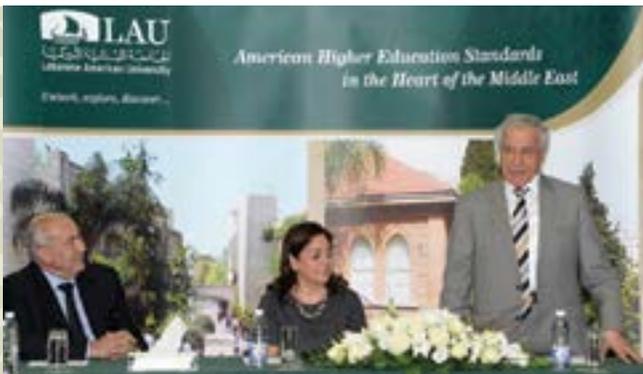
*Being aware of each other's cultural background in the general sense is often not enough to ease the process of interaction on the individual level. A deeper grounding in cultural dynamics is often needed. Thus, being aware of the region's history, culture and artistic heritage allows scholars to draw inspiration from the past. In the pages of this issue, we meet the diverse student body of the university's innovative master's degree program in Islamic art and architecture and discover what motivates these young people in their academic pursuits.*

*We also try to visualize social dynamics of the future as we hurtle through the 21st century, where the family — no longer nuclear but more blended — is often described as a group of people who can relate to each other and share a mutual affection for each other. We reveal how such a family is expected to have a better understanding of compromise and cooperation and how to work together as a unit.*

*LAU is but a fraction, though vital, of a community at large in which social dynamics are a universal phenomenon. Join us on our journey of discovery as we trace the important role that they play in the life of the individual and examine their evolution through the ages.*



Joseph G. Jabbra  
President



# Another successful international conference on medical education

By Federica Marsi

LAU hosts internationally renowned experts with the goal of transforming the field of medical education in the region

The academic preparation of those with whom we entrust our lives must be a priority for every higher institution. Medical education varies considerably across the world, making research and knowledge sharing paramount in assessing the most successful teaching practices.

Key to any research is agreement on what should be considered as evidence. “Too often we are looking for proof that what we are doing is right, rather than factual information,” says Kevin Eva, director of Educational Research and Scholarship at the University of British Columbia, Canada. “In order to collect proof, we should first identify those variable factors that indicate whether we are working in a correct way.”

Eva was one of the international experts in Medical Education that took place in the Second International Conference on Medical Education, which took place in November 2015 under LAU’s leadership. The youngest of the seven participating Lebanese medical schools, the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine (SOM) enticed to Lebanon a pool of internationally renowned guest speakers who, together with local experts, discussed the advancement of medical education in the region.

The stunning success of the last year’s conference and LAU’s Dean of SOM Youssef Comair’s internationally renowned efforts to improve medical education encouraged the participation of some of the greatest experts in the field. With Comair they put together what he deemed an “inspiring program that includes hands-on experience through workshops and roundtables with the aim of promoting quality care and patient safety.”

According to Associate Dean for International Affairs at the University of Illinois Ara Tekian, who is also co-chair of the conference’s scientific committee, “small building blocks should be built along the path in order to check the

student’s progress.” Verifying how much a student is able to learn through periodic assessments implies double-checking the efficacy of the method itself, a process that may sometimes lead to spot some false friends. Strikingly, for example, computerized 3D images — which many would intuitively believe to be beneficial in the teaching of anatomy — have been found to be ineffective in enhancing student performance.

It is therefore not enough for an institution to base its academic strategy on *avant-garde* teaching techniques. A study presented by Ross Scalse, assistant director of Research and Technology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, advocates in favor of Simulation-Based Medical Education — a technology that utilizes simulated human patients for competency-based training.

Scalse is also one of the masterminds behind the new diploma-granting “Clinical Simulation” course that as of January 2016 is being offered by LAU’s School of Medicine to all healthcare providers.

Another key point, brought forward by Dimitri Azar, dean of the College of Medicine at the University of Illinois, is the need to periodically innovate the academic program. According to him, medical education is affected by “diseases of the curriculum” such as *curriculoarthritis* or *apoplexy curricularis*, each of which describes a different type of misalignment between objectives, content and assessment practices.

While the challenges are many, all speakers agree on the solution. “We cannot do without research in medical education,” said Charlotte Ringsted, vice-dean and director of the Center for Health Sciences and Education at Aarhus University, Denmark. “We are in need of deeper understanding, and such understanding relies on international collaboration.”



*“Our goal is to identify those variable factors that enable us to collect factual information, rather than evidence that what we are doing is correct.”*

—Kevin Eva, director of Educational Research and Scholarship at the University of British Columbia, Canada

*“Research has shown that testing has a significant effect on learning, or the creation of trails in and out of long-term memory.”*

—Charlotte Ringsted, vice-dean and director of the Center for Health Sciences and Education at Aarhus University, Denmark



*“LAU gives this professional community the opportunity to come together and network by bringing together resources and professionals.”*

—Ara Tekian, associate dean for International Affairs at the University of Illinois

*“There is a mismatch between the needs of the community and medical education. Our task must be to promote the creation of professional figures that match what is required.”*

—John Norcini, President and CEO of the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER), Philadelphia



*“Prior to Simulation-Based Medical Education, teaching was opportunistic. We taught whenever a medical condition presented itself. Now we can practice certain skills while guaranteeing the patient’s safety.”*

—Ross Scalse, assistant director of research and technology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

*“The variables we are considering in the selection of medical students are often insufficient to guarantee that the candidate will still be the same person ten years later.”*

—Janet Grant, director of CenMEDIC (the Centre for Medical Education in Context) and the FAIMER Centre for Distance Learning in London



*“Academic programs should not be set in stone. The prevention of curriculum diseases occurs through the clear articulation of the program’s aims.”*

—Dimitri Azar, dean of the College of Medicine at the University of Illinois



FEATURE

*LAU students perform in a variety of plays, including Bad Monster, 10 Ways to Survive and Victoria Station*



# The art of reconciliation

By Federica Marsi

**By blurring the line between reality and fiction, theater challenges the fear at the heart of long-lasting social conflicts and becomes a powerful tool for change**

Communities living in conflict areas find themselves entangled in the curse of history, captured in a labyrinth of beliefs, attitudes and emotions that invariably portray the rival group as the guilty perpetrator of wrongdoings. The younger generations, which often had little or no involvement in the original conflict, nonetheless experience these misconceptions as an integral part of their own cultural identity.

Those who seek to break it have long studied this self-replicating spiral of hatred. The means to achieve reconciliation — or the restoration of relationships characterized by mutual mistrust — are varied and often controversial.

At the individual level, artistic expression is known to have a therapeutic effect. However, artistic performances can also play a role in healing the rift between wider communities of people. In Lebanon,

groups like Zoukak and Search for Common Ground, as well as a number of other organizations and NGOs, have used theater to recompose the pieces of a society shattered by decades of civil war.

While its beneficial impact leaves little or no doubt, the reasons behind this success are largely unexplored. Why does theater succeed where other peace-building initiatives fail? What is the lever that triggers a change in the hearts and minds of historically conflicting communities?

Ali Douhi is one of the 16 young adults from the areas of Bab el-Tebbeh, Jabal Mohsen and Ebbeh who took part in the play organized by the NGO March and directed by Lucien Bourjeily (who had previously given a talk on reconciliation during LAU's 2015 International Theater Festival). During three packed-house performances last summer, *Love and War on the Rooftop* recounted the story of Ali and Aisha, who fall in love despite

belonging to rival communities. More than that, the play-within-the-play tells the tale of their own very personal struggle, of how they have found the courage to work side by side.

"At first we did not speak to each other," says Douhi, a 30-year-old father of four. "But as time passed we started finding common ground, our lives were not that different. Next thing you know is that we were spending more time together than with our own families."

Douhi attended the rehearsals out of curiosity and frustration at his many failed attempts at finding a job. The idea of becoming an actor was appealing enough to push him to join the project, despite having to confront his peers from the rival neighborhood of Bab el-Tebbeh.

With time, the two groups began crossing for the first time to the other side of Syria Street, which separates Tebbeneh and Jabal Mohsen. "Some



Scenes from Lucien Bourjeily's *Love and War on the Rooftop*



people made fun of what we were doing at first, but many were interested," he says. Another actor in the group faced far worse intimidation but continued to take part in the project despite threats and physical aggression.

Their motivation was fuelled thanks to Lucien Bourjeily and his team, who brought the actors — some of whom had never entered a theater before — to watch a play, which triggered the fantasy of putting together a "real performance."

The preparatory process focused on building up mutual trust and establishing a safe zone of discussion. "At first everyone came armed to rehearsals. By the time of the performance I had to cut a rope and I needed a knife. Everyone asked around, but no one had one," says Bourjeily. Soon enough, the two groups felt comfortable enough with each other to begin cracking jokes. "What made me feel they were one unique group was how they interacted making fun of each other — which is what I wanted to convey in the play."

Several months after the performance, Bourjeily reflects on the reasons behind its success. "My biggest discovery while working with them was that fights are never initiated by the residents. They do not actually want to fight each other," he points out. "The play made them realize that their real life was an act. We had to put them on stage for them to figure out reality."

Under the same roof, the mixed audience from Tripoli's bloodiest neighborhoods laughed at the representation of its own painful

conflict, applauding the actors in a sign of appreciation. "There was a feeling of gratitude among the audience," concludes Bourjeily. "They had proof that an alternative reality is possible."

If a word could encompass the spirit of theater, that word — according to Mona Knio, an associate professor at LAU's Department of Communication Arts — would be negotiation. "However you look at it, theater teaches you to negotiate," says Knio, "whether it is your space on the stage, your role as a character, or your own interpretation of the play. This, in turn, teaches you to accept and respect other points of view."

Plays involving two conflicting communities are even more likely to be reliant on negotiation. The subject of the play has to be the outcome of a concerted flow of imagination that expands imaginative capacities. In realities such as certain countries in Africa, where tensions easily flare, communities are likely to be very concerned about receiving what they deem to be a fair representation. Negotiation is therefore part of a ritual process that leads both communities into feeling part of a shared experience. "This process of finding a middle way teaches important negotiation skills that, once acquired, are automatically transferred onto the everyday life," Knio says.

By eroding the distance between the expression of reality between two conflicting communities, theater also generates empathy, another feeling that is then likely to represent itself in real life. Ethnicity, religion and gender

become malleable and identities are lost in the multitude of characters. The actors are able to see their experience through the lens of aesthetic distance — the simultaneous experience of being both participant and observer. Seen from outside, issues can finally cease to be black and white as they once appeared.

"Therapy is nothing more than learning how to look at yourself from another angle," she explains, "and this is precisely what theater enables you to do." This has a mirroring effect on the audience who, by seeing its experience from the outside, can reflect on what happened to them and what was done to others.

Many initiatives can have the beneficial effect of bringing together conflicting communities that otherwise would have little or no chance of mingling. However, theater brings interaction a step further, triggering both a social and psychological response.

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*"However you look at it, theater teaches you to negotiate."*

—Mona Knio, LAU associate professor of theater

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According to Craig Zelizer, associate director of the M.A. in Conflict Resolution at Georgetown University and founder of the Peace and Collaborative Development Network, emphasizing common interests like music and dance

*“The play made them realize that their real life was an act.”*

—Lucien Bourjeily, writer and director

can be useful but is alone not enough to bring about change. “Participants are involved into constructive inter-ethnic dialogue and envision new possible realities,” says Zelizer. “This process of co-creating an alternative future is done within the safety of a fictional role.”

A performance opens up a creative safe space, where new perceptions and new experiences can be shared and public spaces become intimate. Several “warm up” exercises are conducted in order to establish a sense of connection and establish mutual trust.

Sociologist and play director Frédérique Lecomte spent most of her career studying the right approaches to communities that bear the brunt of extreme violence. Through her organization Theater and Reconciliation, Lecomte brought theater to Burundi, among other locations, helping communities come to terms with the memory of genocides, mass killings and violence.

“To put people in conflict together, it is necessary to be smart about it,” says Lecomte. At first, she works with each group separately, allowing freedom of expression. “They don’t want to speak, they just want to act,” she explains.

Through improvisation exercises Lecomte is able to gather information on how each of the groups expresses itself, its clichés and social dynamics. When times are ripe — that is to say when both groups have carried out “laughing exercises” and feel comfortable acting — the two groups are put together.

“Symbolism is our magic wand,” says Lecomte. “We use a vision of reality that is distant from what actually happened to create a common vision of reality.” In Burundi, a symbolic grave was used as a common vehicle for both Hutus and Tutsis to express their similar emotions.

By speaking of the scene, rather than the conflict, conflicting communities interact on a level that allows both for distance and the most intimate

involvement. Theater — unlike other forms of interaction — acts as a kaleidoscope, replacing a single view by a multitude of different visions.

Just like in Tripoli, many other conflicting communities might be simply in search of the right stop button to put an end to an exhausted conflict. According to Aliya Khalidi, who teaches the course “Theater in Lebanon and the Arab World” at LAU, Lebanese society is receptive to theater as it provides a much-needed tool to analyze its own history.

“The whole country needs a drama therapy session,” Khalidi says ironically. She likes to define herself as a “graduate of the Lebanese war,” given that the years of her youth were marked by conflict. When she returned to the country in 2010, she could not come to terms with the idea that East and West Beirut were now parts of a reunited city.

Today she is a Muslim professor teaching predominantly Christian students and is dedicating herself to a kind of theater that can heal social rifts and break misconceptions. “Today is the time when theater is having the most tangible effect,” Khalidi points out. “Plays do not provide answers but leave questions open, and discussion is what the Lebanese society is in need of.”

As empathy is believed to be the antidote to fear, it is legitimate to say that theater is a medicine to be generously administered to conflicting societies. Theater allows people to acknowledge that what is happening is hurtful for sides. Once this is understood, there comes the potential for change.

After all, as Frédérique Lecomte concludes after a lifetime of theater for reconciliation, “people are dreaming of peace.” ☒



Theater and Reconciliation approaches African communities that bear the brunt of extreme violence

# Toward an increasingly patient-centered approach

By Selim Njeim

LAU's Interprofessional Education program brings health and social care students together to learn with, from and about each other

"We have had many students say that the work of nutritionists is limited to helping people lose weight," says Nancy Hoffart, dean of the LAU Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing. "Others did not even know what social workers do." The LAU Interprofessional Education (IPE) program — a joint initiative by the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Pharmacy, the School of Medicine and the School of Nursing — aims to change this problem of perception.

Through a combination of didactic lectures, role-play exercises and case-based discussions, LAU students of nursing, pharmacy, medicine, nutrition and social work converge five times over the course of their enrollment for a half-day event called a "Step," a workshop-like training during which they acquire specific communication skills relevant to patient safety. They also tap into the importance of teamwork and conflict resolution skills in a fast-paced hospital setting, as well as the ethical dilemmas associated with taking the right decision at the right time.

In keeping with the program's commitment to celebrate diversity, faculty members from the four participating schools and LAU Medical Center—Rizk Hospital staff help in moderating the group discussions. So far, over 900 students have participated in the LAU IPE Steps and 75 faculty members have contributed to the program.

"People make friends during the IPE sessions, which helps them learn more about each other and potentially become more comfortable working across disciplines when they graduate," Hoffart explains. Entrenching the concept of collaborative practice — working together in a way to avoid conflicts and ensure better outcomes — into students is at the core of the program.

"It has been evidenced that patient care has better outcomes, such as shorter hospital stays, when healthcare teams collaborate," says Assistant Professor of Nutrition Nadine Zeeni, who is the program's coordinator.

The LAU IPE program has been actively working toward making patient-centeredness a priority for health and social work students soon to be joining the job market. "Back in the day, the physician would be leading the healthcare

team and would be the one calling the shots. However, modern trends are disinclined to even identify one person to be at the head of a healthcare team. The center of attention should be the patient and in some cases their families as well," says Zeeni.

"The IPE Steps have opened my eyes to the ways social work ties in with health care, especially medicine, and taught me how much work still needs to be done to create harmonious, interdisciplinary teams," says Rama el-Dukar, a senior social work student who has completed four IPE Steps so far. "What I learned will definitely help me in my profession since I now have more competencies and more confidence, which has allowed me to state my opinion to the team and show them how important social work is in a hospital setting."

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*"Patient care has better outcomes, such as shorter hospital stays, when healthcare teams collaborate."*

—Nadine Zeeni, LAU assistant professor of nutrition

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In the near future the program plans to broaden the scope of its work to include interprofessional simulation sessions in the simulation laboratory and interprofessional clinical activities led by LAU faculty and outreach clinics.

Fulbright scholar Chant Kazandjian, who graduated from LAU with a B.S. in Nursing in 2013, is working on a master's in clinical psychology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Kazandjian is planning to start a Ph.D. program in higher education in the United States, with a focus on IPE. "Being introduced to IPE at LAU immensely influenced my decision to research it. I am looking forward to bringing the knowledge and expertise I acquire back to LAU, if granted the opportunity," Kazandjian enthuses.





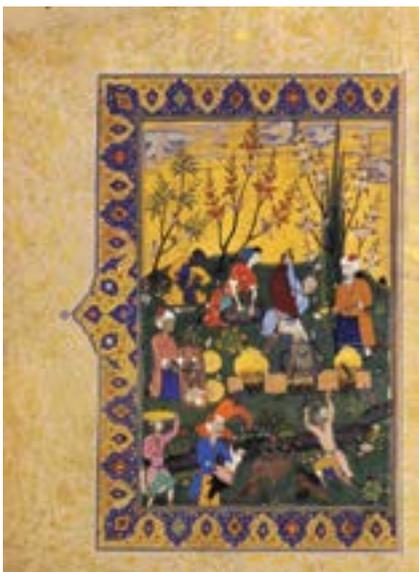
# Drawing inspiration from the past

By Naseem Ferdowsi

The master's degree in Islamic art and architecture marks its successful second year

*"The material we are learning from is rich and stimulating."*

—Ghia Eido, LAU Islamic Art and Architecture postgraduate student



From interior design to fine arts, the students who make up the Mu'taz and Rada Sawwaf M.A. in Islamic Art and Architecture (IAA) program all come from diverse academic backgrounds. Yet these eight students, who have led the new program to exceed enrollment forecasts, are united by a common curiosity and enthusiasm for the field.

"Islamic art is such a passionate field, where you can learn about the visual art produced from the seventh century onward. Wrongly perceived as only religious art, this program covers much more, stretching from Islamic Spain through the Arab countries, as well as Turkey, Iran and Central Asia in diverse historical periods," explains Liane Mathes, a native of Luxembourg who enrolled in the IAA program in spring 2016. She holds a fine arts degree from LAU and a master's in finance from Webster University in Geneva.

"It is one of the few well-formulated programs in Lebanon and the material we are learning from is rich and stimulating, so students really benefit," says Ghia Eido, who joined the program in fall 2015 after obtaining a B.A. in interior design from LAU.

The program's students also share a hope of incorporating elements of Islamic art and architecture into their careers.

"As an artist, I want to learn about Islamic painting and to understand its historic visual culture, with the hope of adopting figurative representations in Islamic art to remind my culture of its creative origins," shares Lana Charara, who began the program in fall 2015 after obtaining her B.A. in fine arts from LAU.

Mathes is an established artist who uses calligraphy-embellished Damascus paper to create pieces that evoke Oriental accents and modernity. However, she believes her IAA studies will take her work further.

"I already have a passion for color, symmetry and creativity, rooted in captivating geometric forms and precise curves, but this master's will surely bring a new dimension to my work and help me move to another level of excellence," she says.

Associate Professor Abdallah Kahil, who coordinates the program, is pleased that students are drawing on coursework for creative inspiration. However, he is making sure they are prepared to pursue further learning.

"A big part of the program involves working with students to develop their research and writing skills so they can continue on to doctorate studies at the best international universities," explains Kahil, who is also the director of the university's Institute of Islamic Art and Architecture.

Shady Jaber, an IAA graduate student since fall 2015, is one of several students who foresee a Ph.D. ahead. "Whether theoretically through a doctoral dissertation or practically through design, I will have the opportunity to implement what I learn through this program to benefit myself and, more importantly, benefit others," says Jaber, an LAU alumnus with a B.S. in graphic design and B.A. in interior architecture.

The program was launched in spring 2015 thanks to Mu'taz and Rada Sawwaf, who made a generous contribution with the aim of expanding students' awareness of the region's history, culture and artistic heritage.

Most IAA graduate students receive financial support to cover a portion of their tuition in the form of graduate assistantships. In addition, LAU is currently receiving donations toward the Islamic Art and Architecture Endowment Fund to further support students' tuition fees in the future.



## The art of teamwork

By Reem Maghribi

Students come together to produce and present a unique and intriguing major music production

"This is a new approach for LAU. It hasn't been done before," said communication arts graduate Rayan Shehab at the end of the opening night performance of *Vadis Quo* this past November. "Seeing LAU developing creativity and technology like this is great."

The interdisciplinary production showcased the skills of students enrolled in a course titled "Vocal and Instrumental Ensemble," which is taught by Martin Loyato, assistant professor of music at LAU's Department of Communication Arts. "I told my students, if we screw up I don't care. We did the job during the many hours of rehearsals before the performance," says Loyato. "The show is simply the exhibition of what they had learned."

The show's 30-person crew included LAU students not enrolled in the course, as well as students from other universities who pitched in to both offer and develop their skills in music, dance, film and theater production. "They are in for the experience, not the credits, and have to work just as hard as those who will be graded," he explains.

During the performance, presented twice over consecutive evenings, the musicians were projected to the audiences via television screens. "During a Q&A session with the audience, some asked whether we were playing live. I pointed out that actually we were, but from behind the stage!"

On stage, complementing the musical pieces written by the students

and Loyato, were nine dancers who performed alongside projections of films made and edited by students from the communication arts department. The performance, with its unique combination of complementary elements, presented a harsh and sometimes aggressive critique of contemporary audiovisual culture.

“Many of my students at first think of music as something that is pleasant and should make you feel good. I explain that music is an art form that makes a statement. So, yes, sometimes it may please you, but sometimes it should make you uncomfortable,” clarifies Loyato, who had only conceived the idea three months earlier.

“It was a challenge, but one I was very interested in pursuing,” says the assistant professor, who has been teaching at LAU for nearly four years. “There’s a psychological problem. The media tells us

what to eat and how to dress, and I see so many students resorting to cosmetic surgery.”

The lack of individuality extends, he says, to people’s ability to appreciate diverse music. “I consciously play music from pieces and styles that my students have never heard before, and sometimes their first reaction is rejection. I ask them to define music at the beginning of the semester and again at the end, and their responses are markedly different.”

Their ability to grasp, produce and perform different styles was evident during the *Vadis Quo* performance, to which each musician and vocalist contributed despite differences in their technical ability and experience. “It’s certainly challenging, particularly as we don’t have a standard ensemble. I have to write for whomever is there, depending on the ability and instrument of the students

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*“Everyone did their part to the max.”*

—Martin Loyato, LAU assistant professor of music

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enrolled,” explains Loyato. “We wondered at first whether we would manage to pull this craziness together? But we did.”

The success of the performances and the achievements of the students are due in no small part to Loyato himself, says his student Karl Bou Rjeily, who played the electric guitar. “It was tough, but Martin did a great job managing and bringing together the musicians, the dancers and the technical team. He always asked for our feedback and input and gave us a lot of liberty. It was a really unique and cool experience.”



# LAU awarded in UNICEF Global Challenge

By Federica Marsi

Students ideate a machine to help solve Lebanon's mounting waste problem

*"These students showed remarkable motivation and ambition."*

—Barbar Akle, assistant dean of LAU's School of Engineering



An ever-growing number of Syrian refugees are fleeing to Lebanon and living in informal tented settlements, where there is a lack of organized garbage disposal. The piles of untreated waste that lie close to refugee tents are how diseases spread. A solution for a proper location to dispose of and separate the waste is urgently needed.

Three LAU mechanical engineer undergrads and a graphic design student — Mohammad Hammad, Amani Saleh, Mahmoud al-Abbassi and Jad Abdo — have come up with a potential solution by designing the Automatic Waste Sorting Machine.

While the principle behind the machine is simple, its functioning is quite amazing. From the outside, it looks like any disposal bin. However, once the garbage is inserted, the user pushes a button that activates the automatic sorting. Through a system of air pistons, the waste is then redirected into the right pile according to its material, determined by interior sensors. A voucher is then printed, which can be redeemed for cash.

The machine was designed as part of the "Vita Mundo" project the four students worked on during the "Instrumentation and Measurements" course taught by LAU Associate Professor and Assistant Dean of the School of Engineering Barbar Akle. It subsequently won second place in the UNICEF Global Challenge competition, which has as its stated goal the leveraging of the skills and talents of young people. Thanks to this award, the team now disposes of \$10,000 to initiate a start-up company and turn their creation into reality.

"These students showed remarkable motivation and ambition," says Akle. "Their passion motivated them to make this project the core of their future careers and dedicate themselves to initiating a startup."

Initially, the project focused on building a small automatic waste sorting machine for refugee camps as a partial solution for the waste problem. To make sure their final year projects — known as Capstone projects — would fit the requirements of the market, the engineering students worked toward the criteria of a prospective client.

"Refugees already have too many problems to be able to focus on the environment," points out Mohammad Hammad, one of the team members. "Therefore, it is necessary to give them an economic incentive." Against all expectations, the cost of the machine is relatively contained, ranging from \$1,500 to \$2,000.

The competition, held by the Welfare Association — a development NGO which aims to help the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon — allows the students to continue working on their project and respond to the demands of the growing number of customers who have already showed interest.

"We encourage good ideas by young entrepreneurs by giving grants so that they can see the fruit of their hard work," explains the Welfare Association's Business Development Consultant Allie Kazan, who works with the NGO's Youth Employment Services (YES) program that awarded the prize. "Ziad Abichaker, CEO at Cedar Environmental, was one of the judges and he was impressed with the idea of the machine, especially using sensors to deflect the garbage."

According to its creators, recycling is at the root of the waste management problem. "In Lebanon it is not possible to recycle until you sort the waste," says Hammad. "We designed a machine that will obviate the lack of a recycling culture that is still affecting our country."



LAU Gala 2015  
Partnered for Excellence *dinner*

# CELEBRATING A LEADER'S COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

By Naseem Ferdowsi



LAU held its fourth annual Fundraising Gala Dinner in December 2015, honoring longtime friend and supporter Adnan Kassar, president and chairman of Fransabank. Hosted at the Phoenicia Hotel in Beirut, the event paid special recognition to Kassar's generous gift of \$10 million toward the naming of the Adnan Kassar School of Business. "President Kassar, you are an example. You are a role model for all of us and we thank you for that," said LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra in his welcoming remarks.

With a history of financial contributions to LAU dating back to 1998, Kassar is a steadfast supporter of the community. His special passion for education has inspired him to contribute to various LAU scholarship grants and educational conferences that provide students with educational opportunities aimed at helping them make a positive impact on society.



The \$10 million donation is one of the biggest philanthropic investments in the university's history and it will go toward ensuring that the Adnan Kassar School of Business continues to bring about positive growth and development in Lebanon and the region.

"With pride and with complete confidence, I chose to have my name linked with LAU, a leading university in Lebanon. I specifically wanted to be affiliated with the university's school of business and my ambition is for the school to carry my values and mission toward peace and education," said Kassar in his speech to the assembled guests.

In addition to paying tribute to Kassar's admirable contribution, over 800 of the region's most recognized political, economic, academic and cultural figures came together at the event to support LAU and its scholarship program, with all proceeds from gala ticket sales and



sponsorships destined for the Gala Dinner Endowed Scholarship Fund.

The fund, which raises between \$1 and 2 million each year, is one of the many ways the university ensures that promising students may access LAU education regardless of their economic standing. For the 2016-2017 academic year, LAU has allocated an unprecedented \$25 million in scholarships and financial aid.

Addressing the guests, Jabbra thanked them for their commitment to LAU and their contribution to the university's "Fulfilling the Promise" campaign, which benefits students and faculty through scholarships, innovative facilities and research opportunities.

"Your giving has allowed LAU to really build a house of wisdom — a city of hope for our youth, for your sons and daughters, and for your grandsons and granddaughters," Jabbra affirmed.



FEATURE

# Ceilings and barriers

The success of and resistance to women at work in Lebanon

By Reem Maghribi

*Photographs on pages 16 & 17 are courtesy of Greg Demarque/Executive magazine*



*“All sectors should be accessible to women and we should combat the male bastions, even the clergy and armed forces.”*

*—Lina Abou-Habib, executive director of the Collective for Research and Training on Development*

Rola Hoteit (left) was MEA's first female pilot when she joined the airliner 16 years ago. She remains the only one. Hoteit alongside mechanical technician Elsy Abou Zeid (top left), Christelle Yared, GM of a car armoring company (above) and police officer Najwa Layan (top right) defy stereotypes of Lebanese women in the workplace.

A police officer, a chef, a pilot, an aerospace engineer, a mechanical technician and a winemaker were among a number of women recently highlighted in a special issue of a Lebanese magazine celebrating women who have defied gender stereotypes in the workplace.

Their success, while certainly noteworthy, goes to highlight the great gender divide still prevalent in Lebanese society in general and the labor market in particular. Rola Hoteit joined MEA as the airline's first female pilot 16 years ago; to date, she remains the only one. Nancy Arbid and Elsy Abou Zeid have found success in their careers as aerospace and mechanical engineers respectively; yet women still only make up less than 20 percent of students enrolled in university engineering programs.

“We need to make it a point that all sectors should be accessible to women and combat the male bastions, even the clergy and armed forces,” says Lina Abou-Habib, executive director of the Collective for Research and Training on

Development (CRTDA), an organization that works on issues of gender, economic rights and women's leadership. “It's a long-term vision that requires everyone's engagement. But I'm driven by the fact that it will happen eventually. Injustice can't prevail forever. Just see how women have progressed since the 1950s.”

Since gaining the right to vote in 1953, Lebanese women have gained more legislative rights, shifting the dynamic of their reliance on and relationship with men and society. In 1974 they gained the right to travel without the permission of a male guardian. In 1993 women became entitled to own property in their own name. The following year they were granted permission to register a business without the approval of a male guardian. At the turn of the century women were granted seven weeks of paid maternity leave, recently increased to 10 weeks. Men, however, are still only entitled to two days of paternity leave.

The persistence of a gender ideology that has associated women with family

roles is one of the two greatest barriers facing women's labor market participation in Lebanon, wrote LAU Associate Professor of Sociology and Social Work Hassan Hammoud and Seiko Sugita, program specialist for social and human sciences at UNESCO, in an editorial published in a special issue about women's employability in *Al-Raida*, a journal published by LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW). The second barrier they identified is the growth of precarious employment. Most women are employed in the informal sector and as such are not included in social security or in statistics issued by Lebanon's Central Administration for Statistics, which notes that less than a quarter of the workforce is made up of women.

Personal accounts of women at work published in another issue of *Al-Raida* support the belief that normative gender roles and informal employment hinder women. A recent graduate, at first delighted that her fiancé had found a job with her employer, was dismayed to



hear that his starting salary would be 70 percent higher than hers. “He is a young man who has to provide for his family,” was the explanation offered by the boss.

The perception of the man as the breadwinner of the family, regardless of whether his wife works, is still prevalent in Lebanon, according to research conducted by economist and former IWSAW director Mona Khalaf. “Even the women, including those who held a higher position than their husband, would refer to him as the breadwinner. This reflects societal norms and traditions, but it varies depending on the social milieu in which you live.”

Khalaf herself was raised within a well-to-do conservative family. Still, “my father supported my education and work and had an egalitarian attitude toward me and my brothers,” she recalls. However, not everyone in her environment was as supportive. During her time as an economics major at AUB in the 1970s, one of Khalaf’s professors, despite having recently returned from Oxford, encouraged her and the two other females in class to transfer to the education department, where women were perceived as receiving

training in a field that would benefit them as mothers. When, upon graduating with distinction, Khalaf received an offer of a paid studentship, her aunt was displeased at the prospect of a woman in the family in paid employment. Another aunt was concerned that her success and dedication to work would make finding a husband more difficult.

Khalaf in fact met her future husband through her work and together they raised a daughter and a son. “I wanted to be available to my children while also working. I didn’t prioritize family, but I feel I didn’t penalize them either,” she says, though she acknowledges that there was an opportunity cost to being available for her children. “There were articles I didn’t publish and a Ph.D. thesis I didn’t finish. But I don’t regret it.”

She doesn’t, however, believe that most women of today would compromise as much. A shift in attitudes, the necessity of a two-income household and the availability of cheap domestic labor are, says Khalaf, among the factors encouraging and enabling women to combat abuse and inequality at home

*Women’s contributions to Arab society and labor force have been plentiful over the past century. A significant number of Lebanese women migrated to nearby countries, including Iraq, in the mid 20-th century to join its then vibrant and diverse work force.*

- 1/ The Popular Resistance Movement during the 1958 revolution, Lebanon.
- 2/ Nurses of the Fouad Osseiran Hospital, Saida, Lebanon, 1962.
- 3/ Dates factory, Basra, Iraq, 1961.
- 4/ Woman working in a textile factory, Baghdad, Iraq, 1963.
- 5/ Secretarial Institute in Baghdad, Iraq, 1961.
- 6/ Institute of pharmacy, Baghdad, Iraq, 1960.

*Photographs on pages 18 & 19 courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation. Iraq by Latif El Ani, Lebanon by Chafik Al Sousi.*

*“Economic independence has made women more assertive.”*

*—Mona Khalaf, economist and former director of LAU’s IWSAW*

and aim beyond the glass ceiling at work. That ceiling is, however, not an unverified assumption but rather a reality of which Lebanese people are very much aware, notes Hussein Ismail, assistant professor at LAU’s Adnan Kassar School of Business, in a recently published paper about



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Lebanese perceptions of the glass ceiling. “In Lebanon, most of the respondents (43.4 percent) believed that companies’ policies and structures are the major barriers to women’s progress. Structural arrangements at work can alienate women from acquiring the experience necessary for job development.”

The fact that men dominate senior management positions perpetuates the problem and may yield the perception that men are more competent, argues Ismail, in a bid to explain why a third of the female students surveyed for his study, compared to only a quarter of the males, consider men to be more competent to handle senior management positions. A third of those surveyed also considered family-work conflict to be a barrier to women’s progress in the workplace.

While studies about the conflict between work and family are on the rise both globally and in the region, most focus on married women and mothers. However, a study co-written by Zeina al-Hakim during her time as a faculty member of the university’s business school stands out. In it the authors hypothesize that single women in Lebanon will experience as much family-work conflict (FWC) as married women, because culturally, single women — most of who live with their parents — are still expected to take on many household responsibilities.

While the study ultimately showed that single women experienced lower levels of FWC than married women, it also suggested that single men showed higher FWC than single women. This, argue the authors, is to be expected given that obligations of single men toward their family fall outside of their gender roles, whereas women are seen by society and within their own self-concept as family-oriented caregivers.

Gender norms, roles and expectations

are at the forefront of most studies and conversations about women at work in Lebanon. One priority therefore is for the attitudes of men to shift and accommodate equality. “Women have suffered a great deal from men’s hegemony. Economic independence has made women more assertive, but men don’t accept that easily, which can explain the high divorce rate,” says Khalaf.

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*“If we work on attitudes, society itself will claim reform.”*

—Ghida Anani, founder and director of ABAAD-Resource Center for Gender Equality

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“We must focus first and foremost on upbringing. If we raise our children with an egalitarian approach, that will facilitate change.”

Children are ultimately the ones to benefit from the increased disposable income generated when a mother works, as it enables parents to invest more in their children’s education. The way women spend their income and their attitudes toward work and family are among the many topics Khalaf has researched over the years, during which time she has come across a trove of fascinating anecdotes. Among them is the story of a woman she interviewed as part of a study commissioned by IWSAW before she took over the ropes.

“I conducted a study to consider the imputed income of women who don’t cash a salary. I asked one woman if she worked. She proceeded to describe how busy her day was, between accompanying her husband to the farm, taking care of the home and the kids, ironing and

cooking, and then asked rhetorically ‘when would I have time to work?’” When Khalaf explained to the woman that what she did was unpaid labor but still very much work, the woman disagreed and said: “This is my share of the responsibility in life.”

Such unpaid work and “forced volunteering” is often displayed as a continuation of the “natural” role of women as “caregivers,” notes a 2016 report by Lebanon Support. “This gender-stereotyped vision of women as caring has very concrete consequences that are still not tackled by gender actors at a local level,” argue the authors, noting that the lack of global vision and feminist ideals within NGOs themselves is turning them into institutions rather than social actors. “Civil society agendas are being parceled to receive funds and gender actors are losing their collective power to pressure policy making on a state level.”

The lack of cohesion among Lebanese NGOs working on gender equality is something Ghida Anani, founder and director of ABAAD-Resource Center for Gender Equality, has herself experienced. “Our strategies have not been in line with the traditional ways of promoting women’s rights and we have faced a lot of resistance,” says Anani, noting in particular their approach toward reforming men’s attitudes and working with religious leaders. “We decided to reform the system from within. We took gender-based violence from the private to the public sphere and were considered controversial.”

Societal reform, says Anani, is the bedrock of change and no legislation or legal reform can be effective without it. “The first focus should be programming for children, promoting understanding of gender equality and dispelling misconceptions about women’s rights,” she says. “If we work on attitudes, society itself will claim reform.” ■

# Gender equality leads the agenda

By Reem Mahgribi

LAU institute committed to promoting women's rights instigates a flurry of activity



Within days of joining LAU as director of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), Lina Abirafeh initiated a new monthly series of talks meant to encourage the LAU community to actively engage in the work and mission of the institute.

"Food 4 Thought" began in October with an informal 90-minute session during which Abirafeh introduced the principles of gender equality, drawing on examples she has gained during nearly 20 years in the field. "This is a space for discussion, to ping-pong ideas back and forth," she said, spurring on a vibrant discussion with and among students, at gatherings held both in Byblos and Beirut.

The guest speakers invited each month to share their knowledge and experience in the field of gender equality have included celebrated journalist Saada Allaw, who took time from her busy schedule at *As-Safir* to walk the LAU community through the trials, tribulations and legal achievements of those who have for decades been striving for feminism and gender justice. Masculinities expert Anthony Kaadi introduced the LAU community to a more recent movement, one that seeks to engage men and disconnect them from harmful social conditioning. "Ripples make waves, and if my talk with you today can slightly tweak your thinking, then there's a ripple," said Kaadi.

In a parallel campaign, IWSAW presented film screenings, engaging talks and an

interactive play as part of "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence." Each year since 1991, the initiative encourages organizations and individuals to plan and attend a plethora of activities between the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25 and Human Rights Day on December 10.

This year, the institute welcomed hundreds of students and visitors to both LAU campuses for various events, many of which were the result of collaborations with other organizations. Initiatives included a screening of a film about young women and gender equality that was followed by a discussion with the Intersectional Feminist and Human Rights clubs, the creation of graffiti art promoting AIDS awareness and anti-stigma, and a talk with LAU graduate and journalist Diana Moukalled about women, war and crime.

Men were equally present, with the screening of a film about women in the media by Jad Ghosn and the women's rights NGO Fe-male, a talk by Kaadi on behalf of ABAAD-Resource Centre for Gender Equality, and an interactive play that tackled the inequality between men and women in the political sphere.

*For more information about the campaign, the Food4Thought series and upcoming events visit [iwsaw.lau.edu.lb](http://iwsaw.lau.edu.lb)*

## Coming home

The third generation of women in a family to have worked at LAU



The new director of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) Lina Abirafeh has a long history with the institute and the university. In 1938 her grandmother Salma Balat graduated from the then AJCW. Between 1964 and 1982, Balat worked as secretary of the Alumni Association and then as executive secretary of the Development Office. From 1968-1978, Abirafeh's aunt Samira Rafidi was the university's head librarian and worked with IWSAW's director at that time to develop a documentation center on Arab women in the library, which then evolved into the Bibliography on the Status of Arab Women. And, if that's not enough, Abirafeh was briefly in daycare here on campus.

concerned about what I saw and therefore sought an opportunity to complain constructively, within a theoretical framework that would allow me to critically examine the work I was doing.

### What are the three main issues women in the region should focus on now?

The region is facing dramatic challenges that are affecting women — continued conflicts and insecurity that are resulting in mass migrations, denial of basic services and rights, lack of legislation — it's a long list. All of these obstacles are fueling an increase in gender-based violence. All the while we are struggling to meet increasing humanitarian and development needs while donor interest wanes.

The most pressing issues are access to livelihoods and economic opportunities — this is an entry point for all other things. Once women are able to support themselves and meet their own basic needs, they will be able to advocate more strongly for their rights. Economic empowerment is also a solid way to both prevent and respond to gender-based violence. Arab women also face discrimination in legislation — there is a lot of work to do on personal status codes, criminal laws, nationality, etc. And women in the region are not adequately represented in political bodies and decision-making positions.

Even the risk or fear of gender-based violence is enough of an impediment for women and girls. It restricts their voices, limits their choices and denies their access to their basic rights. Imagine if we lived in a world where women and girls could be free of that kind of fear — individuals, communities, countries and the region would be far stronger as a result. No sustainable progress or development is possible as long as inequalities persist. We have a lot of work to do!

### How has over 20 years experience in the field focusing on gender-based violence affected you?

I am fortunate to have a career that I love and that has taken me to fascinating countries, and while I've gained a great deal of knowledge, experience and understanding, for me the more important question is what I have actually offered. Working on gender-based violence is always challenging. It exists everywhere, in every country and culture, and ending it often seems like an impossible task.

This is made even more challenging in the context of an emergency, where basic services are lost, vulnerabilities are magnified as people struggle for survival. Regardless, for me it is the most pressing human rights challenge of our time. And while I might not see great results in my lifetime, I can't imagine ever giving up.

### What attracted you to academia?

I call myself an "accidental academic" because I started my doctoral research while I was working in Afghanistan. I was

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*"I am a feminist and an activist — a firm believer in gender equality, human rights and social justice. Gender equality is the most important ingredient for our future."*

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## A deep passion for giving back

By Reem Maghribi

LAU brings to life Issam Mahfouz's 1971 play *Limaza*

Lina Khoury is nothing if not a passionate thespian. Her pride in having mentored students through the challenging task of theater production, her joy at the success of fall 2015's major theater production *Limaza* and her enthusiasm for the staging of the play at the Masrah al-Madina are all clearly evident as she speaks. "Theater is my passion, I couldn't possibly work in any other field," says Khoury, an LAU graduate, theater director and, for the past five years, instructor at LAU.

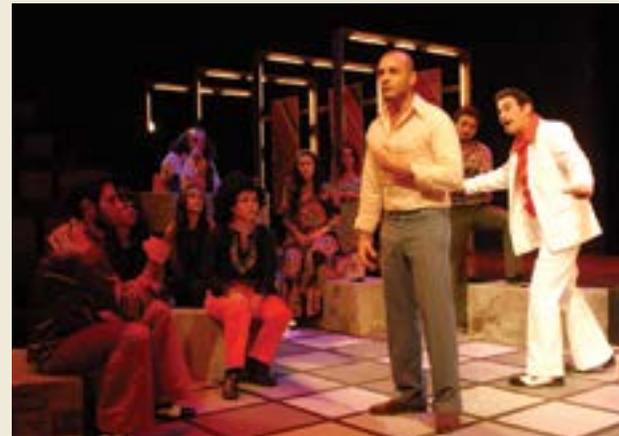
Made up mostly of LAU graduates and students, a 19-person cast participated in the first performance of Issam Mahfouz's play *Limaza* since its opening run in Beirut in 1971. Renowned poet and playwright Mahfouz, who died ten years ago, was among the first to write plays in dialect, taking Arabic theater away from the formal toward the modern.

The format of the play — set in a nightclub where stoned party-goers act out the lives of fallen resistance fighters

— was certainly *avant-garde*, written to reflect, and perhaps engage, apolitical Arabs during the "overwhelming Arab Coma" that followed the 1967 defeat and that many say persists to this day.

This is the fifth university major production directed by Khoury, who was herself bitten by the theater bug as an LAU student in the late 1990s. "Students really wanted to be involved in a major production back then. It was seen as a great opportunity and we wouldn't leave the theater until security kicked us out," recalls Khoury nostalgically. In her students' course log-books, she often glimpses similar feelings. "They write analyses and show critical thinking, but they also detail their feelings and many speak of how the experience has been life-changing for them."

Some students who worked with her on the major production for credit as part of the "Theater in Performance" course have now decided to minor in theater. "Lina's passion for theater



made me realize my own,” says first-year student Riwa Housami, who worked in stage management and enjoyed occasionally filling in for actors during rehearsals. “She’s a great teacher and a talented director,” Housami stresses.

Most of the 19 actors who performed at the Gulbenkian Theater during the LAU production also occupied the stage for the Masrah al-Madina rendition, with all 19 remaining on stage throughout the 60-minute performance. “It was a challenging play to stage,” confides Khoury. “Managing schedules for rehearsals when people are contributing their time is always difficult, but this play also has a huge cast and their actions throughout need to be visually interesting and comprehensible.”

The students who worked on production backstage learned about all the various aspects of putting on a public performance. “It’s a department

production, for the benefit of all students. From lighting and costume to promotion and ticketing, they were involved in every aspect and were super great,” enthuses Khoury, who also hired some of her students to work on the Masrah al-Madina production, under the supervision of a production manager, who is an LAU graduate.

Giving back, through both teaching and working with young talent, is something that gives Khoury a lot of pleasure. “It feels wonderful to open doors for them, it also helps me feel young to meet new people and hear new visions. Helping and working with other people and shining a spotlight on them is all part of being a director.”

Most of the actors were students with little experience of acting, the rest were professionals and LAU graduates with whom Khoury had herself studied. “I always bring together professional and

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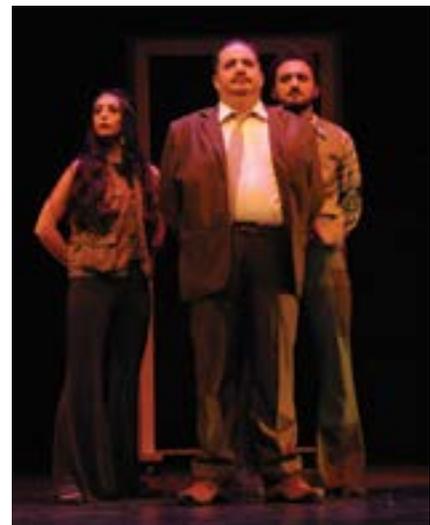
*“Theater is my passion, I couldn’t possibly work in any other field.”*

—Lina Khoury, LAU instructor and theater director

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student actors in my LAU productions. It’s about giving back and providing students with an opportunity to gain experience and learn from others.”

Among those grateful for the spotlight is Housami, who was among the Masrah al-Madina production crew. “I’m only in my second semester but already I’m working on a real production. It’s an amazing opportunity. I really hope I can work in theater fulltime after graduation, but I know the reality is that it’s very difficult in Lebanon.”



# Ending the stalemate in the Middle East

By Federica Marsi

International relations experts discuss regional turmoil and reflect on the path ahead

The year 2015 has reached its closure seeing seven Middle Eastern countries at war, with some analysts referring to the spiraling situation in the region as an “Armageddon.” A coalition of 63 countries has been formed to counter the Islamic State, yet the organization still controls an area bigger than 11 Arab countries, and those who are born Arabs are 30 times more likely than anyone else to become a refugee.

“What occurred is the fracture of the national social contracts,” says Maha Yahya, senior associate at the Carnegie Middle East Center and keynote speaker at the conference “Wars and Wars’ Ending in the Post-2011 Middle East,” organized by LAU in collaboration with the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA). “Local social contracts have replaced national ones, so that states no longer matter.”

seven million Arabs today live below the poverty line and more than 7.8 million Syrians are displaced or on the run in their own homeland. Half of Syria’s youngest population (between 6 and 18 years) is not receiving an education, which has prompted some to talk of a “lost generation.” “Youngsters have no skills, no jobs, nothing to do all day, yet education is one of the most underfunded sectors,” Yahya adds.

According to Makram Ouais, assistant professor of Political Science and International Affairs at LAU, conflict resolution is not possible unless certain conditions come into being. “One condition is that both parties involved are able to visualize a better outcome by reaching an agreement rather than fighting,” says Ouais. Another possibility is what is commonly defined as a “mutually hurting stalemate” or a situation in which neither party thinks it can win without incurring excessive loss.

Similarly, mediation is only successful when all parties agree on the third party undertaking the task. Financial incentives are also a viable, yet less explored, option. According to Ouais, the road to peace in Syria seems to still be a long one. “There is no indication that any party is willing to push in the right direction,” he says, underlining the absence of a mutually hurting stalemate and the unwillingness of certain parties to engage with some others on any level of collaboration.

The option left for exiting the war zone seem to be few, yet the situation is ripe for much needed discussions on the best political structures to mitigate the existing divides. In the face of the strengthening of sectarian fault lines, GIGA’s Stephan Rosiny advocates a transition phase based on consociationalism on the way to a unitary nation state based on nationalism rather than sectarianism.

“Power sharing is not a technique to overcome sectarianism but rather an institutional design to overcome this kind of conflict,” he says. “Identities are fluid. Thus we need to ask ourselves: in which circumstances is an individual willing to drop one in favor of another?”

The regional situation has prompted LAU to establish the Social Justice and Conflict Resolution Institute, endowing it with a mission to develop a research-based public policy forum that addresses contemporary issues of social justice and conflict resolution in the Arab World.



*“Power sharing is not a technique to overcome sectarianism.”*

—Stephan Rosiny of the German Institute of Global and Area Studies

Despite the grim picture, Yahya does not believe the situation to be an Armageddon. Whereas some have blamed the Arab springs for the unrest, claiming that the alternative to the old regimes is chaos, these popular uprisings have had the beneficial effect of reasserting citizens as sources of political legitimacy. “The power of the individuals has ousted the notion of ‘presidents for life,’” says Yahya. “None of these systems were based on citizens’ rights, which allowed political leaders to manipulate institutions as they wished.”

National identity has been dismantled and replaced with sectarian identities, yet this is not sufficient to explain the rise of extreme groups such as ISIS. Thirty-

# Deceptive perceptions

By Jad Melki

Jad Melki, associate professor and newly appointed chair of the Department of Communication Arts, looks at the need to create institutional codes of conduct and penal laws countering sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the news industry.



*“Women make up 80 percent of journalism majors at Lebanese universities.”*



The Lebanese pride themselves on being one of the most progressive and free nations in the region, especially when it comes to gender relations and the press. The perception is that women in this country are free to pursue any profession and to reach any position they aspire to. However, many underlying realities belie such perceptions.

As a former journalist and current media scholar, I have observed and researched the changing role of women and men in the Lebanese news industry. Although the country’s female journalists have accomplished major feats in the past half-century, they continue to be marginalized in objectified roles, obstructed from career advancement and forced out of their profession.

It does not take much for a journalism instructor to notice the disproportionately large number of female students in class. On average women make up 80 percent of journalism majors at Lebanese universities. However, once they step into the workforce, their numbers dwindle to just one in every two male journalists.

Move up the managerial ladder and the numbers drop startlingly. Women make up only 36 percent of middle news management and 29 percent of senior management — critical positions for assigning news stories and setting agendas. At top-tier management and governance positions, where institutional policies and strategic goals are set, women represent 22 and 15 percent respectively. Of course, anyone who understands the political economy of Lebanese media knows that even the 15 percent of women in governance — stockholders and board members — only have titular powers and more often than not only serve as a mechanism for some politicians to circumvent the Lebanese Audiovisual Law that restricts any one individual from owning more than 10 percent of a media company.

But even at the lower professional ranks, females mostly occupy positions of high-

exposure — such as TV reporters and anchors — thanks to the “market oriented feminization” of the industry that strives to boost audience ratings with attractive women, while most low-exposure positions remain dominated by men. For example, women make up less than one-third of production and design positions, and the technical professions are almost entirely occupied by men.

Beyond the numbers, women journalists face numerous legal, cultural and institutional obstacles. Sexual harassment in the workplace is one of the most prominent reasons why a woman leaves the industry. The problem is that Lebanon still has no anti-sexual harassment (nor anti-gender discrimination) laws, even though in the aftermath of the 2014 Hoda Sankari outcry activists have been pushing for the adoption of a draft law.

Moreover, the entrenched patriarchal social system continues to expect women to be the primary domestic caretakers while men are free to focus solely on their jobs outside the house. This means most women journalists essentially hold two full-time jobs, both equally demanding and exhausting. The country’s weak maternity/paternity leave policy has forced many married women to quit the industry. Today, most Lebanese women journalists are under the age of 34 (71 percent), not married (71 percent), have no children (73 percent), and have worked less than 10 years in the profession (68 percent).

So, not much has changed in the relationship between men and women, at least in the newsroom, and we have little hope that things will change in the future unless concrete steps are taken. This includes instituting anti-sexual harassment and anti-discrimination laws, preparing journalism students for the hostile gendered newsrooms by integrating media literacy and gender studies in the curriculum, and forming professional groups with missions devoted to advancing gender equity — three matters in which LAU has much potential to lead.



FEATURE

# Going with the flow

The process of social adaptation while maintaining strong ties to the country of origin is the essence of successful migration today

By Irina du Quenoy



"I was cold," says financial analyst Jennifer Asquith, explaining her decision to move from the American Midwest to a glitzy Asian capital. "I woke up one day in freezing February, didn't like it, went online and two months later found myself employed in Asia."

Asquith has had no problem adapting to her new environment, as most of her business contacts are conducted in English and her salary allows her to live a comfortable life even with the sky-high local prices. Even though a deep integration into the culture is unnecessary for a satisfactory career in her new city, she feels welcomed by local authorities and her experience with work-permit granting bureaucrats has been streamlined and routine.

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*"One out of seven people in the world are on the move."*

—Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss, LAU assistant professor of political science/international affairs and a researcher at the university's Institute for Migration Studies

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Not so for "Ashoka," an Indian migrant to Lebanon. Despite speaking Arabic and living and working in the country for over twenty years, he faces imminent deportation because his employer does not want to renew his papers. Deportation back to a country where he has not lived for more than two decades means leaving behind his wife — also of migrant origin but from another country — and his daughter, who was born in Lebanon.

By all objective indicators, Ashoka had adapted well to his host country and added productive capacity to its workforce, raising a family and working as a professional carpenter in an environment where such skills are highly valued. And yet, unlike Asquith, he has to deal with the reality of a society that is not ready to welcome him as an equal.

Social adaptation, it seems, is a two-way street. One that in the twenty-first century is increasingly well-traveled and traffic-jammed. "One out of seven people in the world are on the move," says Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss, assistant professor of political science/international affairs at

LAU and a researcher with the university's Institute for Migration Studies.

According to a United Nations report from 2010, there are approximately 214 million international migrants worldwide or three percent of the global population. "I myself," Skulte-Ouaiss says, "am a migrant [to Lebanon], though when I say this to people I get funny looks."

Indeed, popular perceptions of migrants conjure up images quite different from a successful academic like Skulte-Ouaiss or a financial analyst like Asquith, images far closer to that of Ashoka. In the U.S., "migrant" tends to connote someone from Central America arriving in the States — often illegally — to pick fruit in California or clean hotel rooms across the country. In Europe, particularly in the wake of the crisis of 2015, "migrants" are associated with people of North African or Middle Eastern origin fleeing economic and military disasters, and washing up in leaky boats on the shores of Greece.

In short, the popular perception of migrants is that of poor, often colored people moving toward rich, white countries in search of better lives. Yet, today migration involves a spectrum of populations from refugees fleeing for their lives to laborers following the pull of the market to highly-skilled and economically secure individuals looking for a "change of pace."

"The poorest people are staying home," points out Skulte-Ouaiss. "They simply have no resources to be able to leave." Thus it is that the majority of new arrivals to Europe, especially Syrian refugees, are educated, have some financial means and most importantly the "drive and ambition" to achieve better lives for themselves — all qualities that a host society should presumably welcome.

In fact, this may, more than pure altruism, explain Germany's and other countries' willingness to accept migrants and to invest in socialization programs meant to turn them into productive members of local society. Until recently, all projections were of the imminent economic decline of Europe due to low birth rates and the arrival of new potential tax payers to support the welfare state is a net positive for the continent.

But state policies, however rational, have to contend with the mood of the local electorate. In the case of Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel's welcoming



stance toward arriving migrants was at the time widely supported by the population, despite some recent far-right protests (which seem to be partially inspired by alleged Russian agents in Germany).

Yet countries as disparate as Hungary and Denmark are clamping down on immigration, in the former case by closing the border and in the latter by imposing onerous financial sanctions on migrants wishing to settle in Hamlet's homeland. In both Hungary and Denmark the government have pursued policies in response to a negative popular mood against the new arrivals.

The source of negative attitudes from local populations is itself context driven. On the one hand, according to Skulte-Ouais, Eastern Europeans in particular harbor anti-migrant sentiments because they themselves are living in economically precarious conditions and are reliant on increasingly scarce state resources for survival. The sudden influx of migrants means having to share an already small piece of the pie. Similarly, at present, Ukrainians who had fled to Russia as a result of the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine are under increasing pressure to leave as Russia's own economy implodes.

On the other hand, there is no getting away from the thorny issue of security concerns. "I don't buy into the conspiracy theories, but the security issue is a problem," says Emel Akcali, senior lecturer at the department of politics and international relations of Swansea

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*"The migration factor is embedded in the Lebanese DNA."*

—*Elise Salem, LAU vice president for Student Development and Enrollment Management*

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University (U.K.). She points out that the January 12, 2016 bombing of Istanbul's Sultanahmet square was carried out by an ISIS member, who entered Turkey as a refugee, and that the Syrian refugee father, who was famously kicked by a Hungarian right-wing journalist while trying to escape from border police, is believed to be a member of al-Nusra Front.

These incidents and the ongoing suspicion that the perpetrators of the Paris

bombing took advantage of the refugee/migrant crisis have all contributed to European fears of the "Other" and to a growing unwillingness to accommodate the newcomers. In Lebanon itself, Skulte-Ouais points out that the Lebanese government has been unwilling to integrate Syrian refugees, skilled and unskilled workers alike, because of a combination of security and economic concerns.

In these circumstances, what are the optimal conditions for migrant adaptation and social integration, as the worldwide flow of people across borders shows no signs of letting up? As seen in the case of Jennifer Asquith, migrants from the middle and upper economic classes seem to have the least difficulty moving and adapting to other societies, particularly as they tend to shift either between first-world environments or from middle-income to high-income countries.

For unskilled economic migrants or for refugees, the situation is evidently more precarious. At the same time, even here hope exists in the form of civil society, in which activists devote considerable resources to helping migrants fight for their rights and maximize life conditions.

In Lebanon, a number of NGOs are dedicated to solving migrant issues, based fundamentally on an altruistic ideology in which doing nothing is not an acceptable moral option.

For example, according to LAU alumnus Rami Shukr (B.A. '14), who coordinates the various activities of the Migrant Community Center (MCC) in Beirut's Gemmayze district, the MCC grew out of the broader Lebanese anti-racist movement. Currently, the center serves a population of approximately 400 migrants, mostly domestic workers and their families, helping them build a network of resources to fight for their rights. Volunteers, many of whom are from the LAU community, hold language, computer and design courses, making the MCC a focal point for migrants to meet and discuss adaptation strategies. In this case, one of thousands that could be cited globally, local civic activists are at the forefront of positively transforming relations between migrants and the host community.

Adaptation to new conditions is also made easier these days by technological advances. In previous centuries, migrants maintained only tenuous ties to their home countries and rarely if ever ventured back for a visit. Holding on to cultural identities

was difficult and, more often than not, assimilation to the host society meant the abandonment of the previous "Self."

The development of open skies policies and the proliferation of low cost carriers has meant that it is much easier for someone, who has left home more or less permanently, to render periodic visits to loved ones. Not to speak of the family and cultural ties maintained through an ever-expanding array of social media. In short, adapting to new societies no longer means giving up one's primary identity, considerably easing the socialization process.

Lebanon itself might be thought of as a pioneer in this respect. In the view of Elise Salem, vice president for Student Development and Enrollment Management at LAU, "the migration factor is embedded in the Lebanese DNA and that will not, cannot change." At the same time, Skulte-Ouaiss depicts a large portion of Lebanon's migratory culture as "circular," in which Lebanese who leave often return for prolonged visits or even retirement, quite consciously upholding ties with the "Old Country" as an important part of their life in the new country.

Among many examples, "as a fourth generation Lebanese-American," Regional Program Coordinator in USAID's Middle

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*"As a fourth generation Lebanese-American I'm proud of my heritage and always have been."*

*—Charles Kiamie III, USAID Middle East Bureau's regional program coordinator*

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East Bureau Charles Kiamie III is "interested in and proud of my heritage — and always have been." Like many Lebanese-Americans, Kiamie has maintained a strong connection to Lebanon, reinforced by such things as traditional family meals and visits to the country, yet feels a deep sense of commitment to his family's adopted homeland.

In the end, as a microcosm in which onerous state policies towards in-migrants coexist with civil society efforts to ease the process of social adaptation and as a country whose culture of out-migration offers many lessons on the role of maintaining strong ties to the country of origin, Lebanon will long remain a country of interest to all those committed to assuring smooth relations between migrants and host societies. ■



*"Today, migration involves a spectrum of populations from refugees fleeing for their lives to highly-skilled and economically secure individuals looking for a change of pace."*

# Postcard from New York

By Paige Kollock

In the final months of 2015, LAU NY hosted a wine lecture and tasting, a movie and popcorn night and a lecture and book launch.



## Heirs of Bacchus

November witnessed over 150 people attending a lecture on the evolution of the Lebanese wine industry at LAU NY. The evening was the fruit of a collaboration between LAU, the Consulate General of Lebanon in New York and the Union Vinicole du Liban, Lebanon's official association of wine producers. It began with a colorful lecture by wine writer Michael Karam, who spoke about the country's 5,000-year-old wine tradition from the Phoenicians through the Ottoman Empire to the French mandate. He then delved into the structure of the modern industry, discussing Lebanon's rank in the global wine market and the steps the country could take to enhance its position. "We're a very small wine-producing country so we have to play with scarcity," said Karam. "We have to present the ultimate boutique product that everybody wants to have. If we can do that, we can sell our wines anywhere." Following the lecture, guests flocked to a separate room for a tasting featuring nine different Lebanese wines. The audience included wine importers, distributors and consultants, bankers, United Nations staff, U.S. State Department personnel, Arabic language students and academics, as well as alumni and friends of LAU.



## Cairo Drive

In December, LAU teamed up with the American University in Cairo (AUC) to host a "movie and popcorn night" featuring a screening of *Cairo Drive* at the New York Academic Center. A Q&A with the film's director, Sherief Elkatsha, followed the viewing. The feature-length documentary explores the life of one of the world's most populated cities from the vantage point of its streets. Shot before and during the Egyptian revolution, it sheds light on the country's collective identity, inherent struggles and the sentiments that led to the historic changes taking place in Egypt today. Elkatsha, who was born in the United States, raised in Cairo and currently lives in Brooklyn, maintains that driving is one of the few issues that cut across all religions and social classes. "It's everyone's story," he said. A lively audience of both LAU and AUC constituents laughed heartily at the film's many lighter moments — reminiscent of Beirut's snarled traffic and colorful drivers — and peppered Elkatsha with questions about the production process.



## Strangers in the West

LAU NY hosted a lecture and book signing in December with author and archeologist Linda K. Jacobs, who spoke about some of the earliest Syrian immigrants to the so-called "land of opportunity." Their story is detailed over the 400-plus pages of her new book, *Strangers in the West: The Syrian Colony of New York City, 1880–1900*. Jacobs described how they arrived equipped with little more than business acumen and built a thriving colony in Lower Manhattan that became the cultural and economic center of the Syrian diaspora in America.

The granddaughter of Syrian immigrants from different parts of what is now Lebanon, Jacobs's quest started with research into her family's past. "When I began, it was simply to do a genealogy of the family," she said. "I was shocked to learn that no one had investigated the Manhattan colony. It became my mission to reconstruct it by discovering every Syrian who had ever lived in New York before 1900. I did that, one name at a time." In telling the story of her grandfathers, Jacobs said she wanted to dismiss the myth that all immigrants were successful — while one of her grandfathers built a thriving textile business, the other died penniless and in debt. The event was co-hosted with AUB.

# Are you being served?

By Paige Kollock

The world's financial capital enriches LAU students' educational experience

*"Hearing stories from graduates with real world experience is so important."*

—Caren Salha, LAU marketing student

When Kentucky Fried Chicken entered the Chinese market in the 1980s, its slogan — "Finger-lickin' good" — translated to "Eat your fingers off" in Mandarin. When Chevrolet rolled out its Nova car in Latin America, the company failed to realize that "nova" translates as "doesn't go" in Spanish. These are just two examples illustrating the perils of introducing local products to the international marketplace.

LAU business students learned about these pitfalls and others in a course called "International Service Management," held at LAU NY in January.

Taught by Mahmood A. Khan, director of the Graduate Program in Hospitality & Tourism Management at Virginia Tech, the nine-day course combined in-class instruction with afternoon site visits to illuminate class discussions.

One such visit was to the renowned Plaza Hotel, a New York City landmark historically hosting princes, princesses and heads of state. The hotel offers perks like an in-room butler, private elevators for

no liqueur, for the birthday of a prince who didn't drink alcohol." She and her team even organized a New Year's Eve celebration on the penthouse terrace for a VIP client from the GCC who wanted to ring in the New Year in the snow.

These are just some of the many boutique services that five-star hotels like The Plaza offer. Of course, besides hotels, the services industry includes many other sectors, such as restaurants, attractions, hospitals, airlines, shipping and other transport, educational facilities, banking, consulting and more.

About 60 percent of all business conducted in the U.S. is related to services, said Khan. And an increasing trend toward automation doesn't necessarily mean fewer service jobs down the road. In fact, the opposite is the case.

"Automation provides ways to reach as many customers as possible conveniently and easily," Khan said, citing Amazon's broad reach of 244 million customers.

Classroom topics touched on concepts like "servicescape" (the way in which you tempt customers to buy your products), cultural differences when it comes to service, "conversational currency" or the buzz that exists around your company or product and how to expand on it, the gap between customer expectations and service provider expectations, among others.

Marketing student Caren Salha says she benefitted immensely from the course. "I really liked that we were undergrads, M.B.A. and Executive M.B.A. mixed together," she said. "We spent a lot of time together in and out of the classroom, and to hear stories from graduate students with real world experience is better than listening to theories in class."

All agreed that Khan's 35 years of experience in the field, as both a consultant and a professor, paid off. "He was incredible. He treated us like his friends or his children," said M.B.A. student Jimmy Ghosn.

This was the sixth course the Adnan Kassar School of Business has organized at LAU's New York outpost — all of them with the purpose of enriching students' educational experiences through exposure to instructors from U.S. universities and site visits to businesses and companies in the world's financial capital.



VIPs and secret entranceways to maintain guest discretion.

The students were treated to a private tour with The Plaza's Diplomatic Manager Alaina Monblatt, who showed them various rooms and suites and shared some of the more unusual requests she's received.

"Our concierge sourced two rare ferrets for a client who collects them in a particular shade of gray," Monblatt said. "Our pastry kitchen created a giant tiramisu cake ... custom-made with



## Looking in from the outside

By Reem Maghribi

External jurors offer students of creative disciplines a fresh and critical eye

"I'm mesmerized by your storytelling. The process is beautiful and poetic, but I don't see it in the final outcome," said one of the eight jurors who sat in front of an LAU fashion design program student as she presented her portfolio and a finished garment for critique. "You stopped too early in the process," concluded the juror, one of 20 external professionals invited to join the university's faculty to partake in the 85 jury discussions held at the fashion department over five consecutive days.

The jury process is long and often critical, but one that is highly beneficial for the students, says assistant professor and program director Jason Steel. "Our students must be thinking about commerce from day one. By inviting professionals from outside the LAU community to join the juries, we reinforce the importance of the industry."

Dozens of external jurors are invited to attend one or more of a number of juries each semester to critique the work of students in the creative discipline, including fashion design, graphic design and fine arts. "It's really useful to have fresh eyes look at our work and give us feedback," says Randa Sabbagh, one of Steel's students. Fashion designer Ziad Ghanem, who was among those to judge



Sabbagh's work, agrees. "We are like any other buyer or client who is not involved in the process but is ready to judge based on the designer's presentation."

The jurors come from diverse professional backgrounds. "I use different materials than those used in fashion, but ultimately the design process is not too dissimilar," says furniture designer Nada Debs, who enjoyed the opportunity to witness the transition of students from education to reality. "I think these fresh ideas are very inspiring and a reflection of the times."

Students with unique concepts, skilled execution and strong presentation skills

often pique the interest of potential buyers and employers. “It’s nice to discover young Lebanese talent, to help and promote them, and to be proud of them,” says jewelry designer Rosy Abourous, who is always looking for new designers to showcase at her concept store.

Advertising executive Nour Kanafani also hopes to scout talent while imparting advice as a juror. “We work in a subjective industry with busy clients who give decisive opinions, so it’s important that our designers have strong communication skills and be able to defend their concepts,” explains Kanafani after a three-hour jury session reviewing the final year projects of students of graphic design.

Among them was Nour al-Hariri, whose project involved the development of an illustrated educational tool to help youngsters understand the grammar and correct use of the Arabic *hamze*. “We need external jurors. They have a lot of experience and ideas for us to learn from. Five minutes with them can change a lot in a project. These five minutes changed my life, basically,” says al-Hariri,

whose work went down a treat with the jury members, all of whom strongly encouraged her to continue developing educational tools.

This opportunity to guide and encourage students is what motivates many industry professionals to offer their time as an external juror, among them advertising executive Danielle Rizkallah. “I’m a person who is engaged. I think that my presence in this world and the experience I was lucky to have in my life is to be shared and if I can inspire all my life, that’s what I want to do.”

To ensure each student benefits from the enthusiasm and full attention of the external jurors, a large number are invited to each attend one or two of the multitude of sessions, which are organized by creative discipline. “It would be redundant if the same jurors critiqued the work of each and every student. Having a variety of experts from different fields is highly beneficial for them,” says LAU instructor Niloufar Asfar, who attended some of the sessions at the fashion school, as well as those of her own

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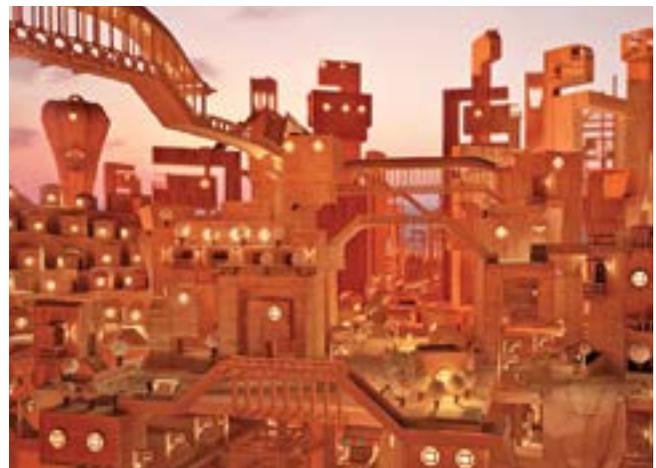
*“Inviting professionals from outside the LAU community reinforces the importance of the industry.”*

—Jason Steel, LAU fashion design program director

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students in the Department of Fine Arts and Foundation Studies.

Indeed, many of Asfar’s students could be seen spread out across the top floor of the Safadi Arts building hovering around one of three jury panels that were concurrently critiquing the work of different aspiring designers and artists. “The jurors have discussions and don’t always agree. It’s good for students to witness that and to consider the different directions any project can take,” says Asfar. “Ultimately, the main benefit of external jurors is the practical knowledge they impart. Knowledge they have gained through industry experience.”





## The spirit of giving back is alive on campus

By Naseem Ferdowsi

LAU's faculty and staff are making a difference and setting an example for students

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*"Our faculty and staff have the unique chance to indirectly serve civil society through educating and empowering the student body."*

—*Elie Samia, LAU assistant vice president for Outreach and Civic Engagement*

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The spirit of giving is on most people's minds during the holiday season. At LAU, however, this spirit is continuously present, though often muted.

"Faculty and staff give back daily, starting with how they treat and address students, teach them, advise them, care about them, help them and celebrate them," explains Elise Salem, the university's vice president of Student Development and Enrollment Management.

Many faculty and staff take it a step further and contribute to others in more tangible ways, from establishing annual scholarship grants to naming seats on campus to participating in the university's annual Fundraising Gala Dinner.

Nayla Moujaes, an assistant director of Marketing and Communications and an LAU alumna, recently named a seat in the Selina Korban Auditorium on the university's Byblos campus.

"I owe LAU more than I will ever be able to give back. I work here, I met my husband here, and I was a merit scholarship student here. It gives me great pleasure to give back to a place that has given me so much," says Moujaes.

"We are all 'getting' from LAU and, usually, those who get must give. It's one of our society's values," explains Raed Mohsen, the university's dean of students in Beirut. Mohsen himself has a history of giving to LAU, dating back to 2000.

Reciprocating the help that they had received as students is a popular way of giving back among faculty and staff. LAU's Assistant Director of Public Relations and Media Office Bert Makadessi, who is also

an alumna, is one such supporter.

"I was a financial aid student whose education was at the expense of an unknown donor who had donated to this institution to provide equal opportunities for all," says Makadessi. She has named seats in the Beirut campus Irwin Hall Auditorium and contributed to the Annual Fund appeal.

"These are difficult times for Lebanon and the MENA region. As we continue to recruit top students to LAU, we want to be able to financially support those who have severe needs. And those numbers are growing," adds Salem, who has contributed financially to the university for several years.

University employees who want to give back in ways other than financial have many alternatives. The university's Outreach and Civic Engagement Office (OCE) offers several opportunities for the LAU community to contribute time and expertise, whether through Model UN, Model Arab League or the countless other programs that the office leads.

"Our faculty and staff have the unique chance to indirectly serve civil society through educating and empowering the student body," says Elie Samia, assistant vice president for Outreach and Civic Engagement at LAU.

"They train, inspire and educate students, who later themselves become trainers, inspirers and educators of middle and high school students across the country. Ultimately, our faculty and staff are our pride and source of knowledge and skills," Samia explains.

# Mapping and understanding today's youth

By Reem Maghribi

LAU economists join Arab-European consortium to research and advise on youth issues in Arab Mediterranean countries

*"There is an established relationship between the quality of education and growth."*

—Ali Fakh, LAU assistant professor of economics

Sixty-five percent of Lebanese youth between the ages of 15 and 29 never use the Internet to surf activist blogs or websites, according to a scientifically conducted survey of 2,000 youngsters in demographically representative neighborhoods and towns across the country. The finding — which contrasts greatly with widespread perceptions of Arab youth since the beginning of the recent uprisings — will be among the many results detailed and analyzed in a series of papers being written as part of a project researching youth attitudes and opportunities in and across Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon.

The SAHWA project, which takes its name from the Arabic word for "revival," is funded by the European Commission and involves researchers from fifteen institutions across the Arab Mediterranean and Europe, among them. LAU's Adnan Kassar School of Business faculty Ghassan Dibeh, Walid Marrouch and Ali Fakh collaborated with the consortium to prepare a survey of 250 questions to be asked to 2,000 young people in each of the five countries.

This leads to many interesting and timely questions," added the economist who, together with Marrouch and Dibeh, is responsible for compiling scientific and policy papers related to youth opportunities across all five countries based on the empirical data collected.

In considering the possible causes of low labor force participation among women and youth, Fakh took note of substantial investments in education across the region in recent decades. "There is an established relationship between the quality of education and growth, and so it's important to consider the private university sector and the wide diversity of quality on offer," he added, referring specifically to the dozens of private universities in Lebanon, most of which were founded during or since the 1990s.

Despite the plethora of universities, the survey found that only 27 percent of youth left school because they felt they had completed their studies, despite over 80 percent expressing a desire to earn a tertiary education. Among the most significant reasons cited for leaving education early were a need to help the family financially (14 percent), high education fees (12 percent) and the need to prepare oneself for marriage (10 percent).

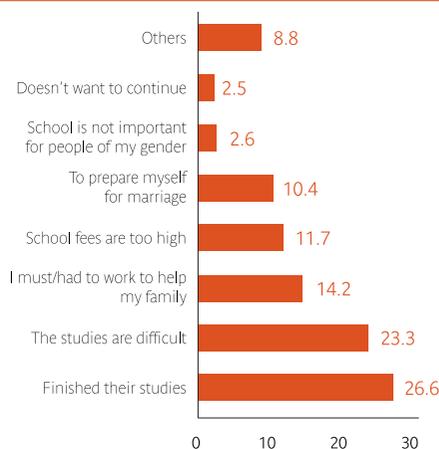
When considering youth opportunities, the LAU researchers and their partners will be focusing on employment, education and social inclusion. They are reviewing, among other things, the effect of economic structures and policies on the poor and marginalized, and burgeoning informal employment in the region.

"Almost half our respondents work without a contract, over half are not registered for social security and almost 60 percent got their jobs through personal contacts," noted Fakh as he presented bar charts and graphs illustrating the data. "These are all important factors that impact or reflect access to labor and social inclusion."

Thorough quantitative and multivariable analyses of full datasets over the coming months will enable the LAU team to both pose and answer various questions related to youth opportunities. In addition, the team will contribute to the research papers being compiled by their partner institutions about youth empowerment, culture and values, gender equity, migration, transition experiences and international cooperation as they relate to youth in and across the five project countries.



Learn more about SAHWA at the project website: [www.sahwa.eu](http://www.sahwa.eu)



**The main reasons that the youth felt compelled to leave school**

"It took some months to finalize. We needed to come up with common questions to harmonize the survey across the five countries, but we had to consider the nuances and limitations of each country," explained Fakh, citing religion in Algeria and politics in Egypt as examples of areas that proved challenging.

The partners recently gathered in Beirut to review preliminary country and topic-specific findings following the implementation of the surveys in all five countries. "The MENA region has enjoyed a GDP growth rate of over five percent and an employment growth rate of around three percent, so we are producing jobs," noted Fakh during a presentation of the LAU team's initial findings. "But unemployment among women and youth is still over 20 and 25 percent respectively.



FEATURE

*The extremely popular U.S. sitcom, Modern Family*

# Family matters

Introducing the family of the future and untangling the relationships within the unit

By Rami Saidi



“It’s complicated. I have a half-brother and two stepsisters,” says Dania Hawat, a final-year communication arts student at LAU, describing the dynamic of her family. “My dad had my half-brother when he was married to his ex-wife. He then married my mom. Meanwhile his ex-wife married somebody else and they had my stepsisters.”

As we venture boldly into the future, everything around us is changing and families are no exception. Long gone are the days when the traditional family unit consisted of a breadwinning father, a stay-at-home mother and 2.5 children. High divorce rates, single parents, multiple step-siblings, same-sex marriages, adoptive families and a host of other variables are turning such families and their interrelationships into the exception rather than the norm.

The traditional family unit, called a nuclear family, is defined as “a couple and their dependent children regarded as a basic social unit.” Using a 2014 census, the Washington-based Pew Research Center has discovered that the number of American children living with parents in their first marriage has dropped from almost 75 percent to less than 50 percent since the 1960s. This means that in the United States the majority of children are

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*“Nowadays, women have increased chances of gaining custody of their children.”*

—Raed Mohsen, dean of students  
at LAU Beirut

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no longer part of a nuclear family, thus changing the dynamics within the unit.

Even the roles of the mother and father are no longer as black and white as they used to be in traditional families. For example, the mother might still do the housework but she will also probably have a full-time job. The father might still be the main income earner but he might do so from home, a role now known as stay-at-home husband. A couple might still have children, but they might not have as many as previous generations did due to increasing costs and lack of disposable time.

“With the high costs of living and increased education among females, the women’s role has changed drastically. She now, more often than not, shares the burden of providing for the family,” elaborates Jessy Tohme, a specialized

and experienced Beirut-based couples counselor. These days, both parents share the workload and support the family economically. "They take turns with the household chores and looking after the children," she explains, adding, "This has led to a gradual reversal in roles between men and women. We see more career-minded women, who place the pursuit of their career before their family. On the other hand, more men are devoting more time to their children, cleaning and cooking."

When it comes to the make-up of a family, things have also changed dramatically. *Modern Family*, an extremely popular U.S. sitcom, shows just how diverse a family can become by encompassing cultural diversity, same-sex relationships and step-children. It also places an emphasis on the extended family and the relationships between them. And who knows, perhaps by the 22nd century families will simply be described as a group of individuals who relate to one another and share mutual affections.

The changes being advocated by women's rights groups have also had a huge impact on the future of how families are formed. "Before, divorced women had a hard time getting remarried," says Dean of Students at LAU Beirut Raed Mohsen, who is a specialist in human communication and marital and family therapy. "Whereas now," he explains, "Not only do divorced women have more chances of remarriage, they have increased chances of gaining custody of their children."

Increasing acceptance of equal rights for both genders and economic



The America TV drama series *The Fosters* follows the lives of a lesbian couple raising one of the partner's biological son along with adopted twins

independence have allowed many to build the family they want as opposed to the kind their parents or grandparents would have had, but how are people adapting to these many changes and what do they make of them? Is blood still thicker than water? And most importantly, how is the ever-adapting family unit affecting those nearest and dearest to us?

"My experience changed my perspective on the fact that siblings don't have to be by blood, we all have this really lovely connection between us," says Hawat. She goes on to say that any problems her blended family experienced were problems that could happen in any family. She stresses that she never received any offensive or negative reactions from her peers, a sign that



Lebanese society is becoming more lax in its view of such diverse family units.

Stepfamilies are the most common form of "non-traditional" families, but they themselves come in many variations. These may range from two parents with custody of their respective children to households where one partner has children and the other doesn't. There are still even more types of families: single mothers, single fathers, grandparents raising grandchildren, multi-generational households and the like.

LAU graduate Kalyl Kadri (B.A. '13) also grew up with two half-brothers and two half-sisters and he feels that his "half-siblings are pretty much full-on siblings." It never crosses his mind that his two younger sisters have a different mother and that his two younger brothers have a different father. "I get along really well with all of them, but unfortunately my sisters live in Brazil and I don't get to see them as often as I would like," he explains.

Divorce stands out as an important element changing the traditional family structure and thus the relationships between those in the unit, as well as the





The Jolie-Pitt family are a mixture of adopted and biological children

*“Parents don’t know what children do online — there are many predators.”*

—Ketty Sarouphim-McGill, LAU  
associate professor of psychology  
and education

roles they play. In Lebanon separations are still increasing, points out Ketty Sarouphim-McGill, associate professor of psychology and education at LAU. “When I was a student I did not know anybody whose parents were divorced,” she says. “Now about 5 percent of students in every classroom say they come from a family where the parents are divorced. And if I ask the class, who knows somebody who has divorced parents? Everybody will raise their hand. So, it is no longer an anomaly to be a child from a broken home.”

Mohsen echoes Sarouphim-McGill, describing how when he was around the same age as his daughters are now, he didn’t know of anyone who came from a broken home. Today, when he talks with his daughters about their peers, it is not unusual for them to say, “So-and-so is going to her mom’s (or dad’s) house this weekend.”

On the bright side, there isn’t any available evidence to suggest that children of divorced parents will end up worse off than those of parents who aren’t. While it is true that divorce produces

trying periods of upheaval, the length or intensity of adjustment to the new situation depends on various factors, such as the children’s age and gender. The older the children, the more likely it is that they will adjust more quickly to the new familial arrangements. But it is the degree to which parents are able to remain amicable after splitting up that plays an important part in forming the bonds that will shape their children’s perception of parenting.

Whatever the family type, the role the parents play in nurturing and loving their children is crucial to proper development. Today, however, the Internet has taken on an increasingly important role in parenting, functioning in some ways as a “third parent,” which may have both positive and negative results on the child’s upbringing. The access social media and networks give both parents and children to tap into the world and benefit from its vast knowledge is huge, but it can put young children at risk and provide false information to parents that can prove harmful to the family. “The parents do not know what their children are doing online,” Sarouphim-McGill explains, “Young people are most vulnerable to online predators.”

Mohsen brings up another important issue related to our increasingly digital lives. Many Lebanese fathers are obliged to work abroad in order to support their families and some of them only get a chance to see their children a few times a year, with the majority of communication taking place via FaceTime and Skype.

“This doesn’t resolve the issue. These are simply communication tools and don’t replace real interaction with the children,” explains Mohsen. When the father returns to live with the family, it is not always easy to take up where he left off.

In the recent past, the old cliché “It takes a village to raise a child” still seemed to hold true in most countries. For example, children playing at the Sporting Club Beach in Beirut would be expected to respect and obey each adult present. If they were loud, complete strangers would tell them off and be listened to. At the same time, everyone there also kept an eye out for the children’s safety and well-being regardless of whether they knew them or not.

Present-day times have seen a shift in this communal attitude and parenting is increasingly left up to the parents alone. “Now, both the father and mother who are working and both are exhausted. The parents come home, where they also have to do housework and take care of the children. In many families, the children, more often than not, come home to an empty house,” states Sarouphim-McGill. So, how can this method be applied to the average family today, when both parents are forced to work and spend less and less time with their children?

She explains that this had led to changes in behavior during both childhood and adolescence. This parenting pattern can take children down the path to delinquency, drug use and even aggressive behavior. The solution, for Sarouphim-McGill, however, does not lie in parents smothering their offspring with attention. Rather, they should take an active interest in their activities and friends in order to make sure they’re on the right track, even if this means finding creative ways of dealing with the exhaustion that comes of combining working full-time with parenting.

The ever-evolving families of the 21st century and beyond are weaving themselves into our social fabric. New patterns will undoubtedly emerge and, with tolerance for these brave new family units seemingly on the rise, there’s no knowing under what circumstances the next generation will grow up. All we do know is that humanity will adapt to its new roles and interactions, as it has through millennia. ■



## Expanding the field of learning

By Leena Saidi

Pharmacy students experience firsthand the mechanisms of advanced pharmacy practice

*"We started in 2011 with eight students a semester, now we support over 30 students annually."*

*—Michael G. Liebl, the U.S. regional director of the program*

Upon their return from their advanced pharmacy practice experiences (APPEs) at the Houston Methodist Hospital in Texas, LAU Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) students appear to have undergone a life-changing experience. "They return to Lebanon with a confidence about them that was not there when they arrived," says Michael G. Liebl, clinical manager of the hospital's Department of Pharmacy and the U.S. regional director of the program since its inception in October 2011.

In collaboration with Houston Methodist Hospital, the LAU pharmacy program provides four months of required APPEs. During this time students receive the instruction and experience necessary to achieve specific learning objectives related to medical and pharmacy knowledge and patient care. They also deepen their interpersonal and communication skills.

Yara Zgheib, currently on rotation in Houston, believes that since the university's Pharm.D. program is accredited by the U.S. Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), it is important to experience the practice of the profession in that country. "The difference also lies in the fact that in the U.S. clinical pharmacy is way more developed," she points out.

"When we started the program in 2011 we worked with eight students a semester. We now support over 30 students annually," says Liebl. The students receive hands-on training in a fast-paced health care environment in which they utilize innovative tools and technologies to serve a wide spectrum of patients, enhancing their ability to work with multidisciplinary teams and gain autonomy.

Along with the increase in the number

of students has come an expansion of their learning activities. LAU Pharm.D. students are now able to obtain the American Pharmacists Association (APhA)-Based Immunization Training Certification. The program "teaches pharmacists the skills necessary to become a primary source for vaccine information and administration," says Imad Btaiche, the dean of the university's School of Pharmacy.

Houston Methodist Hospital also now offers postgraduate residency training for international pharmacy graduates, including LAU Pharm.D. graduates. "Our mission for this program is to develop clinical pharmacy leaders that can return to their country of origin and expand the profession there," explains Vice President of Global Patient Services, Education and Training Summer Dajani, adding, "We began this program in 2013 and have already graduated two incredible LAU alumni."

The program also allows a holistic approach to education, with the development of students' soft skills through training and mentoring programs. According to Rana el-Noamani, a Pharm.D. student, such rotations are crucial to learn what real clinical pharmacy is about and to understand the different roles a pharmacist can fulfill. "Direct patient interaction helped me develop self confidence and be prepared for any question the patient may ask."

El-Noamani completed her required APPEs at Houston Methodist Hospital in spring 2015, during which she went through the Drug Information Center, Internal Medicine, Continuity of Care and Community Pharmacy rotations. "Meeting experts in their fields and learning from their experience was priceless," she affirms.

"The hospital also benefits through LAU's partnership by getting global exposure for our pharmacy programs," says President and CEO of Houston Methodist Global Health Care Services Cathy Easter, who worked closely with LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara to establish the joint program between the two institutions. "LAU is an elite university with highly talented students. Their participation has added a higher standard of expectations and great competition for other residency students in our program," she adds.



# Successful scholarship program gains funding

By Naseem Ferdowsi

LAU secures millions more in USAID funding to continue its University Scholarship Program

*“University changed my life and I have LAU and USAID to thank.”*

—Mustapha Hamad, one of 81 LAU graduates who have benefitted from USP

Obtaining a university education is an unattainable dream for many underprivileged young people. However, it has become a reality for hundreds of students without the means to attend through LAU’s University Scholarship Program (USP), a USAID-funded initiative that covers scholars’ full tuition and related expenses.

The program, which launched in Lebanon in September 2010, has benefited hundreds of top-performing students who come from public schools across the nation and who have severe financial need. This initiative has been so successful over these short six years that it was recently awarded more funding toward a seventh cohort of students, which will be known as USP VII.

“The American government is contributing another \$37.5 million to continue this successful program over the next three years. This will allow at least 320 additional students nationwide to have the opportunity to access a high quality education at either the Lebanese American University or the American University of Beirut,” explained interim American Ambassador Richard H. Jones at an LAU ceremony in January to celebrate the initiative.

Majd el-Fakih, one of 237 current USP scholars at LAU, never imagined that he would have a chance to experience a university education.

“USP has changed my life. I am a business student at the best business school in the Middle East. Now my hope for a successful future and career has blossomed thanks to this scholarship,” said el-Fakih in a speech he gave at the ceremony.

With many of the first cohort’s students having completed their studies, the success of the USP initiative has become clear.

“Graduates of LAU’s USP program hit the job market running. They do as well as they do once they leave us because of the supervision, coaching, monitoring, evaluation and care that we give them,” commented LAU’s Assistant Vice President for Outreach and Civic Engagement Elie Samia, who is involved with running the USP program.

“USP students are provided continual follow up from faculty and staff to ensure they are doing well academically and to make certain they are taking part in extracurricular activities, which plays a big part in their development. All this gives them the ability to fly with two wings when they graduate and become leaders of society as they contribute to the economy of Lebanon,” added Samia.

“Today, I’m officially an engineer with a full-time job while continuing graduate studies at LAU. Those four-and-a-half years as an undergraduate student changed my life and I have LAU and USAID to thank,” said Mustapha Hamad, one of 81 LAU graduates who have benefitted from USP.

USP scholars are selected based on merit, academic performance and financial need. They benefit from full scholarship support, including tuition fees, housing expenses, medical insurance, textbooks and a monthly stipend. All scholars are required to maintain academic excellence and actively engage in community service and leadership training and to take part in career preparation workshops.

# Campusnotes

For more details about these LAU activities, visit the news section of [www.lau.edu.lb](http://www.lau.edu.lb).

## Art

### What kind of artist do you want to be?

Renowned Lebanese curator and gallery owner Saleh Barakat treated students and faculty from LAU's Department of Fine Arts and Foundation Studies to a talk in December. He expounded on the lives and fixations of various "artists on a mission" while projecting photographs of their works, explaining that whereas some obsessed over meaning and message, others wrestled with style, aesthetic and technique. Hoping to inspire the students to define their purpose and artistic goals, the owner of Beirut's renowned Agial gallery said, "There are different ways and different types of art. Obsession is one of them. I wish that students would focus more on engagement."



photo by Bassam Lahoud

### The evolutionary process of art is complete

"The linear history of art as witnessed since the Renaissance has come to an end," said Lebanese art historian Cesar Nammour. "It has been replaced by pluralism, in which everything can or has the potential to be art," the expert told an auditorium overflowing with students from LAU's Department of Fine Arts and Foundation Studies this past November. In his talk, Nammour referenced American historian Francis Fukuyama and German philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger and Georg Hegel. "Fukuyama saw the collapse of the Berlin Wall as the end of history, regarding history as an evolutionary process that took its final form in liberal democracy, from which we cannot progress further," he explained. "Similarly, art has arrived at pluralism where complete freedom reigns and rules no longer bind us to a definition of art."

## Improving Skills



### Faculty and students bolster reading and recital

In November, the Beirut outdoor auditorium overflowed with students who had gathered to cheer for contestants of the Poetry Slam, a competition organized by English instructor Omar Baz Radwan as part of a wider initiative titled "Literature at LAU." "I enjoyed all the poems, both in Arabic and English," said junior year student Yehia Cheaito, who has been writing poetry since he was 12 years old. The undergraduate degree in English, run by the newly-established English Department, was redesigned last year. Students can now follow one of three distinct tracks — language, literature or creative writing — while taking courses in each. "This has altered people's perception of English. Students used to think all English majors were headed for careers in academia, but this shift in the program has changed that view," asserted Cheaito.

### The essence of letterforms

Letterforms are fundamental elements of communication and the visualization of language. LAU's Design Department recently organized TypeTalks Byblos 2015, where internationally acclaimed experts shared their thought processes, inspiration and professional insight. According to Melissa Plourde Khoury, associate chair for the Design Department, this setting was ideal for conversations about letterforms because "this ancient yet modern city is the place where the Phoenician civilization laid the foundation of our alphabets." Attending the event was Khajag Apelian, an award-winning speaker hailed for his typographic work that delves into multiple alphabets. "Typography is a medium that is not widely appreciated, but is one of the most important ones," said Apelian, whose typeface Arek is among the few to include the Armenian language. Also present were Wael Morcos, senior designer at Base Design New York, Yara Khoury Nammour, winner of several awards in typography and book design, and Paris's premier calligrapher Nicolas Ouchenir.



## Conferences, Talks & Workshops



### Ramping up fundraising leadership

A two-day seminar titled “Deans and Fundraising,” which brought together LAU deans, advancement and development staff, and LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara, highlighted the juxtaposition between the university’s impressive track record of academic excellence and its growing financial needs as it seeks to continue to make its mark in academia. With student tuition insufficient for these purposes, outside support is increasingly necessary. “LAU cannot continue to depend on tuition alone as a major part of revenue,” commented Jabbara. “This is why we will join forces with our deans to help create the right conditions for attracting significant philanthropic investments,” he added. Marla Rice-Evans, vice president for University Advancement at LAU, echoed the importance of the deans’ involvement in advancing the university. “Around the world, deans play a vital role and are expected to engage alumni and fundraise actively for their institution,” she said.

### Labor minister urges students to join protests

“Most projects undertaken in Lebanon since the 1990s have produced money and corruption, but not jobs,” Minister of Labor Sejean Azzi told dozens of students who gathered in October to hear him discuss the challenges facing him, his ministry and the Lebanese job market. As he spoke, a group of students in the back rows of the audience raised a banner with the slogan: “The Garbage is Affecting the Job Market.” Azzi agreed with the sentiment and urged his listeners to join ongoing protests. “The garbage crisis was created intentionally so corrupt individuals could line their pockets. You students must be the revolutionaries who bow down to no one and nothing but your conscience,” urged the minister and former journalist.



### Bridging the gap between higher education and industry

According to the World Economic Forum, 73 million young people across the globe are currently looking for work. Understanding what employers are really looking for is therefore a priority for excellence-driven academic institutions. “Learning is a life-long commitment,” said LAU Provost George K. Najjar during an October conference hosted by the university in collaboration with Notre Dame University (NDU) to discuss — together with the EU representative in Lebanon — effective ways of bridging the gap between higher education and industry. The event, organized by LAU’s Continuing Education Program, was the culmination of the Euro-Mediterranean Integration through Lifelong Learning (EU-MILL) initiative, a three-and-a-half year program funded by the European Union to facilitate cooperation in the field of higher education between its member states and partner countries.

## Donations & Grants



### Jacques Saadé offers invaluable support to LAU

The Lebanese American University Medical Center—Rizk Hospital has gained the support of shipping magnate Jacques Saadé, who recently generously donated \$500,000 toward the restoration of the hospital’s blood bank lobby, which now bears the donor’s name. “This is the beginning of a long journey with LAU,” said Saadé during the recognition ceremony. A native of Lebanon, Saadé lives in Marseille, France, and heads CMA CGM, the third largest container transportation and shipping company in the world. “Mr. Saadé believes in our university and expressed to us how impressed he is by our standards,” commented LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara. Taking the relationship with the university even further, Saadé announced his plans to help establish a master’s degree in shipping management.

## Ensuring Lebanon's safety against landslides

Lebanon's rugged topography and location in a zone of relatively high seismic activity make the country vulnerable to earthquakes and landslides. Identifying vulnerable terrain is therefore a priority for anyone concerned with public safety. Research conducted by Grace Abou-Jaoude Estephan, assistant professor in the Department of Civil Engineering, has resulted in the first comprehensive mapping of co-seismic landslide hazards in Lebanon. Abou-Jaoude relied on topography, geology, and the concept of maximum seismic acceleration to develop maps delineating the areas prone to sliding during a major earthquake event on a national scale. The maps — which can be downloaded for free and used as a guideline by public and private institutions — were made possible thanks to a \$100,000 grant that Abou-Jaoude received in 2012 under the umbrella of the Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER) Program, developed jointly by the National Science Foundation and USAID. In August 2015 Abou-Jaoude and her team were granted a new PEER award (\$76,000) to take the research to the risk assessment level.

## Community Engagement



### Together for peace

LAU partnered with the Beirut Marathon Association to bring world marathon champion Paula Radcliffe to the Lebanese capital as the ambassador of the 2015 run. While not running herself, having officially retired from the sport earlier this year, Radcliffe joined Beirut 542, a community-based initiative helping first-time marathoners compete. "We are delighted to have in our midst someone to admire, to pay tribute to and to emulate," said LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara, emphasizing Radcliffe's ability to combine excellence in sport with academic excellence. Despite suffering from asthma, the long-distance runner won her first international title at the age of 19 and obtained a first class degree in languages and economics.

### Nursing health fair puts prevention before cure

LAU's Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing students dedicated their time and expertise to the Byblos community last September, organizing a health fair aimed at raising awareness of the importance of regular checkups. Each booth offered free-of-charge services, including electrocardiograms, the measurement of oxygen and glucose levels in the blood and the calculation of body fat percentage. The Remy Rebeiz Young Heart Foundation, founded by Sylvia Rebeiz — whose son, a 20-year-old football player, died of an undiagnosed genetic heart condition in March 2013 — partnered with LAU to offer free electrocardiograms (EKGs). "Don't think you are healthy, because you never know," said Rebeiz. "The EKG takes five minutes and could save your life."



## Going Global



### LAU signs MOU with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations

LAU signed a memorandum of understanding with the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) last October, with the aim of establishing the ICCR Chair of Indian Studies, bringing Indian scholars to the university's campuses. While LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara stressed the importance of exposing students to a globalized world, India's Ambassador to Lebanon Anita Nayar praised the initiative saying that it was a first-of-its-kind agreement between the ICCR and a Lebanese university.

### LAU students present regional politics to the U.S.

Early November, Lebanon and the U.S. grew a little closer. Through the medium of video conferencing, a group of political science students at LAU connected with American students and professors at Henry Ford Community College, painting for them a clearer picture of Lebanon and the region. Titled *Instability in the Light of Political Vacuum in Lebanon*, LAU's contribution was part of the Annual Michigan Student Political Issues Convention, an event of international caliber attended by congressional and public figures in the U.S. as well as over 700 students throughout Michigan. The discussion touched a chord in this state, home to the highest concentration of Arab Americans (40 percent) and a significant Lebanese community. According to Ayyad el-Masri, who curated LAU's participation in the conference for the second year in a row, taking part in the event allows students to express their major political concerns and reflect on ways to resolve them. "We presented what we deem is missing from the mainstream media narrative," said el-Masri, stressing the benefits of engaging in dialogue.

# Taking the anxiety out of donating

By Linda Dahdah

LAU students create an application linking donors to recipients



*“This reflects the sound, up-to-date and continuously evolving program in computer science that LAU offers.”*

—Danielle Azar, chairperson of LAU's Computer Science and Mathematics Department



Years of unrest, economic instability, and the absence of an adequate governmental social protection program in Lebanon have given birth to the country's strong informal support system.

Charities, associations and non-governmental organizations have been playing a major role in alleviating the suffering of those in need, even more so now with the deteriorating socio-economic situation and the massive influx of Syrian refugees. As a result, the demand for in-kind and/or cash donations has intensified. However, it is not always easy for those who wish to contribute to identify the appropriate channels to go through.

To solve this problem, a group of LAU computer science and bioinformatics students created StepForward, an application that allows people to donate the appropriate goods, cash or services on one side to the appropriate organization on the other.

“The idea was born during a social good hackathon, #PeaceHackBEY, which took place back in September. We had around 48 hours to come up with an idea that our society could benefit from,” says student Georgio Nicolas, current CEO of StepForward.

The project won first prize at the event and as such received the support of incubator and business development center Berytech to work on a viable business model for the new startup to see the light.

StepForward is the closest thing to a combination between Uber, Dubizzle and Donation Campaigns, the students explain. Donors can sign up on the mobile app or through the website and enter information

on the goods they wish to donate. This is then registered in a database that is only accessible to the organizations that are cooperating with StepForward.

“The information is accessed by them as if they were searching for an item to buy on Amazon: they input a keyword and some filters — for example ‘children's clothes,’ ‘location: Beirut’ — and choose,” Nicolas explains. Donors will then be notified of the organization's interest and confirm or not their donation. The StepForward team then arranges to pickup the item and sends it directly to the organization concerned. “It is a first come, first served system; but with a quota by organization,” Nicolas adds.

In case of a cash donation, the user may select the organization of his or her choice and be directed to a secure online payment platform for direct transfer.

To live up to the trust of the donors, the students have designed their platform to guarantee utmost transparency and credibility.

“The donor will get an initial receipt from our delivery person upon pick-up, then a second one via e-mail from the recipient organization. In addition to that, all of the organizations we are cooperating with will have to post periodic reports stating what items or how much money they have received via our platform, including documentation about the final receiver and how the donation was utilized,” Nicolas clarifies.

Impressed by her students' well-rounded project, Chairperson of the Computer Science and Mathematics Department Danielle Azar expresses her pride. “They did everything on their own,” she says, adding, “This reflects the sound, up-to-date and continuously evolving program in computer science that LAU offers.”

Charbel Daoud, former CEO and team leader, agrees. “Technically, our academic background was crucial,” he enthuses. “We were the youngest team taking part in the competition and today we are undergraduate students who could have their new startup up and running soon. It is simply a fabulous experience for us.”

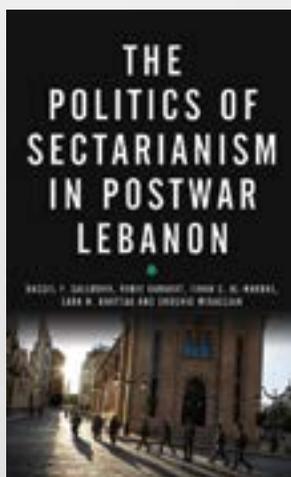
*Other students involved in the project are Rony Riachi, Christian Salem and Camille Dahdah, who along with Nicolas and Daoud are members of the Association of Computing Machinery student club at LAU.*

# Hot off the printing press

Leafing through the latest books by LAU faculty

By Federica Marsi

LAU boasts one of the most published university faculties in the Arab world. Faculty research regularly appears in academic journals and periodicals, and the outside press regularly solicits our experts. *LAU Magazine & Alumni Bulletin* takes a look at some of the recently released books by our professors.



## ***The Politics of Sectarianism in Postwar Lebanon***

By Bassel Salloukh

Published by Pluto Press

Associate Professor of Political Science at LAU's School of Arts and Sciences Bassel Salloukh has co-authored a timely examination of the birth and proliferation of the sectarian system in Lebanon. By unraveling the historicity of sectarian identities, the book offers clarification as to why such an institutional construction is still standing. *The Politics of Sectarianism in Postwar Lebanon* offers an unprecedented insight into the malleability of sectarianism in Lebanese politics. Rather than being immutable, the clientelist network has been sustained by its own ability to readapt to social and historical changes.

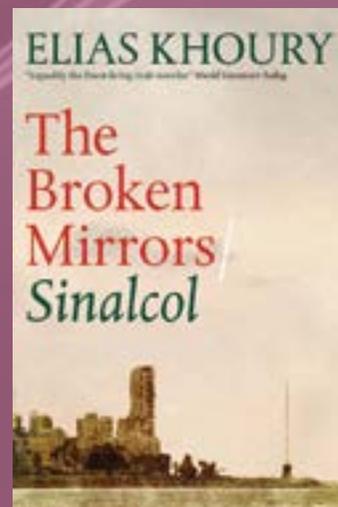
According to Salloukh and co., the emergence of a stable political order in the context of sectarian states is dependent on the negotiation of new socio-economic and political power-sharing arrangements. A review by F. Gregory Gause, head of the International Affairs Department at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University, describes Salloukh's work as a "judicious and well-argued case for why sectarianism continues to dominate the Lebanese political system."

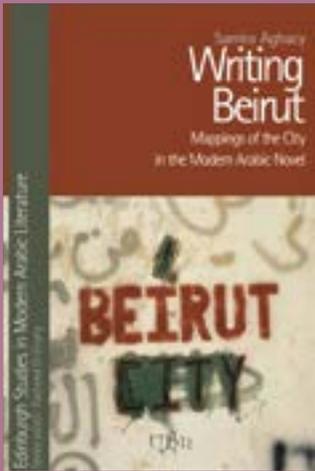
## ***The Broken Mirrors: Sinalcol***

By Elias Khoury / Published by MacLehose Press

Elias Khoury, visiting professor at LAU's School of Arts and Sciences and one of the Arab world's leading intellectuals, has published yet another breathtaking novel in which fiction and history beautifully intertwine. Against the backdrop of Beirut's bullet-ridden Ottoman buildings, a mysterious shadow — known only as Sinalcol — lurks in the streets. As the plot unravels, the contours gain clarity, revealing a legendary hero-fighter and a thug, "a ghost woven out of people's words."

As it is often the case in Khoury's work, the book raises the specter of the civil war and delves into the self-conflicting topics of identity and return. Karim, a doctor, leaves the life he has built in France to return to Lebanon, despite his vow never to return. From that moment on, Karim's life takes the form of resurfaced memories and new unsettling questions. Why he has put himself through this truth-seeking journey is, perhaps, the most daunting of them all.

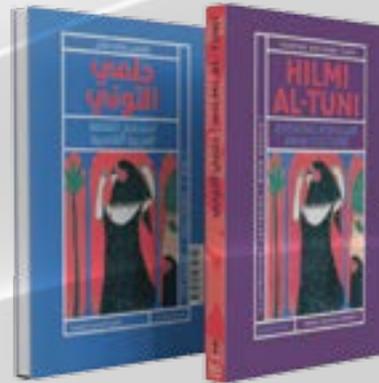




**Writing Beirut:  
Mappings of the  
City in the Modern  
Arabic Novel**

By Samira Aghacy  
Published by Edinburgh  
University Press

Professor of English and Comparative Literature at LAU's School of Arts & Sciences Samira Aghacy explores Beirut through the eyes of 16 Arabic novels from the nineteenth century onwards, each presenting a different image of the city in a kaleidoscope of reality and fiction. Beirut becomes urban and rural, sexualized and gendered, an interactive mix of different realities and perceptions expressed both through its architecture and its varied social interactions. The infinite number of Beiruts generated by these narratives raises thought-provoking questions on the city's identity. As part of the series instituted by the Edinburgh Studies in Modern Arabic Literature, the book aims to contribute to filling a glaring gap in scholarship in the field of modern Arabic literature.



**Hilmi al-Tuni:  
Evoking Popular  
Arab Culture**

By Yasmine Taan  
Published by Khatt Books

Chair of LAU's School of Architecture and Design's Design Department Yasmine Taan has produced a richly-illustrated monograph featuring the work of Hilmi al-Tuni, one of the most prominent Egyptian illustrators and book designers. The book includes examples of his work, which formed the visual sensitivities of generations in the region, as well as an exclusive interview.

The book falls into the Arabic Design Library bilingual series, which focuses on inspiring design achievements of typographers, graphic designers and illustrators from the Middle East and North Africa. Khatt Books seeks to establish a visual record of Arab design history of the 20th century. "Writing about Hilmi al-Tuni as a designer, illustrator and painter was an enchanting journey into the career of a pioneer Egyptian visual storyteller," says Taan. "His production of emotionally and intellectually driven visual communication will remain a legacy for the young as well as adult readers."

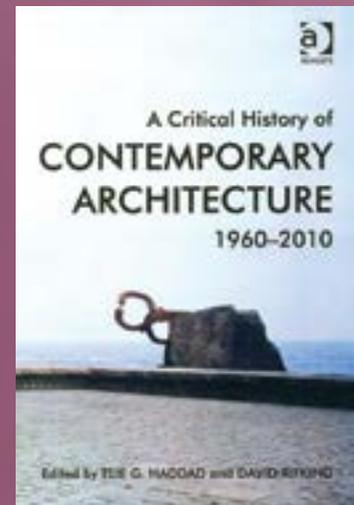
**A Critical History of Contemporary Architecture 1960-2010**

By Elie G. Haddad / Published by Ashgate

Dean of LAU's School of Architecture and Design Elie G. Haddad has produced a critical overview of the developments in architecture from 1960 to 2010. The first section presents major movements in architecture after 1960, while the second is a geographic survey that covers a wide range of territories around the world.

The book, co-written with David Rifkind, a lecturer in architecture at the Florida International University, reaches a middle ground between the "aesthetic" histories that examine architecture in terms of its formal aspects and more "ideological" histories that often avoid any discussion of its formal aspects.

"What we have tried to do is to survey the wide spectrum of architectural production around the world — beyond the traditional limits of the 'western' world," says Haddad, "and to examine it critically through multiple lenses, thus going beyond the 'coffee-table' collections that indiscriminately celebrate all that is produced."



# Alumni update

## October



### Hiking through the Cedars

At 9.30 in the morning on Saturday, October 3, a convoy of Byblos Chapter members, family and friends left the Phoenician city and headed out for a day-trip. The excursion to Dimane and the Cedar Forest included a guided visit to the summer residence of the Maronite Patriarch, with its gardens and abbey that overlook the Qannoubine valley. An easy hike in the Cedar Forest and a sumptuous lunch at Jisr el-Ammar restaurant followed. It was a beautiful outing that everyone enjoyed.

### Discovering lean thinking

Over 150 alumni turned up to the first lecture of the academic year as part of the “Keep Learning” alumni lectures program organized by the Alumni Relations Office. On Thursday, October 22, Raed el-Khalil — an assistant professor at the Adnan Kassar School of Business — tackled the topic of “Why Organizations and Managers are Adopting Lean Thinking.” The lecture included a lively Q&A session and was followed by a reception, where the debate continued.



## November



### Traditional pottery in north Lebanon

On Thursday, October 22, some 25 BCW Chapter members and friends discovered the hidden treasures of Assia, located 20 kilometers from Batroun. The first stop was at a local potter’s shop to learn more about pottery making with a live demonstration. Then a short ride to a hill just south of Assia, to visit the St. Touma Monastery and the Virgin of the Fortress church (Saydet el-Kalaa), which is surrounded by sarcophagi as well as grape and olive mills drilled in the rocks.



### Fun in the mountains

Sunday, October 18, witnessed members of the School of Engineering Chapter converge on Rikky’z in Faraya. The chapter’s fall gathering took place at an altitude of 1,700m on the middle mountain, where the weather was beautiful and crisp and a photo opportunity on the terrace was not to be missed. Surrounded by the breathtaking views, sumptuous food and a great atmosphere, a good time was had by one and all.



### A laugh a minute

The Detroit Chapter gathered over 50 alumni, family and friends for dinner and a laugh with the best in local and national stand-up acts at Joey’s Comedy Shop on Saturday, October 17. For the past 25 years, Joey’s Comedy Shop has been serving up live stand-up comedy and giving its audience a night of laughs with hilarious comedians, as well as great food and drink, and that is exactly what the Detroit Chapter experienced.

### “Ya Hala”

Over 30 New York/New Jersey Alumni Chapter members got together for their festive dinner on Wednesday, November 18, just before the holiday rush. Balade restaurant in New York City’s East Village was the place of choice, with its traditional Lebanese cuisine in an atmosphere true to the Lebanese culture. Alumni, family and friends enjoyed home cooked food that came from the heart.

## Do you have this strong leadership quality?

As part of its “Keep Learning” alumni lectures program, the Alumni Relations Office organized the second lecture of the academic year, titled “Emotional Intelligence.” On Friday, November 27, the enthusiastic, energetic and versatile life coach, trainer and consultant Johnny el-Ghoul explained to an audience of over 170 how managing emotions is seen as a strong leadership quality in today’s business world. “Learn how to understand and take control of your own emotions and the emotional triggers of others. If you can control your emotions and respond to those of others, you can open the door to untold careers and life success,” he concluded.



## December



### Cultural immersion

Wednesday, December 2, saw the BCW Chapter organize a tour to the newly-reopened Sursock Museum to check out its inaugural exhibition *Regards sur Beyrouth: 160 ans d'images 1800-1960*. The exhibition is curated by Sylvia Agemian and brings together over 240 works from private collections. It traces Beirut’s historical evolution from a provincial Ottoman town to the capital of a nation state. The chapter members then visited the group show *The City in the City*, which exhibits recent work by artists, designers, and researchers concerned with mapping and exploring contemporary Beirut. Finally, the alumni explored the museum’s permanent collection.



### Festive spirits

On Friday, December 4, the Bahrain Chapter organized its Annual Christmas Dinner at Señor Pacos restaurant. More than 80 alumni and friends enjoyed a lively evening full of fun and great Mexican gourmet delights.



### A flying start

The Paris Chapter organized its first brunch for family and friends on Sunday, December 6, at the French capital’s Lebanese restaurant Fakra. The brunch was a lovely gathering and a great opportunity for the university’s alumni in Paris to network and get to know each other.

### No communication failure here

On Wednesday, December 2, life coach, trainer and consultant Johnny el-Ghoul gave a workshop to the Bahrain Chapter titled “Exiting Babylon — Speak my Language.” Around 50 alumni benefited from a two-hour interactive and highly practical session aimed at understanding the causes of miscommunication.



### A roof with a view

The Alumni Relations Office and Oman Chapter had networking on the menu when they organized a gathering for alumni residents in the Sultanate at the stunning Muscat Park Inn Hotel rooftop on Saturday, December 12.

# Alumni update



## Winter gathering

On Saturday, December 26, the School of Engineering Chapter organized its annual winter gathering at Amarella restaurant in Beirut's vibrant district of Mar Mikhael. Over 110 alumni and friends enjoyed a great evening full of fun with a Mexican twist.



## Sneak preview

The BCW Chapter organized an avant-première showing of the movie *Joy* at the ABC Grand Cinemas on Monday, December 28. More than 110 alumni and friends enjoyed the story of a family across four generations centered on a girl who grows up to found a business dynasty and become a matriarch in her own right. Betrayal, treachery, the loss of innocence and the scars of love characterize this comedy about becoming the head of a family and enterprise in a world of unforgiving commerce.



## Celebrating a milestone

The 50th graduation anniversary for the classes of 1964 and 1965 — when the university was known as the Beirut College for Women (BCW) — was celebrated at LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara's residence on Tuesday, December 8. Jabbara honored the ladies with 50th anniversary gold medals, which they received with much appreciation and love towards their alma mater.

## January 2016



## Handing over

The Alumni Relations Office, together with the Beirut Chapter, organized a gathering on Thursday, January 14, to celebrate the joining of newly-elected committee members and thank those whose terms have ended. The celebration ceremony took place at the Alumni Lounge on LAU's Beirut campus, in the presence of the association's President Doha El Zein Halawi, Vice President Majdi Awkal and Treasurer Elias Darwish.

## Say enough

As part of its "Keep Learning" alumni lectures program, the Alumni Relations Office organized the third lecture of the academic year, titled "Enough." On Wednesday, January 27, Walid R. Touma, professor of management at the Adnan Kassar School of Business, shared some of his major achievements to help the audience understand the power of the word "enough" and how simply saying and executing it can make a positive impact on our lives. In Touma's latest book, *My Flowers*, he describes what he calls "keys" over the course of our life.



# A game changer

By Paige Kollock

Inaugural scholarship brings LAU student to New York for a semester

This semester, one lucky and deserving student from LAU's Adnan Kassar School of Business is braving the New York winter to spend a semester studying in the Big Apple, thanks to a scholarship from a generous donor.

Second-year student Lynn Gemayel arrived to New York City having never lived away from home. She now lives in a co-ed dorm in the city's Harlem neighborhood, takes the subway to class and navigates the streets of the 18-million strong metropolis like a native.

"The idea for a study abroad scholarship came about over a series of conversations between LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara and the donor, who wanted one LAU student to get a real 'New York experience,'" says Marla Rice-Evans, vice president for University Advancement, referring to donor Joseph Audi, chairman and CEO for Interaudi Bank.

LAU's Office of International Services (OIS) then set out to find just the right candidate. While a high GPA was a must, there was more to it than that.

"After we reviewed the 16 applications, all from students with GPAs above 3.33, the list was narrowed to three," says Jordan Srour, faculty International Initiatives coordinator. Following interviews with the final three candidates, Gemayel, who is studying economics at university's business school, was selected.

"What struck me about Lynn's application was her involvement with both the community at large through her participation in L'Association des Guides du Liban and at LAU through her work to found the Consulting Club," Srour adds.

New York City was the obvious choice, due to the vast array of opportunities the teeming city offers and the ability to have a home away from home at LAU's New York Headquarters and Academic Center.

Having the chance to form a relationship with the donor was another plus.

"Spending a day in New York can change your life, spending six months can change your life forever," says Audi. "I came here when I was young and it transformed my life, so if I can give that opportunities to others, I will," enthuses the father of four boys, who he says were fortunate to study at elite U.S. institutions, reaffirming his faith in the American education system.

The City University of New York (CUNY) was selected as the home base for Gemayel's studies because of the fact that its business school, Lehman College, has similar course offerings to those at LAU.

"While we have had students go to New York for courses or conferences, this is the first time we have a student attend a university based in New York for a full semester," says Elise Salem, vice president of Student Development and Enrollment Management.

OIS strives to provide LAU students with opportunities that challenge their character, says its Study Abroad Coordinator Dina Abdul Rahman. The university has dozens of international partners in Europe, the U.S. and Canada. "Over the span of four years we have exchanged more than 170 students, who all testified that a semester abroad was indeed a journey of a lifetime," she adds.

From January to June, Gemayel will be continuing her economics studies at CUNY while expanding her horizons outside the classroom. Meanwhile, the OIS is working to expand such opportunities for other promising students.

"The cost of sponsoring a student like Lynn for a semester is quite small compared to the lifelong impact this will have," says Srour. "Eventually, it would be wonderful to have students at a variety of schools throughout the U.S."

*"The cost of sponsoring a student for a semester is quite small compared to the lifelong impact it will have."*

—Jordan Srour, LAU faculty International Initiatives coordinator



# Staying connected

**Suman al-Kukreja (A.A. '64)** has had a checkered career, working as an interior designer and a teacher, then later as an art therapist in hospitals and nursing homes in Canada. She even tried her hand at event management for a few years. Due to health reasons she cannot do much now but still manages to do some staging and consultations. Suman is married with two sons and four grandchildren, and lives in Oakville Ontario, Canada. She is thankful for all she has learned and still implements in her daily life.



Ghada Hijjawi-Qaddumi



Christina Sawaya

Recipient of the 2013 Alumni Achievement Award **Ghada Hijjawi-Qaddumi (B.A. '76)** obtained her master's in Arabic literature from AUB and a Ph.D. in history of Islamic art and architecture from Harvard University before moving to Kuwait, where she is now the president of World Crafts Council-Asia Pacific Region for 2013 to 2016. She has also held the positions of curator at the Islamic Art Museum in Kuwait, deputy for cultural affairs at the Department of Antiquities and Museums, and director of the Department of Publications and later the Department of Cultural Studies in Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters. Three of her grandchildren are married and she has two great-grand children.



Noha Wadi Moharram



Mohamad Kabbani



Mazen Hawwa

**Randa Kotob Jalaeddine (B.A. '86)** lives in Lebanon, where she teaches physical education and art. Randa is married with three children. Her daughter, who is also an LAU graduate, is currently studying for her M.B.A. at the university. Her two sons are both studying computer engineering at LAU. She has been an active member of LAU Alumni South Lebanon Chapter for the past five years.

**Samir Wazzan (B.S. '88)** lives in Kuwait, where he works as a general manager. Samir has a 17-year-old son, Raji, and a 13-year-old daughter, Shahed.

**Khalil Fakhoury (B.S. '90)** works as a business development manager in Dubai. Khalil is married with two children, a daughter heading for university next year and a son in tenth grade.

**Mohamad Jarrah (B.S. '92)** is a finance manager in Qatar. He is married with four children, a girl and three boys, one of whom is a newborn named Hamza.

**Susan Wadi (B.S. '94)** moved to San Jose, California, where she is vice president of the Special Assets Division of Bridge Bank. Susan is married to LAU alumnus **Kheireddine Mazboudi (B.S. '96)**. Kheireddine is a senior manager at a high tech company in Silicon Valley. They have two boys, a 14-year-old and an 18-month-old, and a lovely German Shepherd.

**Noha Wadi Moharram (B.S. '96)** is the founder and director of Art on 56th, a modern and contemporary art gallery in Beirut. Noha is married and the mother of three.

**Shakib Daoud (B.S. '97)** is an assistant branch manager at Byblos Bank, which he joined 16 years ago. He lives in Zahle with his wife and two children, eight-year-old Mohamad and four-year-old Bashar.

**Samar Aad Makhoul (B.S. '97)** obtained her M.B.A. from the University of Liverpool before returning to Lebanon, where she was appointed in October 2015 as Accreditation and Continuous Improvement Coordinator at AKSOB LAU Beirut. Samar has two daughters, Bella and Zoe.

**Mirna el-Masri (B.S. '99)** lives in Tripoli, where she is a lead ISO 9000:2001 auditor. Mirna was previously a CEO at MxpanD for healthcare and business development. She is married and is the mother of two boys and a girl.

**Mohamad Kabbani (B.S. '96, M.B.A. '99)** lives in Beirut, where he is the managing director of Kabbani Logistics Services. Mohamad was previously CEO of Agility Logistics Saudi Arabia. He is married to Aya Itani with whom he has two girls, six-year-old Haya and three-year-old Dina.

**Fadi Yanni (B.E. '99)** obtained his postgraduate degree from ESSEC Business School before returning to Lebanon, where he works as a project director. One such project was the construction of Damac Tower in Beirut Central District. Fadi is married and has a daughter.

**Mazen Hawwa (B.S. '01)** obtained his M.B.A. from AUB and is a captain at Middle East Airlines. Mazen is married to Lina Ghaly with whom he has two children, 12-year-old Gabriel and 10-year-old Grace.

**Nadine Ramlawi (B.S. '01)** works as a corporate credit officer at the Arab Finance House bank in Sidon, where she also lives.

Businesswoman **Christina Sawaya (B.S. '01)** is the owner of Christina Sawaya-La Boutique and a partner in Smart Parking Corporation, a firm that manufactures automated parking machines. She is also an actress, singer, TV presenter and MC. A former Miss Lebanon and Miss International, Christina has tried her hand at PR management as well as events and



Fady Fayad



Hiba Moubayed



Sara Mouzanar



Reem Ghaddar



Rola Assi



Youssef Chatila



Farah Al-Hashem



Tony Farah

wedding organizing. She is divorced and has two children, a girl and a boy.

**Tala Khabbaz (B.A. '02)** works at the Department of Protocol and Public Relations at the Presidency of Lebanon's Council of Ministers. Tala is married to Didier Raymond and has two children, a nine-year-old boy and a six-year-old girl.

**Rayan Nourallah (B.S. '02)** obtained his postgraduate degree from Brunel University in the U.K. before returning to Lebanon, where he is a supervisor of internal audit at Arabia Insurance Co. Previously, Rayan was a senior financial auditor at Grant Thornton International.

**Jean-Paul Chami (M.A. '04)** obtained a second master's in peace and conflict studies at the European Peace University in Austria before returning to Lebanon, where he is the director of Peace Labs, a local NGO working on peace at the grassroots level and serving primarily North Lebanon and Akkar. Jean-Paul is a consultant, trainer and facilitator of peace and conflict related topics.

**Fady Fayad (M.B.A. '05)** obtained his postgraduate degree from Université Panthéon-Assas Paris II before returning to Lebanon, where he currently works as the general manager of Sanita Persona. Fady is a partner in The Legend, a wedding and corporate event venue, and also has

his own venue, Domaine du Comte. Along with a group of friends, he established Phellipolis, the NGO in charge of the Jounieh International Festival, and is its general manager. He is also vice president of the NGO LARP-Lebanon. He is married to Greta Habib and has two children, five-year-old Alex and four-month-old Maria.

**Roy Abdo (B.S. '06)** moved to the United States, where he obtained his M.B.A. from Johns Hopkins University. He is the founder of Digital Revamp, an innovative digital agency headquartered in Washington, D.C.

**Hiba Moubayed (Pharm.B. '05, Pharm.D. '06)** moved to Saudi Arabia, where she is a pediatric clinical pharmacist. Hiba has just passed the Pediatric Pharmacy Certification exam given by the American Board of Pharmacy Specialties and is now a board certified pediatric pharmacy specialist. She is the first Lebanese pharmacist to earn this title and one of only 287 pharmacists in the world to do so.

**Zeina Rizk (B.S. '06)** obtained her CFA and moved to Dubai, where she works as a fixed income portfolio manager.

**Patrick Gharios (B.E. '07)** is the founder and CEO of hipernation.com, a livestreaming platform and services provider for events and weddings. Patrick, who lives in Lebanon, previously worked as a solution architect for Ericsson for five years.

**Reem Ghaddar (B.S. '06, M.B.A. '08)** lives in south Lebanon, where she is the academic assistant to the president at Phoenicia University in Sarafand. Reem began her career at Zawya (Thomson Reuters Company), where within five years she moved up the corporate ladder from market analyst to senior quality assurance analyst. She is married to Shady Khalife and they have two daughters, three-year-old Celine and 19-month-old Nay.

**Rola Assi (M.A. '09)** holds a Ph.D. in international law from Université Aix-Marseille III in France. Rola currently lives between Paris and The Hague, where she works as an associate legal officer at the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. Rola is an attorney at law registered with the Beirut Bar Association.

**Farah al-Hashem (B.A. '09)** obtained an M.F.A. in filmmaking and cinematography from New York Film Academy (2013) and expects to graduate with an M.A. in international affairs from LAU this semester. Farah plans to obtain her Ph.D. in the U.S. Her first feature-documentary film, *Breakfast in Beirut*, won a special mention at Egypt's Alexandria Film Festival and was nominated as film of the year at the Lebanese Film festival in Australia. Farah is currently shuttling between Kuwait and Paris to shoot her second feature-documentary film, *Details Gone Unnoticed*.

# Staying connected

**Youssef Chatila (B.S. '10)** moved to Dubai, where he works in acquisitions at the MBC Group and is to be promoted to a senior position in mid-2016.

**Ehab Haddad (B.S. '10)** moved to Abu Dhabi, where he works as a commercial and marketing manager at Abu Dhabi Media Company. Ehab is currently pursuing an E.M.B.A. at LAU and hopes to continue for a Ph.D. He began his career in Abu Dhabi by working at the Beach Rotana Hotel and then at Finance House as a marketing specialist.

**Fadi Awada (B.S. '11)** obtained his master's in financial management from Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, as well as a professional sales executive diploma from LAU's CEP. Fadi currently works as a product manager at ITG Holding, which he joined in March 2011.

**Tony Farah (B.S. '09, M.B.A. '11)** moved to Muscat, where he is the national key accounts manager at Arla Foods (Oman). Tony was previously a sales supervisor at Nestle (Oman).

**Karim Hussein (B.S. '11)** obtained his master's in international business from the Hult International Business School in San Francisco, CA, before moving back to Lebanon to become an entrepreneur. Karim had previously worked in Lebanon as an equity trader for two years and as an executive administrative assistant for one year.

**Marc Abdo (B.S. '12)** moved to Dubai, where he is a regional account executive at Hasbro Middle East and North Africa. Marc

began his career as an account executive at Transmed.

**Majed Abou Arraj (B.S. '12)** moved to Riyadh, where he is managing director for Saudi Arabia at Medicals International. He is currently taking a 6-month course at Harvard Business School as part of their Executive Education Program for Leadership Development. Majed got married in 2013 and has a one-year-old daughter.

**Hadi Fakhreddine (M.S. '12)** moved to Paris, where he is a project manager at Dassault Systèmes and an active member of the LAU Alumni Paris Chapter.

**Sara Mouzannar (B.S. '12)** moved to the United States, where she completed a postgraduate degree in human resources and industrial relations at the University of Minnesota. She currently works as a human resources representative at 3M.

**Christian Adib (B.E. '13)** obtained his postgraduate degree at Columbia University before moving back to Lebanon, where he works as a strategy consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton.

**Shaza el-Moussaoui (B.A. '13)** moved to New Jersey, where this fall she will be studying fashion design at FIT-NYC. Shaza designed her own house in New Jersey and got married in May 2014. Her baby boy was born in September 2015.

**Emile Lakis (M.S. '14)** moved to Montpellier, France, where he is pursuing a Ph.D. at the Montpellier Cancer Research Institute of Montpellier University.

**Remi Mahmoud (B.S. '14)** moved to France, where he completed his master's in international affairs and is currently working for the foreign exchange online broker FXCM in their Paris branch as a market analyst for the Arab world.

**Dima Samara (B.A. '14, T.D. '14)** is continuing her studies at LAU so as to obtain an M.A. in education focusing on school management and leadership. Dima is currently a trainee school manager in at Ittihad School in Tyre. Her grandfather established the school, which was taken over by her mother and aunts upon his death. They are now handing over the Ittihad School to Dima, trusting her to continue its mission.

**Hiba Abou Taha (B.A. '15)** worked as a videographer and photographer at Lebanon's Filmline Production. Hiba also worked as a producer for the short film *Amal* and assistant director for another short film, *The Hallway*. She began her career in the media as a segment director at *An-Nahar* newspaper.

**Celina Chatoyan's (B.S. '15)** has her own brand of gold plated accessories, Chato Accessories. They can be found in 75 different shops around Lebanon. Celina participates in a variety of exhibitions and hopes to have her own shop in the next year.

**Nicolas Zaatar (B.E. '15)** is co-founder of Next Automated Robots (NAR), and has been named one of the "Top 20 Lebanese Entrepreneurs" by *Executive magazine* for the year 2015.

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July 2016

12 Alumni Dinner   14 Byblos Reunion   15 Beirut Reunion   16 Alumni Brunch   17 Alumni Trip



# Pulling away the leaves

By Leena Saidi

Art therapy fights to gain recognition in the field of mental health



Although the sessions can be enjoyable and educational, art therapy is not an art class. “The focus is not on the aesthetics of the end product but rather on the whole process of creation,” says Myra Saad (B.S. ’05), LAU alumna and founder of Lebanon’s art therapy center Artichoke Studio.

Saad earned a degree in graphic design from LAU and initially worked as a graphic designer between Lebanon and California. After a while she found herself more and more intrigued by how the creative process affects a person. She therefore decided to pursue a postgraduate degree in expressive therapies, specializing in art therapy and mental health counseling at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Soon after her return to Lebanon four years ago, Saad began to launch projects using art therapy in a variety of environments to gauge the country’s need for the technique. In the meantime, she continued to work as an art therapist with various populations and in different settings between Boston and Beirut. Finally, in 2014 she founded Artichoke Studio.

“I work with people who are facing challenges in life and have a desire to develop themselves,” she says of her clients, who include adults suffering from severe mental disorders, victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse, inmates in Lebanese prisons, youth at risk of delinquency, the LGBT population, refugees affected by war trauma, and others.

Art therapy generally has goals and values similar to traditional psychotherapy, aiming to develop self-awareness and healthy strategies to deal with personal challenges. “It integrates traditional psychotherapeutic theories and techniques with a unique understanding of the creative process and its ability to aid in the healing process,” Saad points out. Art therapy relies on self-expression to awaken an individual’s own problem-solving capacities. Guided by a professional art therapist, the creative process can be insightful and therapeutic.

Building on specialized academic studies in the field and her innate sensitive nature, Saad is dedicated to using creative expression whenever and however she can to promote mental health and well-being. She adapts a person-centered approach, focusing on the unique needs and potential of those she works with in order to support them in exploring their inner selves and developing healthy strategies in dealing with life’s challenges.



*“Art therapy encourages the use of creative expression as a tool for change and growth.”*

She has collaborated with several organizations on various projects. At the moment, for example, she works with children with cancer through the organization MySchoolPulse, with families of the missing in cooperation with the NGOs ABAAD (Dimensions)-Resource Center for Gender Equality and Act for the Disappeared, as well as with the Cedar Rehab center to combat drug and alcohol abuse and rehabilitation. “Funding was, and still is, the biggest challenge,” says Saad, as the center depends entirely on private funds.

The mission of Artichoke Studio is to promote art therapy to be recognized as a profession in the field of mental health. By offering a safe and non-judgmental studio space in which everyone is welcomed to express, create and become, Saad believes she will be able to “encourage the use of creative expression as a tool for change and growth.”

“I think I succeeded because of my passion toward my work, and the great support I receive from my loved ones helps me to keep going,” she stresses.

# WHY I GIVE BACK

## *Romy Bakhos Salamé* (B.S. '15)



Romy Bakhos Salamé, an LAU alumna who earned a business degree in 2015, is applying her expertise to the marketing and management of sports products, aiming to improve their sales and distribution within the local market. In her personal life, she recently got married and generously allocated all the funds of her wedding gift bank account to LAU's scholarship program. "It struck me that I can give what I don't need and share it in a way that truly makes a difference for someone wanting an education," she says.

### **Why do you give back to LAU?**

At LAU we are taught to give back and help society on all levels. Having been able to enjoy the university and see its impact first-hand, I wanted to do something that would allow deprived students to have this opportunity as well. I hope that every year I will be able to help students experience the greatness of LAU and to set a precedent for others to follow.

### **What is your fondest memory of LAU?**

I love the campus. It is really impressive and of an international standard. I have fond memories of my professors and deeply appreciate that they were always present and available, not only to teach us but also to help us through our times of need and stress. My professors made my university years both fulfilling and enjoyable.

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

I wish that everyone would give back, thereby providing young talent a chance to study and shine brightly. Anyone can help, even in a small way, to eradicate social and cultural barriers in Lebanon.

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

I would really like to see LAU become the number one university in the Middle East, competing with established universities worldwide.

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

It disappoints me to hear that smart, bright students have left Lebanon due to financial constraints. I think we should all support education here in Lebanon to ensure that talented youth stay in our beautiful country to make it a better place to live. I also wish that businesses would help in this effort and create more job opportunities here.



## Fulfilling the Promise

LAU Campaign for Academic Excellence



### THE STOLTZFUS FAMILY IS FULFILLING THE PROMISE

*LAU recently lost a longtime friend and supporter in Ambassador William A. Stoltzfus, Jr. Born in Beirut in 1924, he spent part of his childhood in Aleppo — where his father was head of the North Syria School for Boys — and later moved back to Beirut when his father became president of American Junior College (subsequently Beirut College for Women and now LAU). LAU Magazine & Alumni Bulletin spoke to his son and Board of Trustees member, Philip Stoltzfus to ask how the family plans to keep their parents' spirit alive.*

*“When my grandfather was president of BCW, the function of the college was not simply to educate young people but also to instill in them a sense of civic engagement. My father and mother were totally committed to public service. My father was a career diplomat and also served as a pilot in the Naval Air Corps. My mother Janet Sorg Stoltzfus, who died in 2004, taught at BCW where in 1953 she met my father. She became an accomplished diplomat in her own right and went on to establish the Ta'iz Cooperative School in north Yemen.*

*Because of my parents' lifelong dedication to service, we decided we wanted to establish an award to go to an LAU student who has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to community service. Proceeds from an endowment fund, to be called “The Janet and William A. Stoltzfus, Jr. Endowed Scholarship Fund,” would be credited against the winner's senior year tuition. My parents taught me that real service comes from a feeling of empathy for one's fellow man, which depends on being able to understand and appreciate another person's perspective. LAU excels in educating the student in a civic-minded way, and that's why we continue to support the university.”*

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