

# LAU magazine

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## & ALUMNI BULLETIN



*The Act of Moving*

## All for a Good Cause



Hundreds of LAU runners and volunteers joined the Beirut Marathon in support of the country's unity and the community's welfare. With their T-shirts printed with #LAUcares beside the symbolic pink ribbon, over 400 runners from the university's Beirut and Byblos campuses and LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital set off on Sunday, November 12, to complete the BLOM Bank Beirut Marathon for yet another worthy cause.





## The Act of Moving

### FEATURES

#### 6 Moving society...forward?



Social movements can be defined as organizational structures and strategies that may empower oppressed populations to mount effective challenges and resist more powerful and advantaged elites. They are large, sometimes informal, groupings of individuals or organizations which focus on specific political or social issues. In other words, they carry out, resist or undo a social change. They provide a way of social change from the bottom within nations. *Irina du Quenoy* tries to understand how they work.

#### 24 Pan-Arabism

The intellectual foundations of pan-Arabism were laid down in the early decades of the twentieth century, in the context first of Arab alienation from Ottoman rule and later in response to the imperialist partition of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. The doctrine became politically significant in the post-World War II era, when it produced the drive for integral Arab unity that culminated in the union of Egypt and Syria in the United Arab Republic. Was it a futile political movement or an undeniable reality that moved millions, *Reem Maghribi* investigates.



#### 36 Gentrification in Beirut



While potentially forcing relocation of current, established residents and businesses, gentrification can improve the quality of a neighborhood. A common and controversial topic in politics and in urban planning, it often shifts a neighborhood's racial and ethnic composition. Conversations about gentrification have evolved, as many in the social-scientific community have questioned the negative connotations associated with the word gentrification. *Brooke Anderson* takes a look at how Beirut's Mar Mikhael has moved from industrial edge to bohemian cool to corporate overdevelopment.

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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.

Submit to: [marcom@lau.edu.lb](mailto:marcom@lau.edu.lb), or

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

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

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### President

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### Copy Editor

Irina du Quenoy

### Writers

Brooke Anderson

Linda Dahdah

Naseem Ferdowsi

Dana K. Haffar

Elida Jbeili

Reem Maghribi

Hanan Nasser

Ned Whalley

### Contributors

Zeina Abdallah

Amal Abdel Massih

Lana Abou Teen

Nicole Barghoud

Sevine Fakhoury

Manwa Ghanoum

Ghada Majed

Nayla Abou Merhi Moujaes

Nada Torbey

### Production Manager

Sana Kouatly

### Graphic Designer

Marianne Amkieh Siblani

With thanks to Joelle Bou Khalil

### Photographers

Samer Beyhim

Emile Ghazal

Karem Mounzer

Bassam Lahoud

Yehia Malla

Pro Studio

### CONNECT WITH LAU





## From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,



*Bolstered by the unprecedented support of the extended LAU family, our institution continues to move from success to success. Thanks to you, we have been able to overcome economic and political challenges, continuing to hold our own as a leading institution of higher learning – both locally and internationally. Our standing has been solidified by bold strategies, including forming partnerships with industry, through which we have been able to provide students with hands-on work experience prior to graduation while at the same time opening up opportunities for our faculty to engage in applied research, pedagogical innovation and entrepreneurial initiatives.*

*LAU has always enjoyed a strong bond with the surrounding community. A recent study undertaken by the university reveals the vast scope of the contribution of our two campuses in terms of economic output and development, not only to local municipalities but also to the country as a whole. It is no wonder that the brightest high-school students around choose to study at LAU.*

*They are not the only ones drawn to LAU by its cutting-edge facilities. This year we welcomed over 20 new faculty members at various ranks. Strong academic programs are difficult to maintain without highly qualified and well-supported faculty engaging in research and teaching activities. In the past year, the university has witnessed a marked upsurge in research productivity in all seven of its schools. It is with great pride that we highlight in this issue breakthrough discoveries by two of our scientists in the School of Pharmacy that may lead to reversal of DNA damage and inhibition of cancer cells.*

*As ever, our faculty, staff and students are spending the academic year involved in a wide range of community service and outreach activities. LAU's identity is closely tied to engagement with society at large, an arrangement that works in both directions. To take just one shining example, our Survival Team climbed Russia's Mount Elbrus to raise awareness and motivate young cancer patients, encouraged in their climb by the patients themselves.*

*LAU's engagement with society is reflected, always, in the magazine's feature pieces, which seek to contribute to an intellectual conversation aimed at a better understanding of our turbulent age. This time, as we advance through the 21st century, we are studying mobilizations aimed at social, political, cultural and economic change. We take a closer look at how effective organizational strategies are in empowering disadvantaged populations to gain self-sufficiency and excel on their own. In another piece, we debate whether Pan-Arabism was a futile political movement or an undeniable force that moved millions.*

*We also consider how another form of movement, gentrification, has shaped Lebanon's capital by transforming rundown, industrial neighborhoods, such as Mar Mikhail, into chic districts dotted with cafes, restaurants, art galleries, bakeries and shops. How is this process helping the city and its residents, and what danger does it bring in the form of increased prices and corporate overdevelopment?*

*At LAU, we believe in perpetual motion, as standing still is contrary to a university's very nature. Our Media and Digital Literacy Academy made a goal of going global. Both in Lebanon and abroad, students have empowered the public and encouraged civic activism in connection with the academy. The path did not stop there: Through its vibrant theater culture, the Department of Communication Arts has continued its mission of nurturing creative talents and community spirit, while at the same time reinventing itself.*

*Join us on our journey of innovation and discovery, in which we draw on the vast knowledge and experiences of our students, faculty, staff and alumni to study modern Lebanon and its resources, the most important of which is its people.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph G. Jabbra". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Joseph G. Jabbra  
President



# LAU's two campuses contribute \$900 million per year to Lebanon

By Reem Maghribi

Ministers, economists and bankers gathered at LAU in October to discuss the economic impact of the university's two campuses on Lebanon. Their contribution to the Lebanese economy exceeds 1.3 trillion Lebanese Liras per year, highlighted a study undertaken by the university's Department of Institutional Research and Assessment (DIRA).

"No such study has been conducted in the entire Middle East," explained Diane Nauffal, the Assistant to the President for Institutional Research and Assessment. "They are often done in the U.S. and Europe, as universities have to prove that what they're doing is worthwhile, especially when they receive government subsidies for financial aid, research, money and grants."

The amount, equivalent to almost \$900 million, is based on a quantitative study of the economic contributions of LAU's Beirut and Byblos campuses in the fiscal year 2015-2016 and does not take into account the vast LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital in Ashrafieh and the burgeoning Continuing Education

Program (CEP) that offers thousands of professionals the opportunity to earn a variety of certificates and diplomas.

Details of the methodology and findings of the study were presented to an auditorium full of guests at LAU's Beirut campus by Nauffal, in the presence of former minister of education Hassan Mneimneh, representing Prime Minister Saad Hariri, and LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra, who commissioned the study.

"LAU has lived through and witnessed the various economic phases Lebanon has been through, including the tough years of the civil war," said President Jabbra, emphasizing the long-standing relationship between and contribution of the university and country's economy.

The initiative was set up to show that LAU is giving to its community and the country, both in terms of human economic output and human development. It highlights LAU's current contribution in terms of the workforce with an 80 percent employment rate 18 months after graduation.

Economists, banking professionals, journalists, and LAU students and alumni



*"When you give LAU a dollar it circles through and you get a ripple effect."*

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

were also in attendance, all keen to learn more about the strong contribution the university makes in various sectors of the Lebanese economy, including education, real estate, and communications.

"The figures are conservative," explained Nauffal, an assistant professor in education, noting that some data was missing and a number of LAU initiatives and operations – such as the medical center and CEP – were not included in the study.

The data primarily reflects the expenditure of the university's two campuses, which directly contributed \$209 million to the economy. This went to cover costs of salaries and education and health benefits to 1,582 full and part time

faculty and staff members, operational costs, and construction and renovation projects.

The study also includes the expenditure of students who completed high school abroad and are now enrolled at LAU and contributing to the Lebanese economy through their spending. They equate to 11 percent of the university's student population. And, based on a student survey conducted in the year 2015-16, their spending was equal to \$31 million.

These direct contributions were multiplied through additional direct, indirect and induced economic impacts resulting in increased economic output, employment and labor income. Direct, indirect and induced contributions therefore resulted in a total economic output of \$897 million and the creation of 9,570 jobs.

According to the report, 80 percent of the university's students remain in the country and those who leave often send back remittances. "So, whichever way you look at it, when you give LAU a dollar it circles through and you get a ripple effect," pointed out Nauffal.



In 2015-2016, LAU's aggregated expenditures and out-of-country student spending led to:



**9,570**  
employment  
opportunities



**\$209 m**  
in labor income



**\$897 m**  
in total economic  
output

*The full report "LAU's Economic Impact on Lebanon" is available online on the LAU website.*



# Moving society... forward?

Understanding social movements

By Irina du Quenoy

FEATURE





In February 1917, large crowds gathered in St. Petersburg, Russia, to protest deteriorating social and economic conditions. The Russian Revolution had begun. Seventy years later, large crowds once more went to the streets, toppling communist regimes not only in Russia but across Eastern Europe. Yet, using social mobilization to achieve political, cultural and/or social change does not always work.

In the Middle East, the massive wave of pro-democracy protests known as the Arab Spring has had mixed effects, with relatively successful democratic transitions in Tunisia standing as a sharp contrast to the increasingly authoritarian situation in Turkey, the crackdown in Egypt and the violent crisis in Syria. This ambiguous success rate has also been true of the various Islamist movements that have prominently inserted themselves into regional politics. Yet, despite mixed success rates, movements for change continue to draw in thousands, if not millions of people across the globe.

"One approach within the burgeoning literature on political Islamists is to apply social movement theory to understand the motives, appeal and account for the success, or lack thereof, of specific Islamist movements," says Sami Baroudi, professor of political science at LAU. He refers to an interdisciplinary subfield within the social sciences that attempts to explain why social mobilization occurs, the forms

in which it does so, and to answer the question of why some public causes are more successful than others in achieving their goals.

Early on, social thinkers such as Gustav LeBon embraced the "mass society" hypothesis, which proposed that people who joined large-scale, counter-systemic movements — such as protests against adverse labor conditions — did so because they were marginal individuals not fully integrated into society, who found psychological comfort in the "togetherness" characteristic of (often dangerous) crowds.

Since then, theorists have largely rejected this primacy of psychological factors in collective behavior, although the role of emotions is still acknowledged as important: one thinks here of the way in which highly-charged emotions — fueled by radio propaganda — were involved in mobilizing Hutu militias to kill fellow Tutsi Rwandans in 1994, among other examples. Writing in 2014 for the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, David Yanagizawa-Drott (then Associate Professor at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard) notes, "The appeal to emotions and the fostering of hate through methods such as the use of dehumanizing language, describing Tutsis as cockroaches, could thus play an independent or complementary role by influencing intrinsic motivation for violence."





Social movement theorists have also tended to dismiss ideology as a primary motivating factor, an approach that Baroudi finds to be most useful. “The value added of social movement theory is its emphasis on context and not just on ideology,” he says. In the case of Islamist movements, “there is quite a bit of heterogeneity amongst them, in terms of ideology, goals and modes of operation....they should not be judged exclusively, or even primarily, based on ideology.” Instead, as social movement theory suggests, “we should also carefully examine the context in which they emerged, their relationship to the regime...and to other Islamist movements,” adds Baroudi.

If psychological factors and ideology are not definitive in social mobilization, what is? One potential obvious answer is deprivation or inequality. For example, most pop culture depictions of the French Revolution consist of poor peasants going after exploitative nobles with pitchforks. As do familiar images of most popular revolts against ruling regimes, especially in places like Latin America and the Middle East. And, of course, Occupy Wall Street appears as a poster-child for inequality motivating social protest. But this explanation is not quite as simple or obvious as it seems.

The “relative deprivation” school of thought within social movement theory proposes that there are actually two types of deprivation: One in relation to others (i.e., real poverty) and the other in relation to people’s expectations. Of the two, surprisingly, the second is more important in inspiring social revolt. According to the late James Chowning Davis, an American sociologist and emeritus professor of political science at the University of Oregon, “revolutions are

most likely to occur when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal.”

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*“The value added of social movement theory is its emphasis on context and not just on ideology.”*

—Sami Baroudi, LAU professor of political science

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So, for example, in Egypt in 2011 the initial protests had a lot to do with the fact that the economy was actually growing: from the perspective of the educated but underemployed Egyptian youth, it was simply not improving fast enough to match expectations. “People then subjectively fear that ground gained with great effort will be quite lost, their mood becomes revolutionary,” Davis adds.

Yet, relative deprivation is not the only plausible explanation scholars of

social movements propose for the Arab Spring, whether in Egypt or elsewhere. “One important social movement theory that sheds light on the Arab uprisings is the idea of ‘political opportunity structure,’” says Tamirace Fakhoury, LAU associate professor of political science and international affairs. “That is, political contexts, rifts within elites and geopolitical conditions determined to a large extent the varying outcomes of these uprisings in the different Middle Eastern states where they occurred.”

For example, in thinking about the relative success of the democratic transition in Tunisia, LAU’s Associate Professor of Political Science Bassel Salloukh pinpoints four structural factors specific to that country: “a society divided mainly along ideological rather than sectarian or ethnic lines; a small and apolitical military; a rejuvenated civil society capable of engaging in accommodation on issues that threaten the democratic transition, and finally, an unimportant geopolitical location.”

According to Imad Salamey, LAU associate professor of political science and international affairs and director







of the Institute for Social Justice and Conflict Resolution, specific external conditions ensured the opening of opportunity for initial political action in the case of the Arab revolts. “The movements’ [initial] success can mostly be attributed to globalization and declining barriers between countries and experiences,” he says. In this case, “Youth emerged as global citizens equipped with communication technologies, with the ability to mobilize and inflict greater pressure against dominant powers.”

Outside observers at the time made much of the apparent central role of social media in mobilizing Arab citizens in the cause of drastic political change, leading some to claim that the internet has fundamentally changed the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. In Fakhoury’s view, however, the place of such media in contemporary protest cycles is somewhat more nuanced. “Social media is not a game changer by itself but rather a discursive tool and opportunity to attract more participants and sympathizers that some social movements use better than others,” she says. “It can also be used, however, by autocratic regimes to crackdown on opponents.”

And indeed, while such highly visible protest moments such as the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Color Revolutions in Eastern Europe have contributed to the sense that campaigns for social change must inevitably succeed, countervailing factors often present formidable obstacles. For instance, Middle Eastern countries that did not, in 2011, enjoy the four conditions that Salloukh identifies in Tunisia have seen quite different outcomes from the Tunisian one. “Deeply entrenched communitarian divisions, stimulated and manipulated

by revisionist rival regional powers, are among the major causes for setbacks,” points out Salamey.

Closer to home in Lebanon, the country has experienced a number of social movements over the past few years that provide ample food for thought about their successes or failures, of which the You Stink movement is only the most notable recent example. “Despite its spontaneity, the movement — which was an unprecedented popular mobilization by civil society groups — succeeded in raising public awareness and forced the decentralization of trash management in favor of municipalities,” says Salamey.

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*“Rifts within elites and geopolitical conditions determined to a large extent the varying outcomes of uprisings.”*

—*Tamirace Fakhoury, LAU associate professor of political science and international affairs*

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However, he also notes that “attempts at politicizing it and rivalry over leadership undermined the movement’s sustainability.”

Similar problems have bedeviled the Secular Lebanon movement, which can be described as a loose coalition across the country’s political spectrum seeking to dismantle the sectarian system of government that has prevailed for so many decades. While the movement has occasionally been able to bring forth thousands of demonstrators into the street in support of its cause, inroads into

real change have been slow.

“I can say that the secular subculture in Lebanon is growing, and this is positive,” says activist Mazen Abou Hamdan, co-founder of Freethought Lebanon. “There has been impressive results in the secular clubs in universities, as well as in several syndicates and even in municipalities.” But the movement still faces obstacles. Abou Hamdan identifies a lack of structure and unity as the central issue, more specifically “infiltration of activist decision circles by sectarian parties, ideological differences between different secular groups and personal differences over who would take leadership.”

According to Salloukh, Secular Lebanon’s difficulties may be best explained in terms resonant with the ‘political opportunity structure’ theory. “The sectarian system undergirded by a complex ensemble of institutional, clientelist and discursive practices that sustain the ideological hegemony of sectarianism in postwar Lebanon,” he says. “More importantly, this ensemble shapes peoples’ incentive structures in a manner conducive to the reproduction of sectarian modes of identification and mobilization.” In the end, this means that “when anti- or cross-sectarian movements emerge, they tend to be besieged by this ensemble” and ultimately fail to reach their goals.

As this magazine goes to print, social movements continue to play a formative role in politics and society across the globe, from the #MeToo campaign against sexual harassment, to the protests roiling Iran’s streets, to public demonstrations against the ruling regime in Venezuela, among many other examples. Whether they individually succeed or fail, people’s passion for change and a better society lives on. ☐

## On the move

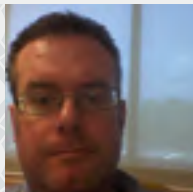
### SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES



#### **GABRIELE COSENTINO, PH.D.**

Visiting Assistant Professor

Cosentino obtained his Ph.D. in Media, Culture and Communication from New York University. His decision to join LAU was motivated by "an interest to expand my research and teaching experience in political communication to the Middle East region, with its complex and rich political history. Also, Beirut's burgeoning media sector and multifaceted social fabric make it a unique vantage point from which to observe political dynamics." For LAU, Cosentino has developed a special topics course titled Social Media and Fake News, which is based on the research done for a book that he recently published on the recent phenomenon of the spreading of false information and fictional political narratives via social media. His main focus will be political communication, with a special emphasis on the relationship between politics and mediated popular culture.



#### **GARETH DAVEY, PH.D.**

Visiting Professor

"The Middle East is important on the world stage and its effects are being felt worldwide," says Davey, who envisages his time at LAU as a springboard to experience these issues first-hand, as well as through academic research.

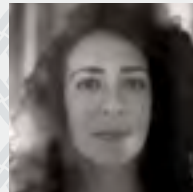
Davey obtained his Ph.D. in Environmental Psychology from the University of Bolton. At LAU, his career goal is to work collaboratively with colleagues to position psychology and social sciences in the university as a hub of national and international excellence, through world-class teaching and research beneficial locally and internationally. The key to achieving this "is to put students at the heart of everything I do." The key focus of Davey's research concerns global public health and its interconnections with the various micro- and macro-level factors which constitute the fabric of daily life and society. He is currently exploring opportunities to engage local issues and is particularly interested in contributing to animal welfare initiatives.



#### **ASSEM FARESS, PH.D.**

Professor/Director of SINARC Program

Faress holds a double-major Ph.D. in English and Comparative Literature from Indiana University. Since completing his degree, he has taught courses ranging from literary theory and criticism to comparative literature to modern Arabic literature. Faress has also held numerous academic and administrative posts at universities in the U.S. and his native Syria. At LAU, he joined what he sees as "a rising-star academic institution with an ambitious agenda, whose mission and vision are the same as mine." Faress' areas of interest deal with cultural issues. He would like to bridge the cultural gap that he says exists between the East and the West, because he deeply believes that mutual understanding leads to cooperation, inasmuch as the lack of it leads to confrontation. Faress is currently writing a book titled Arabic Literature: Cultural Diversity, to be published in English hopefully by the summer of 2018.



#### **SARAH KASKAS, M.F.A.**

Assistant Professor

Kaskas received her M.F.A. from the Red Sea Institute of Cinematic Arts in Aqaba, Jordan. Her thesis film Fugue (2011) toured several festivals before being sold to BBC Arabic's Alternative Cinema. In 2013, she wrote Wanderland, a short animation, which won a Co-Production Forum at the Stuttgart International Animation Festival and was nominated for the Robert Bosch Film Prize 2014. In 2016, she co-directed Bread and Tea, which won Best Short Documentary at Iran's Cinema Verité and toured a number of international film festivals. Kaskas' latest feature documentary was nominated for the Robert Bosch Film Prize 2017. She is also interested in how sound can be used to tell a story in unconventional media and is currently working on her first music album, which will include audio recordings of soundscapes that tell a parallel story that progresses with the music.



#### **N. GABRIEL MARTIN, PH.D.**

Visiting Assistant Professor

Martin obtained his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Sussex. His current research is on what we learn from disagreement. He wants to help students understand that what they think matters, and that reason is important for nurturing relationships and contributing to society. He aims to explain the puzzle of how conflicting positions about the same thing are possible, as well as shed light on why the tension between a common ground and controversy about it requires us to face the existence of other people and a world that must be shared with them. It is tempting to consider disagreement with an eye to resolving it, and he argues for a more patient approach. His research interests include phenomenology, social and political philosophy, and social epistemology. A regular speaker at Stand-Up Philosophy in London, Martin is looking for ways to engage with the wider community in Beirut.

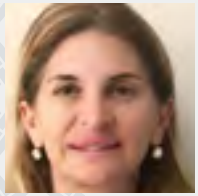


#### **MICHELLA GHASSIBE SABBAGH, PH.D.**

Visiting Assistant Professor

Sabbagh, who holds a Ph.D. in Human Genetics from the Catholic University of Louvain, worked at the Christian de Duve Institute of Cellular Pathology, published more than 65 scientific papers, and supervised master's and Ph.D. students, before moving to work with the European Union on rare Orphan diseases. Through teaching genetics and advanced genetics courses, she hopes to transmit a sense of knowledge to her students and get them involved in the new era of next generation sequencing and whole genome studies, where unraveling the genetic basis of polygenic complex diseases is finding its way to clinical diagnosis from bench to bedside. Sabbagh's main field of research is identifying complex disease susceptibility genes, to study their interaction with the environment and to correlate these interactions with disease onset and manifestation. She is also currently involved in studying the genetic predisposition of Lebanese women to breast cancer.

## THE ADNAN KASSAR SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



### JOELLE MAJDALANI HACHEM, PH.D.

Assistant Professor

After graduating with an M.B.A. from LAU, Hachem went on to obtain her Doctorate in Business Administration from the Grenoble School of Management in France. Hachem has returned to LAU because “the university is like a family to me.” She is also passionate

about fashion and involved in the industry. She is currently the General Manager of Boutique Marcelle, a family-owned business that imports and sells upscale, ready-to-wear garments to a female clientele. Hachem conducts workshops and trainings mostly in her field of passion, Emotional Intelligence. She has written numerous publications on the subject and its marketing links; her current research projects focus on how having highly emotional intelligent managers leads to customer satisfaction. Apart from this, Hachem is also interested in teacher empathy and social skill effect on students, family business, and leadership styles and organizational climate.



### DUNIA HARAJLI, PH.D.

Assistant Professor

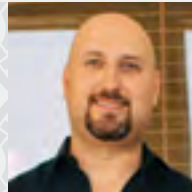
An LAU alumna with an insurmountable passion to teach and impact future generations, Harajli first taught at Adnan Kassar School of Business in 2008. Since that year, she has taught numerous courses at LAU helping to shape thinking patterns, raise critical cognitive skills, and respond to emotional and spiritual needs of students. Harajli — who obtained her doctorate in business administration from the Grenoble School of Management — believes that “socially aware and ethically responsible students, who reflect deeply on learned subjects, can integrate course material with diverse disciplines of knowledge, hence becoming more apt to serving society.” Her areas of interest include workplace spirituality, business ethics education, brands and spirituality, consumer neuroscience, and consumption and spirituality. At the same time, as far back as she can remember, her career has always been guided and nourished by social work. Harajli was once a UNDP Corporate Social Responsibility research volunteer; today she is the vice president of the NGO MEDRAR.



### MOSTAFA HARAKE, PH.D.

Assistant Professor

Harake obtained a Ph.D. in Accounting and Finance from the University of Manchester, where he completed his coursework in collaboration with Lancaster University. His research mainly tackles the economic consequences of financial reporting, the interaction between information asymmetry and corporate financial decisions, and aspects of accounting conservatism. During his undergraduate studies at LAU as a finance student, Harake was inspired by some of his teachers who taught him lessons in finance, and more importantly, in life. He believes that a teacher can, and should, change and improve the

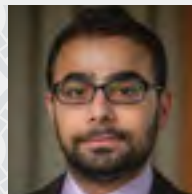


### FAWZI HYDER, PH.D.

Assistant Professor

Having obtained his M.B.A. from LAU, Fawzi Hyder went on to complete a Ph.D. in Finance from the University of Central Florida, Orlando. His research mainly focuses on market efficiency and asset pricing. His current research interests also include index additions,

arbitrage risk, the role of active institutional investors, and trading strategies. Hyder has presented his work at top finance conferences across the USA. Through his academic teaching at the Department of Finance and Accounting at LAU's Adnan Kassar School of Business, he aims to bring his academic and professional experience in trading and portfolio management to help the university's students make more informed investment decisions and to provide them with the required tools to compete for jobs in the financial industry.



### OMAR ITANI, PH.D.

Assistant Professor

Itani holds a Ph.D. in Marketing from the University of Texas Arlington. His ongoing research lies in the areas of digital and social media marketing, relationship marketing, and professional selling. Itani is a member of the Beta Gamma Sigma honors organization and a fellow of the American Marketing Association-Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium. He aims to provide an active learning environment to his students, where they can acquire the knowledge and skills needed to succeed on their chosen career paths. Prior to joining LAU, Itani taught several courses at the University of Texas Arlington, including on topics such as social media marketing and international marketing.



## THE ADNAN KASSAR SCHOOL OF BUSINESS (con't)



### ILHAN SEZER, PH.D.

Assistant Professor

Sezer obtained his Ph.D. in Economics from Princeton University. His interest in mathematics has lead him to study economic theory and its applications. At LAU, he has two main goals. The first is to help students in their career decisions: "This is very important in a university and is unfortunately very weak in most of the universities." His second goal is to find ways to include his students in the research process. "The payoff is great when you start doing research with your students, since they will bring their energy and enthusiasm." Sezer's fields of research include political economy and economic theory and its applications. He is interested in voters' and candidates' behavior in elections and democratic peace. He also hopes to study different regimes types and compare them in terms of their effect on the society and economy.

## SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN



### SILVIA MAZZETTO, PH.D.

Visiting Assistant Professor

Mazzetto is a licensed professional architect with a Ph.D. in Architectural Composition and has extensive experience in both practice and academia. She taught at Qatar University and at IUAV University of Architecture in Venice, where she obtained her doctorate.

Her research interests include topics in conservation of architectural heritage and in multidisciplinary collaboration projects that focus on integrating the socio-cultural and behavioral aspects of collaboration and leadership into education and professional practice. Mazzetto served as a supervising architect for European Union research projects, working with a wide range of experts and stakeholders on the preservation of architectural heritage and urban planning. Her experience includes many years of practice as an architect in project management and consultant roles in international companies both in Europe and in the Gulf region. In the past, Mazzetto has been able to develop innovative teaching approaches working in multidisciplinary collaboration with diverse departments and courses, and hopes to continue to do so at LAU.

## SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

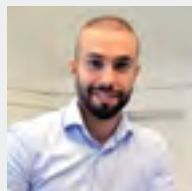


### AMNE EL CHEIKH, PH.D.

Visiting Assistant Professor

Having obtained her undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Balamand, el Cheikh continued her doctoral studies in mechanical engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

She joined LAU's Department of Industrial and Mechanical Engineering in order to fulfill her desire to contribute to building a better society in Lebanon. El Cheikh is keen to help students develop higher order thinking skills and motivate them to be involved in research. Her research interests lie in the creation of efficient and eco-friendly energy conversion systems by incorporating renewable energy sources. These include the design of efficient thermal storage systems using PCM, as well as the study of novel techniques used to improve the thermal-hydraulic performance of heat exchangers and performance enhancement of wind turbines using CFD simulations. El Cheikh has closely studied frost growth and densification on flat surfaces, and has developed a mathematical model to measure it.



### NICOLAS FARAH, PH.D.

Assistant Professor

After completing his B.E. at Polytech Marseille, Farah went on to obtain an M.Sc. in Petroleum Engineering (Specialized in Reservoir) followed by a Ph.D. in Geosciences, Natural Resources and Environment from the Sorbonne's

Université Pierre et Marie Curie (UPMC). In addition, he finished his Ph.D. at IFP Energies nouvelles (French Institute of Petroleum Engineering) at Rueil-Malmaison in France, where he worked for three years on developing a software for flow modeling from unconventional low reservoir permeability by implementing a new Discrete Fracture Model (DFM) based on a Multiple Interacting Continua (MINC) proximity function. By joining LAU's School of Engineering, he hopes to provide his students with real-life examples and motivation to pursue a career in petroleum engineering. Continuing from his doctorate research on flow modeling from unconventional reservoirs, the areas of research that interest him now include reservoir simulation and enhanced oil recovery methods.

For on the move in the health sciences check out the upcoming spring 2018 issue.

# A university of choice

By Reem Maghribi

Forty percent of Lebanon's brightest high-school students choose to study at LAU



Twenty-six of the top high-school graduates from Lebanon's state schools were offered scholarships to study at the university of their choice. Ten of them chose to study at LAU.

The awardees were honored at a ceremony at the Grand Serail, held before the start of the academic year and attended by LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra, the Minister of Education Marwan Hamadeh, and the director of Council for Scientific Research (CNRS), the government body that established the scholarship program, George Tohme.

"I love this campus and the friendly student-professor relationships. It's been a great experience," enthuses scholarship recipient student Zeina Bazzi two months into her first year at LAU. She chose to enroll in the psychology program at LAU after a visit to the Beirut campus. "The experience at the admissions office was so warm, much nicer than at any of the other universities I had visited."

Sawsan Alzahr was also thrilled by her first visit to the Byblos campus, where she is now studying electrical engineering. "The recruitment team was very friendly and explained things really clearly," recalls Alzahr, who highlights the transport services and language support offered by the university as highly useful value-added services.

Praising the student recruitment office that introduces prospective students to all that the university has to offer, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management Abdo Ghié explains why it is no surprise that 40 percent of the students receiving the CNRS scholarship chose to spend their formative years at LAU.

"They enjoy the student life at LAU, where we give them the opportunity to go abroad and be active citizens through various initiatives, including the Model

United Nations," says Ghié. "In my experience, those who excel academically are also passionate activists wanting to effect change, so the activities of the Dean of Students offices and the Outreach & Civic Engagement unit are very attractive to them."

The scholarships are presented through a program established by CNRS and offered to the students who attain the five highest results in each of the four baccalaureate disciplines of life sciences, general science, social studies and economics, and literature and humanities. Seventy-three per cent of this year's recipients were women.

LAU covers the majority of the costs of the scholarships and offers each student a monthly stipend. The university also offers CNRS program undergraduates the opportunity to enroll at the Gilbert and Rose Chagoury School of Medicine on a full scholarship.

"When LAU presented its offer of extended scholarships for the full seven years it takes to earn a medical degree, I decided to study biology," explains Oulyana Arafat, who had scored the highest marks nationwide in the baccalaureate program in social studies and economics. "Even before getting the scholarship, I'd been planning to study business at LAU, as the Adnan Kassar School of Business has a very strong reputation," says Arafat, whose father graduated from the school many years ago.

Kassem Sbeity is also studying biology. Like Arafat, he was a student at the Lycée National in Choueifat and earned the highest baccalaureate score nationwide in life sciences. "LAU's reputation and accreditation attracted me to it, and the technology I saw during my visit to the medical school was the decisive factor," explained Sbeity.



*"Through various initiatives LAU gives them the opportunity to go abroad and be active citizens."*

—Abdo Ghié, LAU assistant vice president for Enrollment Management



# LAU mountaineers reach the top of Mount Elbrus

By Reem Maghribi

More importantly, they reach the hearts of children with cancer



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*"When we were ready to give up, we remembered the children and kept going."*

—Alan Kairouz, LAU associate manager of campus activities Byblos

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The LAU Survival Team is comprised of highly athletic members of the university's community, who enjoy training and love a challenge. While members come and go, Alan Kairouz — associate manager of campus activities at Byblos — has been the leader of the team since its inception in 2011, heading training camps and adventurous expeditions.

This summer — and only two years after climbing Mount Kilimanjaro with seven LAU students and staff members — Kairouz, together with a fellow staff member Charbel Harb, a School of Architecture and Design graphic designer and four students (IT management major Georges B. Rattel, architecture major Richard Bchara, and banking and finance major Joey Daouk) climbed Mount Elbrus in support of children with cancer.

"Everybody has a mountain to climb. We had Elbrus, the children have their

own mountain, and together we faced our challenges, hand in hand," says Kairouz of the bond that formed between climbers and children both before the climb, when they met in person at the hospital and during, when they were exchanging text and video messages. "The best tool to fight cancer is a positive attitude and motivation—the will to survive and fight on. So, we decided to be a source of motivation for the children."

The children in question were being treated at the LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital under the care of oncologist Dr. Roula Farah and CHANCE, the non-profit association founded at the hospital fifteen years ago and of which she is president. "Going through treatment is like climbing a mountain, so the kids loved the messages. They made them feel special and encouraged them to continue their treatment," says Farah, noting the positive effect the climbers had on the children.





"I was so happy! I felt they were supporting me," recalls nine-year old Yasmina, who was battling leukemia while the climbers were facing 60km winds and temperatures of -25C in Russia. "Their climb motivated me and kept me strong."

In addition to supporting the children, the climb aimed to support the fundraising work of CHANCE Association by raising awareness of its activities. "All initiatives that help us raise funds to support the treatment of children with cancer are most welcome," explained Farah during a fundraising gala recently held at SkyBar, at which some of the children spoke of their adventure with the LAU mountaineers, who climb under the moniker "Never Give Up."

Also offering support prior to and throughout the climb, says Kairouz, was the university, through its provision of training, clothing and transport to sites within Lebanon, where the climbers

would train in harsh terrain and weather conditions. "We would train almost daily at the gym, but would also go to Qurnet el Sawda (the highest peak in Lebanon) every week, including during stormy weather to acclimatize to harsh conditions."

Perhaps hoping to find contenders for future "Never Give Up" climbs, the LAU survival team organizes survival camps for students during the month of October and another survival camp for school students during the spring semester. "The camp was exhausting but it really pushed my limits and made me reach points I didn't think I could ever reach, physically and mentally," says computer engineering major Abdallah al Chami of the experience. "It wasn't just a lesson in survival, but a lesson in life."

Postgraduate student Sabine Arayssi concurs: "Despite all the mental, physical, and psychological challenges encountered during the survival camp, I believe that we

should always have a positive attitude, be curious and non-judgmental towards any challenge we are facing."

Whether Abdallah or Sabine join future "Never Give Up" challenges remains to be seen, but the next climb is projected to be up Mount Aconcagua, the second highest peak after Everest. Half of those who made it up Mount Elbrus had also participated in the Kilimanjaro climb in 2015, which was in support of LAU's groundbreaking exoskeleton engineering project.

The success of each climb, says Kairouz emphatically, relies heavily on teamwork. "When one of us felt ready to give up, we remembered the children and were motivated to keep going," he says, explaining why he wouldn't consider climbing without a cause. "It's a two-way support. That's what it's all about."



# Journey of excellence

By Dana K. Haffar

LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital receives ASHA grant for quality equipment and training

*"The process was so successful that we were able to help save the lives of 674 individuals—nearly a 400 percent increase compared to what we originally projected."*

—Sami Rizk, CEO of LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital

During the fall semester, LAU Health Foundation and LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital hosted a reception in recognition of the generous donation of life-saving equipment made possible by the United States Agency for International Development's Office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA). The event was attended by Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut Edward White, the director of the program Dr. E. Anne Peterson, and director of the ASHA office Dr. Ann Dix.

"Today we come together with one purpose — to acknowledge USAID and ASHA-American Schools and Hospitals Abroad — for our first-ever LAU Health Foundation grant awarded to us in 2014," said LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra welcoming all three representatives, as well as the Dean of the Gilbert and Rose-Mary Chagoury School of Medicine Dr. Michel Mawad, Dean of the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing Dr. Anahid Kulwicki, and medical staff at LAU Medical Hospital-Rizk Hospital.

An organizational unit within the USAID Bureau of Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), ASHA administers a worldwide grant program that facilitates the creation of educational and learning centers and promotes opportunities in foreign countries by creating institutions that incorporate America's highest education and medical research standards. The objectives are to strengthen overseas schools and hospitals that best demonstrate American ideas and practices and are likely to survive over a long term.

Although ASHA has supported LAU for many years, this latest grant for \$1.3 million, which has funded the two-year trauma care equipment purchasing project beginning in 2014, is the first from ASHA to provide support for the LAU Health Foundation. Established in 2009, the foundation is the only charitable organization through which LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital can undertake

fundraising in the U.S., with the goal of becoming an internationally accredited hospital that provides an American standard of health care to the people of Lebanon as well as medical training opportunities.

The ASHA grant, called the Trauma Care Project, went toward life-saving equipment for the Emergency Unit, the Operating Room, the C-Section Delivery Room, the Open Heart Operating Room, and the Intensive Care Unit at the LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital.

"The process was so successful in terms of equipment quality and superb training that we were able to help save the lives of 674 individuals — nearly a 400 percent increase compared to what we originally projected," said Sami Rizk, CEO of LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital, speaking of the magnitude of the project that had greatly enhanced the hospital's capacity to treat more patients with traumatic injuries and provided all healthcare workers with innovative training techniques, leading to improved care.

Confident that LAU's mission is aligned with theirs, USAID and ASHA are also giving the university's health foundation and hospital a second two-year grant that is just starting up. This new support will particularly focus on the growing incidence of childbirth complications, some of which result in severe health issues for newborns. It will allow physicians and nurses to practice innovative delivery and neonatal care, with special equipment for treating mothers and their infants.

White recognized LAU's great work in transforming the facilities. "The impact you are making here is incredibly significant," he said. "You're improving lives everyday. You're promoting progress, science and humanity. You're building a resilient healthcare program. You have reached the underserved and marginalized populations and all citizens of this country. You are fostering well-being between our nations daily, and we are very pleased to walk with you on your journey of excellence."



# Carnegie Corporation New York honors Board of Trustees member

By Reem Maghribi



Distinguished higher  
education policy  
leader and renowned  
linguistics scholar  
Joseph Aoun receives  
prestigious Academic  
Leadership Award

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*“Humanics empowers us to do  
what even the most advanced  
machines cannot.”*

—Joseph Aoun, LAU Board of Trustees  
member and President of Northeastern  
University, Massachusetts

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Member of LAU’s Board of Trustees and President of Northeastern University (Massachusetts) Joseph Aoun was recently declared a recipient of the Carnegie Corporation of New York’s prestigious Academic Leadership Award. The award, bestowed on only seven exceptional American college and university presidents, consists of \$500,000 in support of each winner’s academic initiatives.

The Academic Leadership Award recognizes educators who, in addition to fulfilling their administrative and managerial roles with dedication and creativity, demonstrate vision and an outstanding commitment to excellence in undergraduate education, the liberal arts, equal opportunity, the development of major interdisciplinary programs, international engagement, and the promotion of strong ties between their institutions and their local communities. Aoun has since pledged \$500,000 of his personal funds to match the award, committing a total of \$1 million to one of his signature priorities: expanding global experiential opportunities for Northeastern students.

“I am delighted that a close friend and president of a leading institution was recognized as an undisputable leader in American higher education,” said LAU

President Joseph G. Jabbara on receiving the news. “Our LAU family salutes you with pride and congratulates you on this signal and rewarding award.”

President Aoun began his tenure at Northeastern University in 2006. Since then, his priorities have been to globalize higher education, promote use-inspired research, and advance experiential learning and innovation the educational sphere.

He has remarkably transformed Northeastern, adding at least 140 undergraduate and graduate areas of study, recruiting more than 600 tenured and tenure-track faculty, and increasing research grants by nearly 300 percent. Initiatives he has introduced provide students with real-world experiential learning opportunities, including but not limited to a global co-op program, interdisciplinary research, and study abroad and service programs, enhanced by a network of 3,300 corporate and NGO partners in 136 countries and seven continents.

For Aoun, the best thing students can do to be prepared for the jobs of the future is to be grounded in humanics. “An education in humanics teaches us how to work alongside high-performing technologies while accentuating our uniquely human strengths. This empowers us to do what even the most advanced machines cannot,” he explained in a recent interview about his book *Robot-Proof: Higher Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*.

Aoun received his Ph.D. in linguistics and philosophy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and advanced degrees from the University of Paris VIII and Saint Joseph University, Beirut, Lebanon. He was named a Chevalier de l’ordre des palmes académiques by the French government and in 2011 received the Robert A. Muh Award from MIT’s School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences. He is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the immediate past chairperson of the American Council on Education (ACE).

Established in 2005, the Academic Leadership Award of the Carnegie Corporation of New York reflects the conviction of Andrew Carnegie, the Corporation’s philanthropic founder, that education and knowledge are fundamental to strengthening democracy and creating a vibrant civil society.





# Carnegie Corporation awards LAU institutes sizable grant

By Reem Maghribi

Research into inclusive governance and gender policies gets well-earned boost

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*"We're bringing together expertise from different areas and developing cross-disciplinary specializations while developing common ground."*

—Imad Salamey, LAU associate professor of political science and director of its ISJCR

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The Institute for Social Justice and Conflict Resolution (ISJCR) and the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) worked together to develop inter-related proposals for research projects centered around inclusive governance and gender policies. Their proposals caught the attention of Carnegie Corporation of New York, which in the fall awarded LAU a substantial grant for research into transnational social movements.

The Carnegie grant of hundreds of thousands of dollars will fund two projects with distinct but interconnected goals, each spearheaded by one of the two LAU institutes. "Our project will focus on Islamic family law in the region," explains Connie Christiansen, visiting associate professor in gender studies and author and co-principle investigator of the IWSAW project.

"We will be reviewing existing literature pertaining to transnational movements — both from within the region and originating from Muslim countries outside the Arab world — that aim to instigate changes in family law," continues Christiansen. The literature review, which aims to extend the impact of existing scholarly work, will be followed by an in-depth study into the impact and development of Islamic family law in Lebanon, Egypt and Morocco over the past two decades.

The ISJCR project will target a different set of countries — Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Sudan and Somalia — in a bid to develop a transnational network of advocates seeking to promote pluralism in governance. Imad Salamey (co-principal investigator for the Carnegie project, director of ISJCR and associate professor of political science) has written many articles and books on the need for pluralism and power-sharing in the Arab world and expects to host a number of events with IWSAW through which LAU can advance cooperation

between decision makers and academics across the region.

"LAU, the institutes and our collaborators all cherish diversity and are seeking inclusive governance," says Salamey, stressing the shared vision of the Carnegie funded projects. "We're bringing together expertise from different areas and developing cross-disciplinary specializations while developing common ground." The goals of this expansive project, he insists, can only be achieved through collaboration.

"Congratulations to you, your colleagues and networks for your remarkable achievements," enthused Hillary Wiesner, the director of Carnegie's Transnational Movements and the Arab Region program, in an email announcing the sizable grant awarded to LAU. "We look forward to working together over the next months and years."

Also eager to express her enthusiasm for the two-year project is IWSAW Director Lina Abirafeh. "We work nationally, regionally and internationally, and this project further strengthens and supports our work on and with other countries, building our regional network to address gender equality and women's empowerment in Arab countries," explains Abirafeh. "Social movements do not stay nicely confined within borders, and as such our reach has to be regional and our analysis must be transnational in order to be rigorous—and relevant."

Echoing Salamey's view that collaboration is key to success, Abirafeh adds: "We are stronger together. It is not the job of one single entity to address gender equality—it is everyone's responsibility! This partnership is an ideal example of how we integrate gender across LAU departments—to better understand gender issues and ultimately foster gender equality."

# Awarded for excellence

By Irina du Quenoy

Recently, LAU's Clinical Simulation Center (LAU-CSC) achieved accreditation by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), a regulatory authority with a mandate to ensure that the training and evaluation of medical and surgical specialists maintain certain quality standards. The RCPSC accreditation reflects the center's status as a leading Lebanese and regional hub for simulation-based education, and is valid for a period of three years.



Reflecting LAU's Clinical Simulation Center's status as a leading Lebanese and regional hub for simulation-based education

*"The accreditation reflects our ability to provide simulation-based education activities that model the highest administrative, educational and ethical standards."*

—Dr. Vanda Abi Raad, director of LAU Clinical Simulation Center

Located on the Byblos campus in the Chagoury Health Sciences Building, the LAU-CSC houses a large array of simulators that allow learners in various healthcare fields to practice their skills and engage in educational role play while guaranteeing patient safety in an interprofessional environment. Focused primarily on serving the educational needs of LAU's medical, pharmacy and nursing schools — as well as the nutrition program housed in the School of Arts & Sciences — the center also provides training opportunities for healthcare practitioners from outside the university.

According to the CSC's director Dr. Vanda Abi Raad, the successful accreditation "reflects our center's ability to provide simulation-based education activities that model the highest administrative, educational and ethical standards." Achieving this recognition proved to be a meticulous process that unfolded over a full year and a half.

After the initial submission of a letter of intent to the RCPSC in May 2016, "The LAU-CSC had three months to complete a rigorous self-review and schedule an on-site assessment," explains

Abi Raad. In preparation for the visit of the RCPSC auditors, the center's faculty and administration had to respond to accreditation criteria that covered "31 standards and sub-standards."

In mid-July 2017, two reviewers representing the Canadian body's simulation accreditation committee arrived in Lebanon, spending two days conducting "a series of interviews with key stakeholders, including myself, administrative staff, planning committee members, faculty and learners who have participated in the CSC's activities," says Abi Raad.

The reviewers — Dr. Susan Brien (professor of neurosurgery at the University of Ottawa and director of simulation-based education and practice, performance and innovation at the RCPSC) and Linda Crelisten (an RN responsible for the financial, operational and personnel activities at McGill University's own simulation center) — "were amazed by the enthusiasm, engagement, professionalism, teamwork and mutual respect that they observed from their encounters with CSC learners, faculty and staff," Abi Raad notes.

Based on this experience, Brien and Crelisten prepared a report, which they presented to the simulation accreditation committee during its subsequent fall meeting, recommending accreditation. Among other positive factors, the report emphasized "strong support for the CSC from students, faculty and university leadership," the center's commitment to interprofessional education and the simulation team's "commitment to educational growth and a desire to improve."

For Abi Raad, accreditation would have been impossible without several key factors, namely, the support of LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara and the Dean of the School of Medicine Dr. Michel Mawad, the exceptional team effort of the center's faculty and staff, and the effective guidelines established by the center for submitting reports and completing other accreditation activities. "Once the Liaison Committee (which consisted of representatives from all three LAU health sciences schools) had a broad understanding of this process, the right people were selected and appointed to serve in designated roles; the accreditation process was comprehensive and required the engagement of persons throughout the institution."



## Mastering the power of media and digital literacy

By Dana K. Haffar & Naseem Ferdowsi

Funded by the Embassy of Norway to Lebanon, LAU's MDLAB goes global in its fifth edition

*"The MDLAB initiative reinforces the image of Beirut as a liberal country in the Arab world, where people can talk freely."*

—Manal Kortam, International Development Officer at the Embassy of Norway

With media taking on a more insidious nature as a platform for ideological warfare and the promotion of political, economic and commercial interests, the need to decipher and, in some cases, combat the message it carries have become all the more pressing. This need has given rise to a new concept known as media and digital literacy, which involves understanding how media messages are constructed, and how advertising and propaganda insinuate themselves into public opinion with the ultimate purpose of empowering the public and encouraging civic activism.

During the summer, LAU's Department of Communications Arts once again took on this challenge by engaging its students in the Salzburg Academy's Media and Global Change action program and in the annual summer session of the Media and Digital Literacy Academy in Beirut (MDLAB), which is being run by the university's Institute of Media Research and Training.

Leading these initiatives is Jad Melki, director of the institute, chairperson of LAU's communication arts department and one of the founders of the Salzburg Academy. "I returned to Lebanon in 2009 and discovered that there was no media literacy concept in the Arab world," Melki says. "So we held a conference in 2011, which then developed into a summer academy for media and digital literacy education."

Annual sessions held by each of MDLAB and the Salzburg Academy aim to expand participants' critical thinking, teach them to discern strategies behind

a message, raise their awareness about the use of media for propaganda and misrepresentation, and help them master digital competencies for social change. Attracting scholars, journalists, academics, and activists, the academies' curricula are composed of modules and training manuals that include course plans, multimedia, and case studies.

While MDLAB this year focused on responding to extremism, gender inequality, fake news and human rights during conflict and wars, among others, the 2017 Salzburg program "Voices against Extremism: Media Responses to Global Populism" entailed analyzing media coverage of global populism in order to create projects that challenged misconceptions and that promoted positive change.

The twenty-five LAU students who attended the Salzburg Academy collaborated with other participants in the production of a DIY Playbook — a series of interactive multimedia projects that engage the public in harnessing the rise of populism and extremism. The students, faculty and visiting experts, said Paul Mihailidis, program director of the Salzburg Academy and associate professor at Emerson College, "came together to create a meaningful civic media intervention that provides creative media solutions for responding to harmful populist rhetoric."

Preparing students to become global citizens is essential in this day and age, and a prime target of MDLAB, in fact, is to go global. This year's fifth annual session,





funded by the Embassy of Norway to Lebanon, was distinguished by cross-cultural engagement. The embassy's backing allowed for 75 regional and international participants to gather for specialized workshops, training, and lectures on important topics surrounding media literacy, in addition to other issues supported by the embassy.

"Norway aims to increase democratic practices in the Arab region, including the dissemination of values related to free speech, tolerance, gender equality and human rights," said International Development Officer at the Embassy of Norway, Manal Kortam. "MDLAB reinforces Beirut's image as a liberal country, where people can talk freely."

The merit that the embassy sees in MDLAB is not only in its mission but notably in its promotion of a type of education that did not exist in the Arab world. Within five years, the institute had introduced media literacy to 35 universities in the MENA region and several schools in Lebanon and a few other countries. "They see the value in that because tangible accomplishments are happening," continued Melki, according to whom MDLAB participants from Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Jordan are making major advances in media literacy in their hometowns after taking part in the academy.

With far-reaching impact, MDLAB is continually developing its curriculum

in collaboration with experts from the Salzburg Academy, based on current issues and feedback from previous participants and local academics. "MDLAB is not just a two-week project in the summer," noted Melki. "It is a year-round project. Every one of these participants is part of a bigger network of media literacy professors and activists in the region. We are always communicating with them back and forth."

This inclusive and dynamic approach serves LAU students well, placing them in a position where they can benefit from global engagement through both academies.



# A winning video lands student a spot at the Salzburg Academy

By Naseem Ferdowsi



And her pivotal interaction sees her invited to return

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*"The Salzburg Global Seminar was so impressed by Sarah that they asked her to return and work on countering violent extremism."*

—Jad Melki, chair of LAU's Department of Communication and a visiting professor at the academy

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A 90-second video that cost \$6 to produce landed LAU student Sarah AlNemr a spot at this summer's Salzburg Academy, which is held in Austria each year.

It all started when she, along with other students majoring and minoring in Communications Arts, entered an LAU video competition that gave them a chance to win a scholarship to the unique three-week Salzburg Academy program that brings young media makers together from around the world to critique and create civic media for social change.

The competition, which was made possible by generous financial support from Fransabank, focused on the theme of youth and money, but was open-ended to allow students to express their own personal narrative with the topic.

Explaining the plot of her winning video, AlNemr said, "It's a short film showcasing one student's complacent lifestyle and careless spending. The video turned out the way it did because budgeting is a struggle that hits home for a lot of university students, and the lifestyle shown represents at least a phase of all university students' lives."

While AlNemr channeled much effort and creativity into her video, she did not put in a lot of money. Instead, she shot her footage at locations owned by friends and had her actor friends volunteer their time. Her only cost was \$6 for transportation.

She was shocked to learn she had won the competition. "I was stunned when I heard the news," said AlNemr. "There's a lot of talent in the department, which made things more competitive," she added.

Her reward — a fully paid scholarship to attend the Salzburg Academy for three weeks — was an eye-opening experience that she treasures. "The experience was an interesting way to get introduced to and be part of over 80 other people's lives," she explained. "Thanks to the unique dynamics of the academy, the participants were comfortable enough to share personal stories and bond with others almost seamlessly as opposed to in regular everyday life where people have their guards up," added AlNemr, who said the experience included pivotal sessions that brought up important, emotionally-triggering topics.

AlNemr's participation in the academy was so crucial, in fact, that she was asked to return in the coming months. "Sarah was so good that the Salzburg Global Seminar invited her to go back to Salzburg this winter for another session, fully paid, and to engage in discussions and work about countering violent extremism," said Jad Melki, chair of LAU's Department of Communication and a visiting professor at the academy.

Go to <https://youtu.be/E2wQu4XaFkI> to watch the video.



*"It is critical that we highlight female role models who have defied convention and achieved success, specifically as entrepreneurs."*

—Lina Abirafeh, director of LAU's IWSAW

## Successful women in business inspire students

By Reem Maghribi

LAU institutes partner to spotlight female entrepreneurs

*"We invited women with strong concepts and successful initiatives to encourage our students."*

—Josiane Sreih, LAU assistant dean, associate professor of management and director of IFEB

The Institute of Family and Entrepreneurial Business (IFEB) at the Adnan Kassar School of Business, in cooperation with the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), organized several talks led by six female entrepreneurs as part of the fourth annual Women Entrepreneurship Week 2017, an initiative by Montclair State University that celebrates women entrepreneurs.

"We invited women with strong concepts and successful initiatives in order to encourage our students to investigate their ideas and come up with entrepreneurial ventures," said Josiane Sreih, IFEB director, assistant dean and associate professor of management. "When students are exposed to the hardships of entrepreneurs, they won't be discouraged if they face hurdles and problems in developing their own ideas."

In order to identify strong women who could be part of the talk series, Sreih reached out to IWSAW. "It is critical that we highlight female role models who have defied convention and achieved success, specifically as entrepreneurs," said Lina Abirafeh, the director of the institute. "Financial independence is a critical component of women's lives that is often undervalued, overlooked, or sidelined due to socio-cultural expectations and constraints. But the ability to survive on your own — to earn your own income and govern your own life — is something that, once we have, cannot be taken away. Hopefully these talks will inspire a new generation of women to follow suit."

Carine Daher and Mina Hussein, the founders of e-commerce platform GarageLuxe, shared with marketing and innovation students the value of

maintaining focus and specialization during the early years of the business.

"We have to develop our core business before we consider diversifying, else we will lose focus," said Daher in response to a student asking why they did not sell men's clothing as well as women's.

Asked if they faced discrimination as women, Hussein said that being female did not stand in their way, but that as working mothers, organization was of the utmost importance. "Time management and strong partnership are essential."

Partnerships indeed played a significant role in the survival of a business, said Sarah Hermez, founder and director of Creative Space Beirut, a school of fashion design for the underprivileged. "It's important to empower your team and the people you're working with," said the designer. "It's difficult for social enterprises to survive, but at the same time, there's a great network of support in Lebanon for them at the moment."

Hana Alireza and Leila Fakihi, co-founders of Qi Juices, an organic "green juice" producer, also shared their experiences, while Roula Moussa, mentor for younger entrepreneurs and founder of Netways, a pioneering internet tech company, discussed how her company became one of the leading providers of business technology and e-Government solutions in the Arab world. Moussa also expounded on her new project, DiasporaID, a digital platform that aims to capitalize on the enormous potential of Lebanese diaspora to contribute to employment and economic growth in Lebanon on a bigger scale.

All six speakers have led by example in championing businesswomen in Lebanon and the MENA region.




# Pan-Arabism

A futile political movement or an undeniable reality that moved millions

By Reem Maghribi

FEATURE



*"With the 2011 Arab uprisings, we saw a new permeability of the Arab world, a bottom-up one that travelled between societies."*

—Bassel Salloukh, LAU associate professor of political science

"The tragedy of Arab nationalism is that what was originally considered an anti-colonial ideology was then used by authoritarian regimes after independence to justify the centralized unitary homogenizing Arab state." This is how LAU Associate Professor of Political Science Bassel Salloukh summarizes the pan-Arabism of the 1950s and 60s, a movement that was predominantly defined by Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser (1956 to 1970) and Baathism in Syria and Iraq.

While some still wax lyrical about how Nasser could give a speech that would travel across borders and mobilize Arab streets, most consider Nasserism and the pan-Arab ideology it espoused to have failed to deliver either prosperity or self-determination to people of the Arab world. "With the Arab uprisings of 2011 however, we saw a new permeability of the Arab world, a bottom-up one that travelled not from the regime to another country or society, but between societies," adds Salloukh.

The issues that instigated those uprisings also differed from the issues that used to move the Arab streets in previous decades, says Professor of

Sociology and Chair of the Department of Humanities Paul Tabar. "Those who took to the streets in 2011 were concerned with liberty and social justice, whereas the pan-Arab political movement [of the mid twentieth century] focused on emancipation from colonial powers and imperialist domination," explains Tabar, who is also the director of LAU's Institute for Migration Studies.

In the majority of cases however, manifestations of pan-Arabism in individual countries resulted in authoritarian regimes that failed not only to deliver liberation from external domination, challenge the Israeli occupation of Palestine and instigate economic development, but also to build citizenship and proper civic culture. "In addition to ignoring the importance of creating the appropriate political environment for stability and growth," adds Tabar, "the movement struggled with external challenges, as well as with their own structure, constitution and outlook."

Though often remembered for its failings, the pan-Arab movement of the 1950s and 60s had a strong impact

on the region and its peoples. Prior to the rise of Nasser and his pan-Arab rhetoric, thoughts of Arabism had been the domain of the elite and intellectual classes. Moreover, concepts of pan-Arab unity and resistance existed mostly in the Levant, but took no mind of the Maghreb and Gulf countries. Nasser made Egypt the movement's centrepiece and his televised addresses were heard across the Arab world.

Twentieth century advances in communication and travel also brought peoples of the region closer together, at least culturally if not politically. "The pan-Arab thread in the 2011 movement was not really political," says Tabar. "Pan-Arab culturalism was however present in the sense that all Arabs, more or less, are facing the same regime and coming from a similar historical experience."

The pan-Arab culturalism Tabar refers to has its roots in the Levant of the late nineteenth century, which was then under Ottoman rule. It was born as a reaction to the globalization and modernization of the era and marked a shift from thinking in terms of religious identity to thinking in terms of nationhood.



The Arab nahda — as it is referred to — was however still an elite phenomenon at this stage. “The Arab populations in the empire varied greatly from sophisticated city dwellers in major cities like Aleppo, Damascus and Beirut to Bedouin who had very little if any idea of Arabism,” says LAU Professor of History Selim Deringil. Almost all the Arab intellectuals who emerged at the time, he adds, were products of Ottoman schools.

Twenty years later, however, as they realized that the Ottoman Empire was going to lose the First World War, they hung on to the ideational concept of pan-Arabism, laying ground for the emergence of the pan Arab political movement. Decades later, during the Second World War, pan-Arabism again gained momentum as an anti-colonial political movement.

*“When Arabs emigrate, they end up reconstructing their identity under the impact of the new situation.”*

—Paul Tabar, LAU professor of sociology and chair of its Department of Humanities

Both world wars resulted in mass emigration of people from various Arab countries and in many ways enriched the notion of a common identity. “Arab identity in the west seems to be a unifying force,” says Tabar, author of *Being Lebanese in Australia: Identity, Racism and the Ethnic Field*. “When Arabs emigrate, they end up reconstructing their identity under the impact of the new situation,” he adds, noting the impetus provided by anti-Arab racism to the development of an identity that transcends possible differences.

Why then, if anti-Arab racism unites people from Arab countries living abroad, and a desire for liberty from authoritarian powers unites those in the Arab world, did pan-Arabism not succeed as a political movement?

The existence of Israel and the presence of petrol in the region certainly contributed, as both ensured on going meddling by western powers wanting control of the Arab world. “Another reason is that people lost trust in the authoritarian regimes of Nasserism and Baathism—the two main political manifestations of pan-Arab movement,” explains Tabar, adding that unity and economic development can only flourish within a democracy.

In this sense, a regional entity like the Arab League, established and

*“The Arab populations in the empire varied greatly from sophisticated city dwellers to Bedouin who had very little if any idea of Arabism.”*

—Selim Deringil, LAU professor of history

controlled as it is predominantly by authoritarian regimes, offers little to the populations of the countries it claims to represent. Just as the European Union was created by nation states built on some form of democracy, so too must an Arab Union. “Pan-Arabism may gain momentum if it follows the European Union model of cooperation, respect to diversity, and plurality while embedding inclusive politics and decentralized administration,” says Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs Imad Salamey.

However, in his book *The Decline of Nation-States after the Arab Spring: The Rise of Communitocracy*, Salamey highlights societal fragmentation within the region, offering little if







any suggestion that its ethnically and religiously diverse communities may one day be united. "It's true that sectarian communities have been politically mobilized as proxies in many countries, contributing to the fragmentation of national cohesion," confirms Salamey, director of LAU's Institute for Social Justice and Conflict Resolution. "Yet, sectarian communities are part of the socio-political fabric of Arab societies and need not to be viewed as the drivers for division." The faults, he adds, may rather be found in states' exclusionary policies and traditional divide and rule approach.

Can pan-Arabism then be seen as a people's movement that will help communities in Arab countries work together to overthrow their authoritarian regimes? Salloukh thinks so, though he chooses not to homogenize the word Arab. "I'm not a romantic when it comes to Arab nationalism. I'm against monolithic ideas and ideologies, but I'm also against the likes of Fouad Ajami who every ten years write an article

*"Pan-Arabism may gain momentum if it follows the European Union model of cooperation, respect to diversity, and plurality."*

—Imad Salamey, LAU associate professor of political science and international affairs.

declaring an end to Arab nationalism for it to come back and surprise us," says the political science professor, referring to the late American-Lebanese scholar and commentator, and citing the Arab uprisings of 2011 as the most recent wave of pan-Arabism.

While the populations of Arab countries that have witnessed revolution, oppression and conflict have demonstrated unity in many ways since 2011, the same cannot be said of political parties, be they in power

or in opposition. As such, a distinction is to be made between pan-Arabism as a societal movement and as an organised political movement, though the fruitfulness of one likely impacts the strength of the other. "We feel we are Arab, we have some common destiny, but being cultural does not necessary translate into political framework and outlook," says Tabar. While empathy and communication may have instigated a domino effect in 2011, "it was not necessarily a connection that needed to develop into an organised political pan Arab movement. That can wait." ■





# Syria's displacement: The politics of reception

By Hanan Nasser

LAU hosts conference  
on a critical subject  
from cross-comparative  
and multi-disciplinary  
perspectives

Syrian displacement was the focus of a three-day cross-disciplinary conference organized by LAU's Department of Social Sciences and Institute for Migration Studies (IMS), together with the German Institute of Global and Area Studies in Hamburg (GIGA).

An interdisciplinary group of 25 junior and senior research specialists across the political science, anthropology, migration studies, and peace and conflict studies fields from Europe, the Middle East and the United States came together at the university's campus in Byblos. The

participants not only compared Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey as refugee host countries, but also drew on examples from other regions, such as East Africa and Latin America.

Assistant Provost for Special External Projects Wassim Shahin described the issue at hand as one of geography par excellence. He expressed his hope that humanitarian interventionism will lead to the "defeat of geography," contrasting this hope to author Robert Kaplan's evocation of the "revenge of geography."

Keynote speaker Yezid Sayigh, senior fellow at the Carnegie Middle East Center (Beirut), asked the participants to play around with the concepts of migrants and refugees, underlining how we create categories to fit each word. Addressing the notion of space and what it represented politically and culturally, he raised the question of "which space is ours" and "which space is somebody else's."





The conference treated different aspects of the politics of reception in refugee host countries, including local security and moral economies. Tackling Lebanon's response to Syrian displacement, Tamirace Fakhoury, associate professor of Social Science and International Affairs and co-organizer of the event, shed light on "how the resulting policy formulation processes and discourse have constructed the relationship between the hosting state and the refugees." Lebanon's sectarian politics, she argued, have "extracted gains from the displacement" of more than one million refugees to Lebanon.

Jordan's refugee policy, on the other hand, expounded GIGA Senior Researcher and co-organizer André Bank, was characterized by "persistent ambiguities" in terms of numbers, policy of encampment and work permits.

Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Hamburg Christiane Fröhlich touched on the concept of citizenship in the Turkish context. Inviting the participants to consider the possibility of going beyond what a "cosmopolitan citizenship would be like, in order to achieve sustainable integration," she recommended that "the problem of refugees and mobility in general" be viewed "through the cosmopolitan lens."

The second panel focused on local security dynamics and transformations since 2011 in Syria's neighboring countries. Addressing these issues in Lebanon, Estella Carpi, research associate at the University College London, highlighted the absence of "clear policies on securities" in the country's small towns and villages through a case study of Ebrine in the north.

Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Chairperson of the Department of Social Sciences Marwan Rowayheb moderated a discussion by panelists Paul Tabar (director of IMS), Ann-Christin Wagner of the University of Edinburgh, and Evrim Görmü from MEF University Istanbul, who explored the intricate relationships between local moral economies, governance, and refugee agencies at both the national and local levels.

Wrapping up the conference, Libyan panelist Houda Mzioudet, a non-resident researcher with Carnegie, offered insights on how the 2011 turmoil had changed the lives of exiled Libyans in Tunisia and Tunisian migrants in Libya, while Stefanie Wodrig, research fellow at the University of Kiel and Sabine Kurtenbach, senior research fellow at GIGA, drew inspiration from the refugee crises in East Africa and Latin America respectively.



*Wassim Shahin*



*Marwan Rowayheb*



*Christiane Fröhlich*



*André Bank*



*Yezid Sayigh*

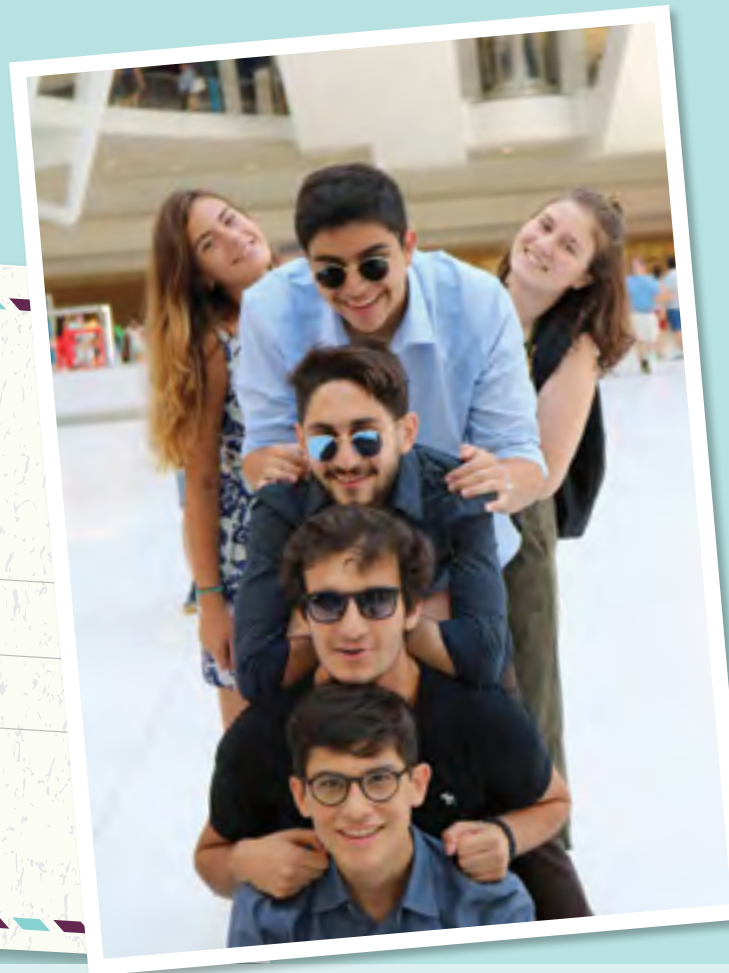


*Tamirace Fakhoury*



# Postcard from New York

By Elida Jbeili



LAU's New York Headquarters and Academic Center (LAU NY) summer kicked off with a historic performance by Zajal masters Adel Khaddaj and Dany Sfeir, who squared off in song with musical accompaniment and a chorus. The event was presented in partnership with the Consul General of Lebanon in New York Majdi Ramadan, City Lore, and the New Pen League.

An audience that included many members of the Lebanese diaspora enjoyed the poets' improvised performance in Arabic. Poet Sheikh Youssef Abdul Samad captured the spirit of the evening: "It was a piece of Lebanon, a piece of my culture. I felt like I was in Lebanon when I came to this LAU event."

Also in the spirit of cultural exchange, dozens of Lebanese, Chinese and American students were hosted at LAU NY during the summer as they participated in the five-day annual Global Outreach and Leadership Development

Conference (GOLD). The aspiring diplomats practiced their state-crafting skills in a series of Model United Nations simulation sessions, where they deepened their debate, negotiation, public speaking, and conflict resolution skills.

The participants had the chance to have a unique and memorable "New York experience," through cultural and touristic site-visits, such as a tour of the Headquarters of the United Nations and the Financial District. At the concluding session of the conference, Assistant Vice President for Outreach and Civic Engagement Elie Samia remarked that the GOLD conference had been "a golden opportunity for student leaders to be exposed to real practitioners in the realm of international diplomacy and civic society, with interactive discussions about the value of social service and civic engagement."

In September, the bi-annual LAU Board of Trustees (BOT) three-day meeting was

*"The dinner brings together members of the board, university administrators, friends and donors, who work on the development of the institution,"*

*—Ed Shiner, director of Alumni and Special Projects at LAU NY*

held at LAU NY. The BOT is responsible for seeing that the university's needs are met organizationally, administratively, educationally, spiritually, socially and financially; that adequate facilities are provided; and that a policy framework is established within which the program of the university can be developed and administered by the staff.

As always, the BOT meeting was accompanied by a Chairman's Dinner



*Lina Beydoun, George Helou, Consul General of Lebanon Majdi Ramadan, and Nadia Drake at the Black Holes to Habitable Exoplanets: Our Incredible Cosmos event at LAU NY.*



*LAU Board of Trustees members, staff and friends of LAU during the Chairman's Dinner at the famous Roosevelt Hotel in the heart of Manhattan, New York City.*

hosted by LAU. The event provided an opportunity to acknowledge board members for their service, as well as to thank donors and welcome potential donors. "This dinner gathering is a significant part of LAU's Board Meeting, because it brings together members of the board, university administrators, friends and donors, who interact socially while learning more about each other, as well as the work and development of the institution," said Ed Shiner, director of Alumni and Special Projects at LAU NY.

Welcoming the fall with an exploration of space, LAU, AUB and the Consul General of Lebanon in New York Majdi Ramadan co-hosted From Black Holes to Habitable Exoplanets: Our Incredible Cosmos at LAU NY. The event featured George Helou, executive director of

NASA's Infrared Astronomy Center at the California Institute of Technology, in conversation with Nadia Drake, a contributing writer at National Geographic.

A captivated audience learned about exoplanets beyond our solar system and recent discoveries made using improved infrared space telescopes, as Helou spoke of his work overseeing science operations for space telescopes and for major astronomical archives, both for NASA and ground-based observatories. When asked by Drake why astronomy is important, Helou replied, "Astronomy and all science is a universal aspiration of humanity, because it helps us put earth, life on earth, and our solar system into a greater context."



*(L-R) Zajal masters Sheikh Youssef Abdul Samad, Adel Khaddaj and Dany Sfeir.*





# Breaking the barriers

By Irina du Quenoy

LAU's assistant dean of  
the School of Nursing  
inducted into the  
prestigious American  
Academy of Nursing

*"We want to encourage the  
women to openly discuss  
breast cancer and remove  
the fear and stigma that  
surrounds it."*

*—Myrna Doumit, assistant dean of  
Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing.*



October 2017 saw Associate Professor and Assistant Dean of LAU's Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing Myrna Doumit travel to Washington, D.C., at the invitation of the American Academy of Nursing (AAN). During an induction ceremony held at the U.S. capital's Marriot Marquis hotel during AAN's annual policy conference, Doumit became a Fellow of the Academy, the only representative of Lebanon among the 173 leaders of the nursing profession receiving the honor this year.

The academy selects fellows on criteria that include "the extent [to which] the nominee's nursing career has influenced health policies and the health and wellbeing of all." Doumit's career trajectory — which has included combining policy-oriented research with community engagement and work with policy-makers to improve patient care — made her an ideal candidate for the fellowship.

Doumit has spent years researching breast cancer in Lebanon, in particular practices and attitudes of Lebanese women toward the disease. She has concluded that if women think of cancer as "something from God, or that cancer is similar to any other disease, or if they receive positive support from work, family and husband, or if they are able to share the experience with others who can relate to it," then they are able to cope with the illness in positive ways. On the negative side, "changed body image, fear of recurrence and fear of being pitied

by others" hinder coping, including timely mammograms and self-examination.

The result Doumit's research has "led me to the general conclusion that breast cancer is still a taboo in our society and that we need to encourage women to talk about it in order to fight the disease effectively," she says. One way to do that is to create support groups, which Doumit did even before joining the LAU faculty, founding a group at AUB Medical Center that eventually became the NGO "Awareness."

More recently, in a partnership with LAU alumna Hiba Yazbeck (B.S. '97), Doumit launched "Courage to Fight Breast Cancer" or "C2" — a series of awareness-raising sessions across Lebanon. Focused on rural areas and organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health, the campaign consists of one-hour sessions educating women about self-care measures and early detection. "We want to encourage the women to openly discuss breast cancer and remove the fear and stigma that surrounds it," says Doumit.

Doumit's work with the government extends beyond the "C2" campaign, however. In addition to serving on the National Committee for Breast Cancer Awareness, "I am also working with the ministry to improve nurses' knowledge about breast cancer awareness and early detection, as well as working with them to have breast reconstruction be reimbursed by the national insurance system," she explains.

# Premier international honor society opens LAU chapter

By Reem Maghribi

Beta Gamma Sigma  
welcomes its first  
members

Twenty-eight outstanding students and recent graduates of the Adnan Kassar School of Business were named as the inaugural members of the newly initiated LAU chapter of Beta Gamma Sigma (BGS), the premier international business honor society. The new recipients of the lifetime membership had each, by the end of the spring semester, achieved a cumulative GPA of at least 3.86.

LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra, President of Fransabank and patron of the School Adnan Kassar, and Interim Dean Said Ladki personally congratulated the students at an evening ceremony held in Beirut during the fall semester. Recipients, alumni, board members and friends of the university came together for a reception of cocktails and music, marked by the unveiling of a 100kg key.

"It's a wonderful and unique opportunity for our brightest students to join a network of similarly motivated and ambitious professionals across the world," added Assistant Professor of Information Technology Abbas Tarhini. As faculty advisor for the chapter, Tarhini joined Jabbra, Kassar and Ladki to personally congratulate each of the honorees and present them with a certificate, a pin, a tasseled honor cord, and a medal.

"The name Beta Gamma Sigma means honor-wisdom-earnestness," explained Ladki to the attendees gathered in the courtyard of the school. "Indeed, the BGS honor society cultivates and celebrates leadership and professional excellence to advance societal values."

Jabbra also took to the podium to congratulate the school and its students and to address its patron. "Thank you for all you do in society in Lebanon and beyond ... Today we are benefiting from your indefatigable efforts to make sure that Lebanon is in good health," said the president before placing a blue and yellow BGS tasseled honor cord around Kassar's shoulders.

Newly inducted member of the BGS honor society Karine Monsef concurs. "I expect that this will open many doors for me and help me achieve my goals," said the third-year student of banking and finance. She was one of the 21 women — of a total of 28 LAU students and recent graduates — to receive the prestigious lifetime membership.

"I am very proud to see many of my students inducted into the society," added faculty member Rabihi Abi Ammar, who graduated from LAU with a degree in accounting and an M.B.A. "LAU has the standards and now has the associated accreditation. This is a true reflection of what our university is about and makes it more prestigious for me to belong to LAU."

Fellow alumnus and M.B.A. graduate Abdulaziz Sherbiny agreed. "I feel very proud and pleased by the school's constant development. What's good for LAU is good for me," said the business owner, who hires LAU graduates to work at his consultancy.

Mahmoud Kreidie, vice-chairman of LAU's international board of advisors, was equally jubilant. "We have such brilliant people who are prone to succeed and they do," said the neuroscientist. "It makes me convinced that there is a way forward in Lebanon, a way to change and improve."



*"The honor society cultivates and celebrates leadership and professional excellence to advance societal values."*

—Said Ladki, interim dean of LAU's  
Adnan Kassar School of Business



The value of BGS membership to those lucky few who receive it is immense, stressed LAU accreditation and continuous improvement coordinator Samar Aad Makhoul, initiator and administrator of the new chapter. "It is a symbol of academic excellence that gives each member an edge in this highly competitive business world," said Makhoul, who also played the role of MC throughout the evening.





# LAU Consult continues to assist Oman college expansion

By Reem Magribi

Longstanding and ongoing cooperation between LAU and the Scientific College of Design benefits faculty and students of both institutions

For 14 years, LAU faculty and staff have been assisting the Scientific College of Design (SCD) in Oman with the development of programs and curricula, as well as contributing academic coverage and advisory interventions. In that time, the College — which boasts around 1,500 students and a similar number of graduates — has almost doubled its offering of programs.

“The college is a specialized art and design higher education institution, which is collaborating with LAU to supervise the implementation of academic programs to ensure the delivery of high quality higher education,” says Dean of SCD Mona Ismail. “This engagement has evolved and matured over the years since 2004.”

Currently, LAU is preparing to launch a postgraduate program in graphic design both in Lebanon and at the college in Oman. SCD will help the program’s successful launch and sustainability in Oman, by providing support to LAU with faculty, space and networking on the ground.

“This longstanding and ongoing engagement with SCD has been very rewarding for LAU,” says Walid Touma, director of LAU’s University Enterprise Office (UEO) and LAU Consult, which instigate and manage consultancies with external parties in the MENA region. “Our faculty are more exposed as a result, and this enriches their teaching and consulting experience,” he added, noting

that at one time more than 70 LAU faculty and staff members were engaged in the various consultancy projects run by UEO/LAU Consult.

LAU and SCD signed their academic coverage and advisory services agreement in 2004, the year the College was founded. “Such engagement is mandated by the Ministry of Higher Education in the Sultanate of Oman, and the Ministry is a solid partner of LAU in the quality of education and the direct oversight of the academic process at SCD,” explains Touma. LAU faculty have since worked on the development of SCD’s programs and curricula in architecture, interior design, graphic design and fine arts, and more recently in photography, animation and fashion design.

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*“LAU has a major role in supporting SCD to achieve its mission and develop as a higher education institution.”*

—Mona Ismail, dean of Oman’s Scientific College of Design

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“LAU has a major role in supporting SCD to achieve its mission and develop as a higher education institution,” explains Ismail, adding, “SCD will achieve institutional accreditation by the Oman



*“Our students benefit from the increased exposure, knowledge and experience these consultancies and partnerships afford our staff and educators”*

—Walid Touma, director of LAU's University Enterprise Office and LAU Consult

Academic Accreditation Authority this year and will then move forward to apply for international accreditation.”

“I helped restructure their curricular activities in all the majors offered as of 2009 under LAU’s custodianship,” recalls Chair of the Department of Architecture & Interior Design Rachid Chamoun, who in 2009 became the coordinator

and principal consulting faculty member working with the faculty in Oman.

“I’m a believer in education within and beyond campus, and I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to share knowledge,” adds the founding member of LAU’s School of Architecture and Design, who has taught at LAU for more than 25 years.

Chamoun speaks fondly of his many trips to Muscat, during which he would visit SCD faculty and students two to three times per semester to discuss program development and offer workshops. Over time, the scope of LAU’s engagement expanded and many faculty members and staff have traveled to Oman for workshops and juries and to help develop exhibitions and engage alumni.

“I learned as much as I was able to contribute, and I found Muscat to embody a wonderful society and cultural values. It was gratifying and I miss them,” says Chamoun, who two years ago handed the reins over to Associate Professor and

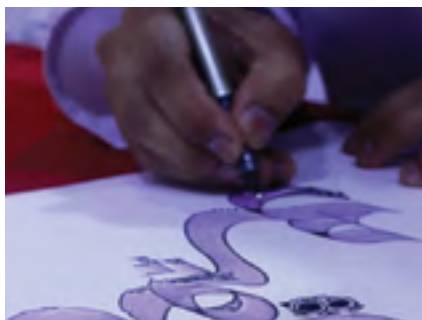
Director of the Institute of Islamic Art and Architecture at LAU Abdallah Kahil.

“It is always good for us to work on these initiatives, as they make us reevaluate our own work and strengthen us as educators,” says Kahil of the opportunity to support the work of a growing Arab college.

Elie Haddad, dean of the School of Architecture and Design — the School Touma refers to as “the custodian of academic integrity” — concurs the most important part of our engagement with SCD is that the relationship is mutually beneficial. “It allows our faculty to engage their peers in a different setting, offering advice but also learn to tailor their teaching skills to different contexts, through intensive workshops in which they also interact with students from the Arab Gulf,” explains Haddad.

Over the past several years, LAU Consult has also developed a full assessment and restructuring plan for the College of Social Work at Princess Noura University in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, the UEO was engaged in a number of programs with the governments of Iraq and the U.S, and has recently spearheaded several academic cooperation agreements with the Lebanese Armed Services. “We continue to expand and develop new partnerships,” enthuses Touma, who has led the UEO since its inception in 2007.

“Our number one beneficiary is always our students. They benefit from the increased exposure, knowledge and experience these consultancies and partnerships afford our staff and educators,” says Touma, insisting that success is reliant on partnership within and across the university. “UEO/ LAU Consult and all the Schools and Administrative divisions at LAU are partners in making a success of our interventions in consulting projects in Lebanon and beyond, all of which affect our university and community as a whole.”







# Gentrification in Beirut

FEATURE





## From industrial edge through to bohemian cool and then to corporate overdevelopment

By Brooke Anderson

Like many cities around the world, Beirut is experiencing gentrification—from the reconstruction of the city's downtown to the various residential neighborhoods. Unlike many other cities, however, the lack of basic building regulations and rule of law in Lebanon have made Beirut vulnerable to unusually rapid and uncontrolled transformations of neighborhoods.

One of the starkest examples of this trend is the area of Mar Mikhael, whose home prices, bars and noise levels have all multiplied in the past 10 years. In the midst of small old homes, tall apartment buildings are changing the skyline. It is difficult to tell when or if the pace of development in Mar Mikhael will ever slow down. One thing is for sure: with the changed skyline, culture and migration of longtime residents, it will never go back to what it was before gentrification.

As the sun sets, the sound of liquid being poured and glasses clinking raises, as the old narrow streets begin filling with people enjoying happy hour drinks after work. A couple of hours later, the dinner crowds take their seats at small outdoor bars, cafes and restaurants. Around midnight, the after-party drinkers continue piling into the main thoroughfare, Armenia Street, spilling onto a pavement

that has been the host of bumper-to-bumper traffic, parking on sidewalks, and continuous honking since the beginning of the evening.

The next morning, residents wake up to the remains of the previous night—vomit, broken glass and litter. A few hours later, the cycle continues, as the next wave of partiers descends on the latest Beirut neighborhood that's being loved to death. While gentrification — broadly defined as the process of urban renewability whereby affluent people and businesses move into historical and authentic working-class areas — typically leads to higher prices and standards of living, it often brings with it unintended consequences of economic displacement and the loss of neighborhood charm.

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*"The turbo gentrification that happens in Beirut happens so fast that it's not sustainable."*

—Lee Frederix, assistant professor and interim chair at LAU's Department of Art and Design

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Like many other gentrified neighborhoods around the world, Mar Mikhael started as a working-class area with modest metalwork and handicraft shops. In the first familiar stage of change, artists began setting up shop about a decade ago, followed shortly thereafter by a handful of small bars and cafes, which were then followed by organized mass commercial development.

By 2012, the neighborhood had nearly completely transformed from a sleepy historic area on the edge of Beirut to a hipster hotspot that has become largely unaffordable — and in many cases unrecognizable — to the older residents and shopkeepers. At the same time, its purpose has largely changed from a quiet place of residence to a nightly destination of people from outside the area.

"When I moved in, it was a community. Now when I come here on a Saturday morning, there is vomit and smashed beer bottles all over the place," says Lee Frederix, an architect and artist, as well as an assistant professor at and interim chair of LAU's Department of Art and Design, who after eight years is now

*"Gentrification caters for the privileged few at the expense of the others."*

—Roula Khoury, LAU assistant professor of architecture



closing his Mar Mikhael studio due to the area's overdevelopment and congestion. Gentrification has driven him out.

Jewelry designer Cynthia Raffoul opened her shop at the beginning of Mar Mikhael's main strip at the end of 2008, when it was still a quiet area. "People asked me, 'Why are you moving here?' I said it's a nice place. I was one of the first people to believe in Mar Mikhael."

"At that time, the landlords wanted to avoid the spread of pubs and restaurants, so they agreed to not rent to them, but that didn't last long. Eventually one landlord caved in, it was the money, of course," recalls Frederix, whose personal frustrations with the neighborhood began when he arrived at his studio one morning to discover a car parked on the sidewalk, preventing him from opening his front door.

"It's great and terrible at the same time," he said, acknowledging mixed feelings over the changing times that has meant both the loss of the old tight-knit neighborhood, as well as the injection of new life—a wide selection of international and experimental cuisines and cocktails impossible to find on this scale in Beirut

before Mar Mikhael took off as a hotspot.

Such transformations are not unusual in cities throughout the world. What is unusual, in the case of Beirut, is the fast pace and intensity with which it happens.


"Gentrification is OK, as long as it happens gradually. But the turbo gentrification that happens in Beirut happens so fast that it's not sustainable. This hyper gentrification is unique to the capital. One area explodes and everything else dies," says Frederix, referring to Mar Mikhael's fast rise following other areas that have quickly gone in and out of style.

In the 90s, Monot was the hotspot. Gemmayze later replaced it. Both have since faded out, with only a handful of bars still remaining.

"Certainly, there are hotspots in every city, but in Beirut they're exclusive. Pub owners know this and many make allowances in their business plans for this, because they know there's quick turnover," Frederix says.

Elie Azar, owner of Bar 35, opened the pub nearly two years ago, after running one in Jounieh for 10 years, which he closed due to the area's decline in





*"The process of renovation does not abide by any rules or regulations"*

—Tania Kallab, LAU adjunct economics professor

*The Garden of Earthly Delights, a triptych painted by the Early Netherlandish master Hieronymus Bosch*

popularity. His lease in Mar Mikhael is for six years and after that he doesn't know where he'll be.

Another element that intensifies gentrification in Lebanon is its government policies or lack thereof. An absence of city planning, an overreliance on the private sector, and the continuation of old rental laws — in many cases with old tenants paying as low as \$100 a year for properties valued at \$2,000 a month — all combine to create abrupt changes.

"There's no fair compensation for the displaced people, which makes gentrification cater for the privileged few at the expense of others," says Roula Khoury, assistant professor of architecture at LAU. "The role of the banking sector is boosting the construction industry by giving loans, mostly to developers—not families. The absence of the state and the active role of banks is changing the morphology of the city."

She adds, "By not playing a role, [the government] is employing others to play a drastic role. Lebanon is a very acute model of laissez faire. We call it neoliberal urbanization. It's shapeless."

"The process of renovation does not abide by any rules or regulations," notes Tania Kallab, LAU adjunct economics professor. "Causes mainly related to the war, lead to unwanted inflation in prices, high supply and then stagflation."

In addition, valet parking services, often charging as much as 10,000LL per car, offer a convenience and luxury that

encourages people to bring their cars into a small neighborhood that doesn't have the space to handle the traffic, resulting in nightly congestion, as well as noise and air pollution.

In the case of Mar Mikhael, the neighborhood seems chaotic, but beneath the apparent chaos are deliberate business models that fuel the area's buzz and growth. Corporate-owned bar franchises have largely replaced the independent watering holes. Although their various names would suggest otherwise, most of Mar Mikhael's bars are owned by a handful of firms that ironically cater to a clientele that tends to be attracted to the neighborhood's bohemian charm.

"Larger corporations disguise themselves as little shops. They invade these areas under another image. They understand people's taste," says Khoury.

Such is the case with Bodo, part of a chain of bars and restaurants located throughout greater Beirut, which opened in the area four years ago. In Mar Mikhael, Bodo manager Boulos Saab says business is good although he sometimes gets frustrated with the street traffic, recalling a time several years ago when the area was "cozier" with much fewer bars. Saab expects the area to level off in a few years, once it reaches a saturation point.

Meanwhile, real estate development in Mar Mikhael has already changed its skyline and lifestyle. Luxury high-rise apartments and lofts have begun to spring up amid historic homes, bringing

in wealthier residents who can better afford the high-end restaurants than the old-time neighbors.

With very little in the way of enforcing heritage home protection laws, there's no reason to slow down the pace of these developments. Some companies have taken a more sensitive nuanced approach by keeping the façades of historic buildings and then gutting the interiors to make way for modern high-rises — keeping a tangible piece of heritage, but removing the heart of the area's traditional lifestyle. It is perhaps this type of compromise that is most symbolic of the current state of Mar Mikhael—a façade of heritage, but corporatization at its heart.

What is next for this neighborhood that has become a trendy hotspot due to its historic charm? Frederix, whose frustration with the area's changes drove him out, takes a long-term optimistic view, as he looks back at other neighborhoods that have gone through similar transformations. He notes that Monot and Gemmayze, after having gone out of style, have now reached a balance making them once again pleasant places to live and visit, even if they don't enjoy the "trendy" label.

He says he predicted the rise of Mar Mikhael, whose popularity he expects to last another two years, and he expects the next hotspot to be Corniche An-Naher. 📍



# Theater at LAU continues to nurture creative talent and community spirit

By Reem Maghribi

## Four plays reveal the unique relationship between directors and actors

The Gulbenkian and Irwin theaters on LAU's Beirut campus have long been a hub of creativity and community engagement in the Lebanese capital. Even during the civil war, former presidents, ministers and ambassadors would be among the audiences at various cultural presentations and this fall was no exception.

In addition to staging plays on campus, LAU's talented faculty, students and alumni develop engaging scripts and sets for presentation to an ever-wider audience at spaces throughout the capital and even Lebanese locations beyond Beirut.

Such off-campus productions, says Jad Melki, chair of the Department of Communication Arts, highlight the strength and history of the university's performing arts program. "We have a long-standing commitment to focusing on a culture of collaboration and continuous betterment."

This collaboration, furthermore, extends beyond the department and the university. Dima Matta, an actor, storyteller and graduate of Hagazian and Rutgers universities, was among the cast of LAU's most recent Major Production Abou Warde el-Santa, directed by Lecturer of Theater Aliyah Khalidi. "Performing in an LAU production allows me to work with directors I admire such as Lina Abyad and Aliya Khalidi, which is an opportunity that does not come by very often," says Matta, who teaches creative writing at Balamand.

"It is also a chance to experiment, play and discover a lot about theater because we have the luxury of not creating a play for profit," adds Matta. "Acting with students is rewarding. They get to learn from the more experienced participants like myself and I get to keep in touch with young people, which in turn helps me in my teaching."

The elaborate performance saw audience members move around the Safadi Fine Arts building in groups taking in scenes from Lebanon's civil war. "I believe that art must be an expression of truth, not of lies and misrepresentation. Once you share your own truth, you realize that you need to be innovative and to push boundaries," says Khalidi, stressing that censorship constrains creativity.

Also performing in Abou Warde el-Santa was Associate Professor of Theater Lina Abyad, who earlier in the year staged Wasafuli al-Sabr (I am Waiting for You) with LAU alumna Abir Hamdar at the Madina Theater on Hamra Street. "She was a brilliant student and is a challenging writer, tackling taboo subjects head on," says Abyad of Hamdar while referring to the play's central theme of cancer, a subject that she says continues to be taboo in the Arab world.



*"It is my duty to guide my students, not to overrule their creativity."*

—Aliyah Khalidi, LAU lecturer of theater

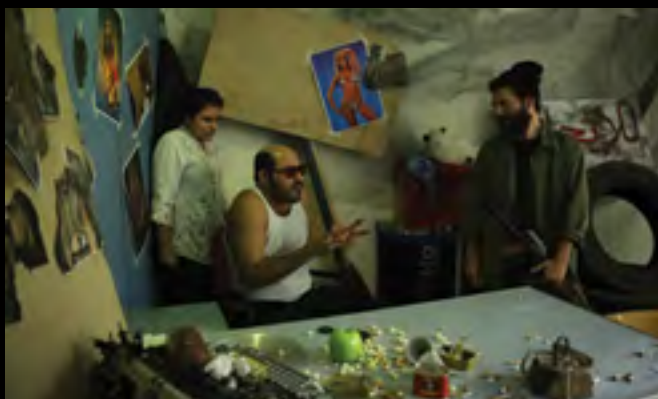
The way in which the production was staged was also unique and — says LAU alumna and cast member Dima Alansari — challenging. The performance was staged in the Nuha al-Radi Hall of the theater, named after Iraqi artist and diarist who lost her battle with cancer in 2004. "It was a very intentional symbolic choice of location and one that breaks with convention, just as the play itself does," says Alansari, who enjoyed the challenge. "Lina is such a courageous and daring director, and so confident about breaking with traditional methods that it was a most exciting experience."

Across the hall on the main stage of the Madina Theater, LAU alumnus Awad Awad led a team of over twenty cast and crew in the development of a production about nostalgia. The team — half of whom study at or graduated from LAU — wrote the one-hour play *Tuyour Nawras* (Seagulls) together and first performed it at the theater's Mishkal Festival in September.

"Most of the actors studied performing arts at LAU and I really felt the freedom of expression they had," recalls USJ graduate Christiane Namour, who acted in both this and a previous production by Awad. "In a nutshell, LAU students are characterized by their openness to other people and their freedom to express themselves in artistic ways." The play was so well received by the audience and the media that the theater asked Awad to stage it for another two nights the following month.

Similarly, *Ayyoubé*, a play by Awad first staged at the Gulbenkian Theater as LAU's inaugural Alumni Major Production, has also received high praise and continues to be staged at various venues across the country. "I loved the play and the work Awad put into the script to reflect the political and social struggle of the Palestinians," says Abyad of her former student.

While Abyad and Awad both acted in Khalidi's recent production, Khalidi herself was one of the three cast members in *Ayyoubé*. "As an academic, I believe our mission is to support our current and former students and promote their work so they may be recognized as professional actors and artists." To that end, Khalidi refrained from interjecting in the directorial role of her former student. "It is my duty to guide my students, not to overrule their creativity."





# School of Pharmacy boasts new research discoveries

By Reem Maghribi

Two scientists make breakthrough discoveries that may lead to reversal of DNA damage and inhibition of cancer cells

*"As part of its strategic vision, LAU strives to ensure a dynamic environment for research success and develop a sustainable research culture."*

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

Faculty members from the School of Pharmacy (SOP) have been actively working to investigate and publish on a diverse range of subjects covering a broad spectrum of basic, pharmaceutical and clinical sciences, as well as pharmacy practice, education and health services.

"Research engaging faculty and students in inquiry that leads to the publication of findings and knowledge sharing is part of the school's mission," says Imad Btaiche, the school dean. "Research in the pharmaceutical fields is intertwined with education and practice. It motivates educators, positively impacts the learning experience of students and enhances their inquisitive mind, expanding the scope of the profession through the translation of findings and application of knowledge into patient care."

The annual output of published scientific research by SOP faculty has more than doubled in recent years. Assistant Professors of Pharmaceutical Sciences Jad Abdallah and Tamara Abou Antoun are among those who have recently published in highly reputed journals.

Abdallah's research, carried out in collaboration with a team of American and French scientists, may hold the key to reversing the process of glycation, which causes DNA damage. Specifically, when the byproducts of sugar metabolism bind to nucleotides — the basic structural unit of DNA — in human cells. This can lead to an increased frequency of mutation, DNA strand breaks and cytotoxicity, and subsequently to a number of conditions, including hypertension, Parkinson's disease, cancer, blockage of the coronary arteries, and eye cataracts.


"We didn't know much about glycation," explains Abdallah. "It is usually irreversible, but we have now discovered

that a protein called DJ-1 actually reverses the process," adds the scientist with great enthusiasm. The discovery, he says, will definitely lead to clinical research.

"Having confirmed our findings testing molecules and cells, we can now test tissues, then the whole organism." Future research can, in parallel, also look at different types of applications. "Heated caramel darkens because it is glycated. Our groundbreaking discovery may lead to interest from the food industry wanting to minimize glycation, which may impact the quality and taste of food."

Abdallah's focus is, however, on health and the plethora of conditions that can be reversed or prevented as a result of this finding. "Once glycation begins in the human body, it usually cascades, leading to cell cytotoxicity," he explains, noting that the location of the damaged cells determines the resulting disease or condition suffered. Damage to the nervous cells, for example, may result in neurodegenerative diseases, such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and Huntington's.

Glycation, for the most part, is not the result of lifestyle choices, so we can't prevent it. The discovery of DJ-1 and its



homologs may therefore hold the key to preventing diseases by reversing glycation before it results in multiplies. “I have recently been working with the lab where I completed my Ph.D.,” says Abdallah, referring to the Stress Molecules Lab in France. “We focus on stress molecules and we’re therefore very interested in proteins that could help reduce stress in the cells.” This is how they came to focus on DJ-1. “We wondered why this parkinsonism-associated protein was present during cell stress and what role it played.”

Through a series of tests utilizing a multi-faceted methodology, Abdallah and his colleagues discovered that DJ-1 promotes deglycation and constitutes a major nucleotide repair system. Their findings were published in the 2017

summer edition of prestigious journal Science.

Abdallah is also collaborating with Abou-Antoun, a researcher in childhood cancer — specifically pediatric neural tumors — in investigating the tumorigenic role of proteins in stem-like cancer cells. A series of papers have recently been completed on the subject, one of which was published in the International Journal of Oncology and another more recently in PLOS ONE.

“We’ve been looking at aggressive types of neuroblastoma that have poor prognoses and focusing on tumor-initiating, stem-like cells believed to recapitulate the original tumors,” explains Abou-Antoun. She and her research team — which includes a faculty member and a student from the University of Balamand

— have identified proteins that are exclusively expressed in the highly malignant MYCN-amplified and stem-like cells. They have also researched methods to interfere with their proliferation, migration and evasion of apoptosis (cell death).

Such cells, while often dormant, can recapitulate tumors after standard treatments, as they do not respond to therapy. “There’s also a lot of networking between proteins and various tumorigenic pathways, therefore, there are many avenues to explore and discover,” adds Abou-Antoun, who has collaborated with the Cleveland Clinic and the Children’s National Medical Center in Washington, D.C., on related studies.

Abou-Antoun explains that childhood brain cancers differ drastically from those of adults, and as such it is important to focus our experiments in the lab on the molecular mechanisms of pediatric neural cancer cells. “Their molecular mechanisms are different.”

The hope is that with continued research, medical scientists will be able to devise targeted therapies that eliminate the tumor-initiating cells, as well as the bulk tumor cells, thereby reaching better cures for children. Multi-modality approaches would enable simultaneous targeting of various tumorigenic pathways in childhood cancers, and thus disable malignant progression from various angles. “Immunotherapy provides a promising tool for targeted therapy, which has shown some hope in hematologic (blood) cancers and we hope such an approach would be optimized for solid tumors in both the adult and pediatric populations.”

Such dedication and passion for research is what Dean Btaiche seeks to encourage. “We want to ensure a dynamic environment for research success, and develop a sustainable research culture as part of our strategic vision,” said Btaiche. “As such we are committed to continued development of skills and abilities, motivation, resources and incentives, and to diversifying the new recruitment of talent.”





# Modern architecture: From Montreal to Beirut

By Ned Whalley

Students from LAU's School  
of Architecture & Design  
and the University of  
Quebec in Montreal jointly  
explore Lebanon's unique  
modernist architecture

Department of Architecture and Interior Design students hosted a cohort of their counterparts from the University of Quebec's Modern Architecture and Heritage graduate program, traveling together across the country and exploring everything from Beirut apartment blocks to Oscar Niemeyer's famously unfinished international fairground in downtown Tripoli. Over two weeks, twenty-five students listened to guest lectures and toured the neighborhoods of Badaro, Hamra and Archrafieh, making their way across the capital in search of Lebanon's modernist 50s and 60s heritage.

Groups of students were assigned buildings representing different architectural developments in small neighborhoods to draw and plan by exploring the edifices' unique features. The students had the liberty of producing a work that they considered the most in line with their reading of the building.

Completed in just two days, these projects highlighted the breadth of skills architecture students utilize in their practice, from blueprints to computer

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*"I feel like all this beautiful heritage is destined to be destroyed"*

—Nancy Elias, University of Quebec Modern Architecture and Heritage student

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generated drawings to quick sketches, photographs and 3-D models. "They had to pick elements, study them and explain what they mean in relation to the building," explained Marwan Zouein, LAU assistant professor of architecture.

"The focus was presentational and visual, but the content was very rich in terms of being partly historical and partly social and cultural," said his colleague Assistant Professor Elie Harfouche, adding, "Which kind of modernity came here and why?"

Modern Lebanese architecture has its roots in the country's colonial history under the French mandate, but what was initially an imposed style became adopted

by local architects and shaped by local conditions. Modernism in architecture can be understood as the intent to express the ideals of progress, openness and faith in technology.

Zoueïn described how the project also looked to push the understanding of urban interaction and cultural heritage. "Beyond the topics of modernity and architecture, it is also about the urban fabric of the city—looking at what authenticity means, what its identity is in terms of architecture for the Lebanese."

Professor of Architecture and Director of the Master Program in Design of the Built Environment Carole Levesque, who has spent several years in Lebanon, led the Quebecois contingent. For Levesque, the project provided very different fare from trips to more traditional destinations in Europe and helped change students' notions both about the region and the far-reaching influence of modern architecture. "The students know about modernism from the European perspective — Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, the classics — and we have some in Montreal, really nice modernistic buildings, but they're kind of icons," she explained. "Here modern architecture is everywhere — it's in the big buildings, but also the smaller houses."

Despite Lebanon's rich modernist heritage, many of the buildings in this style such as the destroyed Carlton Hotel by Karol Schayer and Wassek Adib and the Arida Building by George Rais and Theo Canaan are not locally recognized as culturally significant in the way that older traditional Lebanese houses are. Conservation remains an uphill battle.

Born in Montreal to Lebanese parents, Canadian student Nancy Elias "was curious to see what modernist architecture could be in the Middle East." Initially, she "had a lot of prejudice before I came, in fact, I would say I had low

expectations. Then I came here and was totally surprised."

Still, Elias expressed sadness at the prevailing frustrated attempts to maintain archives and building plans, and a general Lebanese indifference toward conservation. "I feel like all this beautiful heritage is destined to be destroyed," she said, adding she was glad the students had the chance to explore a vanishing architectural world.

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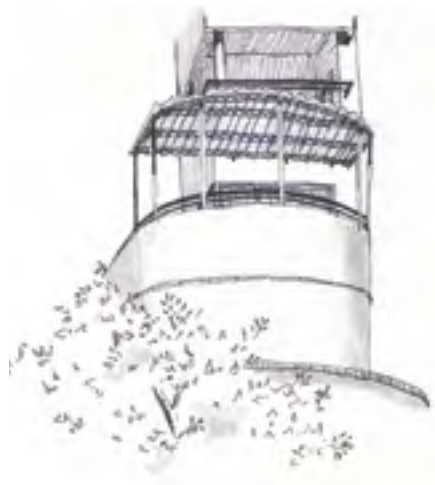
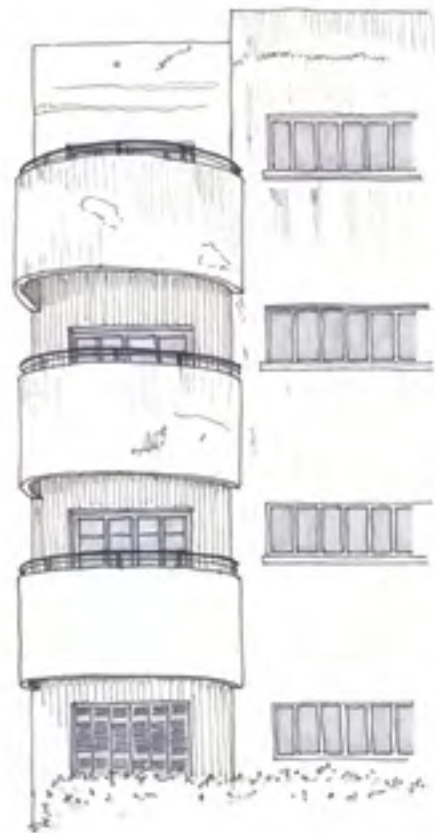
*"The amount of work in the 50s and 60s is really impressive."*

—Johnny Kokajian, LAU Bachelor in Architecture student

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For the Lebanese students, the project pushed them to experience familiar surroundings from a different perspective. "As Lebanese, we felt like tourists in our own country. As we know the area, we don't tend give buildings a second glance," said Johnny Kokajian, a fourth year of Bachelor in Architecture student at LAU. "But now we have seen just how many modern buildings there are and the quantity of design by both Lebanese and foreign architects. The amount of work in the 50s and 60s is really impressive."

Kokajian recalled being surprised when Canadian students photographed a construction site where a reinforced concrete building was being built, a ubiquitous sight for Beirut but less common in Montreal. "It was interesting to experience different attitudes to architecture," he said, noting that the students' varying architectural backgrounds and educational experiences enriched the program. "These little disparities can make a difference to how you think, how you approach subjects."





## Collaborations & Exchanges

### School of Pharmacy begins long-term collaboration with Wayne State University

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two pharmacy education giants marks the beginning of an ongoing collaboration in teaching and research, which Deepak Bhalla, dean of Wayne State University (WSU) Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences believes “will create a mutually beneficial international exchange program between our universities, and provide a platform for cultural and educational enrichment for our students.” Dean of LAU’s School of Pharmacy Imad Btaiche also expressed his delight with the agreement: “WSU’s College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences ranks in the top tier of U.S. schools and colleges of pharmacy, and, as it is located in Detroit, a large number of its students and faculty members are Arab American. As such, this agreement will also help strengthen cultural connections between LAU and the Lebanese diaspora in the Detroit area.”

The cooperation between the two universities supports LAU’s current strategic plan, adds Btaiche, particularly the aim to promote “a network of academic and corporate alliances.” Up to three Pharm.D. student exchanges are anticipated in the coming year, while faculty exchanges will promote professional development



in research and education at both schools. “Visiting faculty will receive structured training in basic and clinical research aimed at boosting research productivity and developing joint studies in diverse areas in the sciences,” Btaiche explains, adding, “We may also seek to work together on the development of curricula and innovative practice models.”

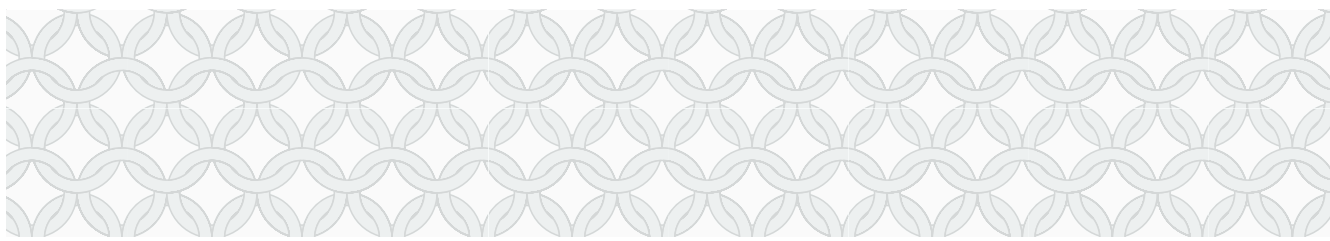
### LAU to sign MOU with China’s Renmin university

LAU and Renmin University will soon sign a Memorandum of Understanding to encourage and facilitate student and faculty exchanges and joint research, according to LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara and Executive Vice Chairman of the University Council of Renmin University Jianming Zhang. The announcement came during Zhang’s recent visit to LAU — which took in a tour of the Beirut campus and a four-course meal prepared and served by the students of the hospitality program — instigated by Adnan Kassar, patron of the university’s School of Business and chairman of Fransabank. “Adnan Kassar opened the road between China and Lebanon in business and encouraged me to do so for education,” said Jabbara during his address. “By March, we will sign an agreement that will provide our students with opportunities to learn Chinese, facilitate faculty exchanges and collaborate on research that will contribute to both our universities and countries.”

Like LAU, Renmin has a long history and numerous relationships with universities around the world. Although the Chinese system of education is based on the Russian model,



Renmin been able to partner successfully with universities in Europe and the U.S. This new collaboration with LAU will, however, be the Chinese university’s first such partnership in the region. “LAU and Lebanon are clearly the best choice for us to engage in the region,” said Zhang, speaking enthusiastically after a three-day visit to the country. “This will be a start of a cooperation that will develop quickly in the near future.”



## LAU signs MOU establishing collaboration in research with NJIT

LAU and the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that establishes research collaboration between the two institutions. LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra and Fadi Deek, NJIT provost and senior executive vice president, signed the memorandum during a ceremony at the university's Byblos campus. The agreement allows LAU graduates with a master's degree to apply for admission to Ph.D. programs offered at NJIT and, after admission, to be co-advised jointly in dissertation research by faculty from both institutions. Furthermore, NJIT engineering Ph.D. students will be able to spend up to two semesters at LAU to carry out their dissertation research. The MOU also seeks to provide opportunities for collaborative research between LAU and NJIT faculty, involving LAU M.S. graduates and NJIT exchange students. Such collaboration is expected to lead to joint research proposals for funding and higher research productivity for Ph.D. students, since research expertise, infrastructure, co-supervision and research outputs will be shared. "It will enable the students to incorporate different



approaches to their study and gain the perspectives of more than one academic advisor," explained LAU's Dean of the School of Engineering George E. Nasr. "It will also allow them to enlarge their professional network, which will help them during and after completing their education."

## Building peace by bridging gaps

LAU's Institute for Social Justice and Conflict Resolution (ISJCR) partnered with the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) to launch a publication that presents 10 case studies of peace building initiatives from across the region. The studies were written by members of the Regional Facilitator's Forum, a body established by USIP in 2016 with the aim of promoting an exchange of ideas and best practices in peaceful conflict resolution. "The forum members have been convening a number of times over the past two years, but today is the first time they come together with academics," explains Imad Salamey, director of ISJCR, which hosted the event at Beirut's Crowne Plaza hotel last week.

"Much work is being done in peace building across the region by civil societies and international organizations, but it hasn't yet been compiled or examined," notes Salamey, who is also associate professor of Political Science at LAU. A documentation and study of these experiences, he adds, will enable the production of materials that can be used in teaching peace building in the region. To this end, USIP asked ISJCR to partner with it in the production of a second book that will expand on the case studies,



and include academic theory and analysis. "This partnership will enable us to pull together the expertise of peace building facilitators in the region, not only in implementation but, also importantly, in thought leadership," says Manal Omar, associate vice president of USIP's Middle East and Africa Center.



# Commitment to Excellence

## Provost honored by Academy of International Business

LAU Provost George K. Najjar was named International Educator of the Year by the Academy of International Business (AIB), the world's flagship organization in international business research and education since 1959. The provost accepted the award at the AIB annual conference, which was held in Dubai. "The selection process for this award is most rigorous and the award itself highly prestigious," said LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara, offering his heartfelt congratulations to Najjar in an open letter to the LAU community. "You are clearly well deserving of this most distinguished award in international business education leadership," said Dean Emeritus at the University of Akron Raj Aggarwal, who chaired the committee that selected Najjar from among a number of strong candidates. Aggarwal praised LAU's Provost for the "contributions you have made over your outstanding career towards developing global mindsets among students, faculty, and educators."

The award is bestowed upon internationally recognized deans, provosts, presidents, and other educational leaders who have made significant contributions to research, academic leadership, and pedagogical innovation and, explained Aggarwal, "achieved distinction in globalizing their institutions." As such, says Najjar,



"this award recognizes LAU as a major center of business education and is a reinforcement of the already considerable stature of the university as an academic powerhouse." LAU trustee and President of Northeastern University in Boston Joseph E. Aoun is among previous recipients of the award.



## LAU's dietetics take oath at White Coat Ceremony

The Nutrition Program at the Department of Natural Sciences honored 37 graduates in a White Coat Ceremony in October on LAU's Beirut campus, attended by LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara, guest of honor philanthropist and businessman Fouad Makhzoumi, and Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences Nashat Mansour. The LAU Nutrition Program is the only one in Lebanon to host a white coat ceremony for dietetics, a tradition that began at the university in 2015 to mark the students' transition to clinical learning. "The white coat ceremony truly constitutes a rite of passage of the journey toward your career," Jabbara told the graduates. Associate Professor of Nutrition Nadine Zeeni invited the honorees to reflect on what the white coat symbolizes and on the message they wished to convey: "Today you take your first steps toward clinical learning, where

the patient becomes the ultimate teacher, not us." In his address, Makhzoumi advised the graduates to be equipped for a world that is constantly changing, saying that the only way forward is through education: "Your education is going to make a difference in our world and our society."

The bachelor's degree in Nutrition and Dietetics – Coordinated Program entails three years of theoretical learning with an additional year of supervised practice. The dietetic internship may be conducted at LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital or one of the university's partner hospitals. In order to qualify as licensed dietitians, interns are required to complete rotations in clinical nutrition, food service management, and community nutrition. The Makhzoumi Foundation is one of LAU's community partner sites where they can fulfill community rotations.



## Faculty awards celebrate excellence in teaching and research

LAU faculty and administrators came together in October at the Byblos campus for the first faculty meeting of the academic year. The gathering culminated in the presentation by LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara of two major faculty awards. Introduced by LAU Provost George K. Najjar, the prizes represent, in his words, “a celebration of our commitment to excellence in both teaching and research.” The Teaching Excellence Award went to Associate Professor of English and Applied Linguistics Rula Diab. Currently the Chair of the English department and Founding Director of LAU’s Writing Center, Diab values “active learning and teaching methods that promote critical thinking and encourage students to go beyond the required course readings.” According to Mona Majdalani, LAU’s assistant provost for academic affairs, the award “recognizes a faculty member who has demonstrated excellence in teaching innovation,” based on a range of criteria.

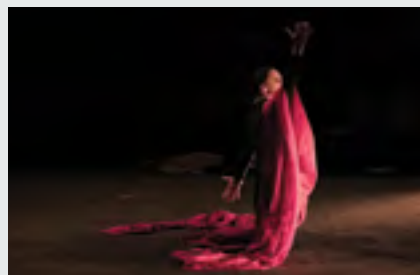
To receive a Research Excellence Award, faculty members “must have achieved an exceptional contribution in their discipline and must have succeeded in communicating the results of the work to a wide audience,” says Majdalani. This year, Guy Assaker, associate professor of hospitality and marketing, shared the award with Azzam Mourad, associate professor of computer science. Assaker was unable to attend the ceremony. For his part, Mourad has conducted groundbreaking research along several different yet fundamentally related tracks: “My research is always directed toward solving cutting-edge and real-life problems in the latest emerging fields and technologies such as security, mobile computing, cloud computing and social networks.”

## Inspirational Drama

### LAU Beirut enjoys special performance of “Jogging”

Visiting theater production “Jogging” was brought to LAU in September for a special one-time performance. The renowned actor and director Hanan Hajj Ali wrote, directed, and performed the piece, which reflects upon the feminine condition through the heroic-tragic flight of the mythological Medea and various stories of women in Lebanon. Hajj Ali, who has received international accolades for her work, stayed after the performance, engaging with students, and answering questions. The event was made possible by the generosity of Heinrich Böll Stiftung Middle East, which partnered with LAU

for the first time to bring the cultural event to the university. “It is so important for students and the community to have access to rich extracurricular activities such as this visiting production,” explained LAU Associate Director of Development Suha Abou Rialy, who supported the initiative. “The production enjoyed a good turn out and attracted many students in the university’s communication arts courses,” added Abou Rialy, who plans to continue to collaborate with Heinrich Böll Stiftung Middle East to bring more events to the LAU community.



### A most successful project

Many take education for granted, but for some, it is a dream that can never be actualized. This idea is highlighted in LAU student Rachid Hneineh’s play, *Education is Not a Dream* (Il ‘Ilm mish Hilm), which he wrote and directed as a Community Service Project (CSP). Staged in Hneineh’s hometown, Sidon, the production reflects what he calls “the problems of the underprivileged people in the community” who face educational and social hardships on a daily basis. Hneineh himself is a beneficiary of LAU’s University Scholarship Program VII (USP VII) — funded and supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) — that enables public school graduates to attend a private university. As part of the USP, Hneineh and five other team members became involved in the project, working with underprivileged children and young adults. “LAU is very supportive of this kind of community service work,” says Director and Associate Professor of Theater Lina Abyad, adding, “it puts energy into getting in touch with the community.”



The project was brought to fruition with the help of Reach Out and Dazzle (ROAD) and the Outreach and Leadership Academy (OLA), led by Assistant Vice President for the Outreach and the Civic Engagement (OCE) unit Elie Samia. “The teams working on the project,” says Samia, “had a vision to expose the underprivileged children of old Sidon to a new experience related to art in their lives.” More than just a theatrical performance, *Education is not a Dream* shows that it is possible for people from different backgrounds to collaborate toward creating something great. In Samia’s words, “the play epitomizes hope and salvation in the power of education as a great leveler and as a means to achieve upward social mobility.”



## Workshops & More

### Lebanon: actor or passive recipient of the Arab Spring?

The Department of Social Sciences and the Center for Contemporary Middle East Studies at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) co-organized a two-day workshop titled “The impact of the ‘Arab Spring’ on socio-political developments in Lebanon: Preconditions, process, and consequences” at LAU Byblos campus in October. The workshop was part of the department’s continuous initiatives to collaborate with local and international academics and policy makers in order to provide the community with theoretically informed and evidence-based analysis of issues facing Lebanon. The conference revolved around four panels “demonstrating how Lebanon was heavily influenced by the Arab Spring, its narratives, dynamics and spillovers,” said Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs Tamirace Fakhoury. Each panel discussion looked at Lebanon from a different angle: the domestic level — both “from below” and “from above”



— the international level, and the level of political discourse in media and academia.

SDU’s chair Professor Martin Beck described the workshop as a cross-Mediterranean cooperation that brought together researchers and academics from Europe and the Middle East. What set it apart, he said, was that the participants wanted to emphasize Lebanon’s role as an “actor rather than merely a passive recipient” of the regional turmoil following the Arab uprisings. The participants, said Fakhoury, “were asked in the final roundtable to share suggestions on how they can imagine contributing to a broader research project with the University of Southern Denmark.”



### Translation as custodian of cultures and channel of communication

In celebration of International Translation Day, the Translation Program at the Department of Humanities hosted a series of lectures in October at LAU’s Beirut campus. The event honored an age-old profession that has connected civilizations across the barriers of time and space. “We shed light on the immense efforts by translators around the world to bridge the gap between cultures, and promote dialogue and understanding so that universal peace and harmony can prevail,” said Translation Program Coordinator Nuwar Mawlawi Diab, who organized the event. The guest speakers — from publishers to academics — offered their translation strategies and insights into the main challenges and future prospects of the domain.

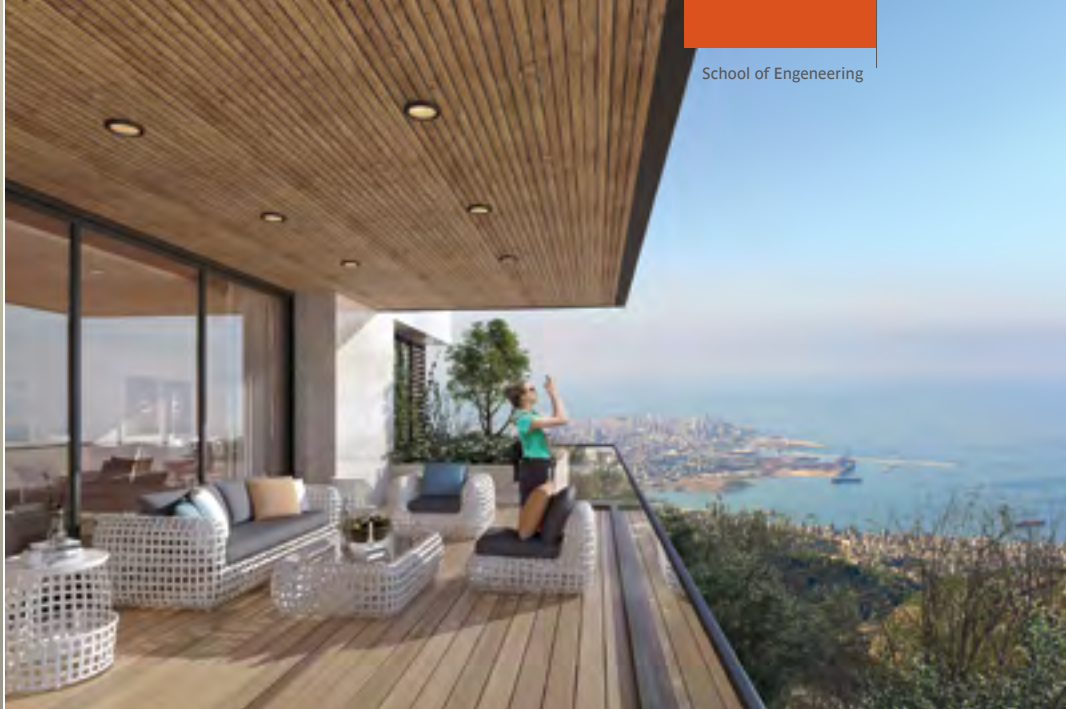
Welcoming the guests, Chair of the Department of Humanities Paul Tabar said, “I am fully confident that today’s discussions will be rich in new information that will encourage researchers to conduct more studies in order to help us improve our abilities in translation and find the best ways to teach it to our students.” The event ended with a contest during which students huddled in groups to render into Arabic a short text by award-winning journalist Peter Gumbel. Enthusiastic chatter filled the conference room as they debated the mot juste — the exact word to convey meaning.

### EMBA students benefit from experts

The Adnan Kassar School of Business recently partnered with the Thomson Reuters Foundation to deliver an intensive three-day course in strategic corporate communications for LAU Executive M.B.A. students. Among the instructors was Paul Casciato, former correspondent and editor at Thomson Reuters Foundation and current director of Blue Lake Media, a U.K.-based agency. “The executives who took the course were intelligent, insightful and keenly engaged, because the course offered them practical skills that they knew would be useful in their business lives,” said Casciato, who had designed the curriculum especially for LAU, combining elements used for courses he has taught at Cambridge University as well as those for corporate clients and journalists.

Joining Casciato was Joseph Logan — a media, communications, and journalism trainer and former Istanbul-based reporter and television producer — who has taught a variety of courses run by the Foundation. “People with a background in journalism and experience dealing with corporate messages from the other side of a camera or a screen can help private sector professionals save time, clarify strategic messages, and enhance their impact,” explains Logan, who has years of experience training journalists and professionals at the UN, NGOs, and in the private sector. Fida Haidar, program officer at the School of Business and coordinator of the course, agrees. “Gaining first-hand knowledge and lessons learned from the experts in global media who actually walk the talk is invaluable,” she says. “The simulations gave our executives the opportunity to learn while doing.”





# Perla Silva is on a mission

By Naseem Ferdowsi

## The importance of continuous funding

*"I had to test materials prior to their use on site... we had done the same procedure in a lab situation."*

—Perla Silva, third-year LAU civil engineering student

Perla Silva is a third-year student pursuing a civil engineering degree at LAU. Exhibiting an aptitude for math and physics, coupled with a penchant for LEGO® structures, she is already looking to the future and has big plans for after she graduates in fall 2019.

"First, I'll gain practical work experience and then I will seek higher education to develop knowledge in a particular area, which will most likely be earthquake engineering," said Silva, who attributes her curiosity of civil engineering to the time she learned about the megastructure towers that exist in Shanghai, China.

In addition to pursuing graduate studies, she sees herself making a big impact internationally. "I have always wanted to be part of United Nations (UN) and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)," she says, adding that she hopes to one day apply for a civil engineering post within those organizations.

With LAU's rigorous and comprehensive curriculum, Silva will no doubt reach her goals. She has completed several degree-specific courses in surveying, structural analysis, mechanics of materials, construction, concrete, stress analysis, and fluid mechanics. She has also learned how to use sophisticated civil engineering software, including AutoCAD Civil 3D, Robot Structural Analysis Professional, and SAP2000. In addition, Silva has managed to land an internship with Matta et Associés—a leading Lebanese construction company.

The civil engineering major says that securing her internship took persistence and a willingness to keep pursuing her dreams, even in the face of adversity. "I did not get a call back from Matta

et Associés, so I called them. While they indicated that they only accepted fourth-year students and not second-year students like myself, I insisted and showed them how interested I was to intern with their company — eventually they accepted me," she says.

The internship allowed Silva to put her knowledge and skills to the test while getting practical work experience. "I was sent to work on the Beit Misk project. There, I was given maps about the project. I then started learning how to read these maps and visualize things clearly on site. Once familiarized, I was tasked with watching workers and assuring construction work was done in accordance with the drawings," Silva explains.

Describing how well prepared she was thanks to LAU, she says, "I had to test materials prior to their use on site...this was exciting because we had done the same procedure in a lab situation. We also encountered some problems, such as cracks in beams and joint issues, and I was able to determine the cause of these errors since I had learned about them."

All of Silva's accomplishments would not be possible without her education at LAU and the crucial financial support she receives. "I really appreciate the scholarships and aid I received, especially since my parents could not afford the tuition fees," Silva says.

One of the scholarships she received was through the LAU Engineering Students' Emergency Relief Fund, a "mini campaign" launched in 2016 to raise scholarship funds for currently enrolled engineering students in critical financial need. The campaign is now in its second year and will help many more students like Silva to pursue their studies.

To contribute to the Engineering Students' Emergency Relief Fund and help students like Silva, please go to [www.giving.lau.edu.lb](http://www.giving.lau.edu.lb)





# Reinventing Communication

By Hanan Nasser

Communication Arts students at LAU express their pride in the department's mission

Perpetually reinventing itself, the Department of Communications Arts transforms two major festivals: IMAGINE Workshop and Concert Series (IWCS) and Festival NEXT, into multidisciplinary events that reflect its eclectic curricula and a holistic approach to the arts.

Visitors were treated to five packed days of workshops and performances in music, theater, dance and writing during the launch of Festival NEXT, which evolved from LAU's prominent annual theater festival. "The new interdisciplinary program and name of the festival reflect where we currently are as a department," explains Chair of the Department of Communication Arts Jad Melki. "We are on our next phase in moving toward the future of communication. We are the builders of the next generation of communicators in the region. We are what perpetually reinvents and continuously comes next."

Led by Assistant Professor of Music Amr Selim and Assistant Professor of Dance Nadra Assaf, the production of Festival NEXT was a collaborative effort between LAU faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends. "Because of the team spirit and the quality of the workshops and

performances, this edition of the festival was spectacularly successful, and offered us a proven concept and prototype for our 2018 edition, which will coincide with the 20th anniversary of the festival," says Melki, noting that it will likely be held in May or June.

Each year, international artists are invited to participate in the festival, and share their experiences and skills. Among those invited this year was renowned Colombian theatre director and psychologist Hector Aristizabal, who ran a three-day workshop on theater in action. "Theater is the modern word for ritual and ritual is the place where humanity heals," says Aristizabal, who





*"As a musician, you are always trying to absorb and transmit different parts of humanity."*

—Salley Koo, American violinist

used to employ theater in his work as a psychologist. "Before we had psychiatrists we had storytelling and the theatre is a place where we can open up. It's very therapeutic."

The department recently expanded its offerings to four sharply defined yet interdependent programs in performing arts, multimedia journalism, television and film, and communication. Festival NEXT, says Melki, reflects this multidisciplinary nature.

The department's new philosophy was also echoed in Reflections—IWCS' collection of 22 cross-disciplinary events on equality and human rights that combined music, dance, theater, fashion and an art show, as well as panel discussions, workshops, and outreach and education programs. Spread over four months and ending in March 2018, the last of the four residencies, Salaam,

will kick off in February with the Apple Hill String Quartet and world-renowned clarinet player Kinan Azmeh.

Earlier, in the fall, whether from the alley ways of Shatila Camp or the red carpet and limelight of the university's Beirut campus, LAU artists found a platform to fight social injustice and gender inequality under IWCS' umbrella.

"I believe that all the art disciplines complete each other and I wanted to have everyone on board as much as possible," says IWCS artistic director, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Music Seba Ali Ali.

IWCS invited internationally acclaimed American violinist Salley Koo, whose first trip to Lebanon took her to the Shatila refugee camp where she and Ali played for Syrian refugee children, in collaboration with the NGO Basmeh and Zeitooneh. "As a musician, you are always trying to absorb and transmit different parts of humanity," Koo said of her visit to the camp. "I feel more connected to and sad about children. They are so happy and alive, but then they live in a displaced situation, which is heartbreaking."

IWCS's Reflections concluding fall program included a music and dance performance by Koo and Ali, a tribute to female composers whose talents

suffered injustices because of their gender. "Women are always judged. Sometimes you feel you're in a maze. A woman is always multitasking and must excel in all that she does," Ali said. "With Sarah Fadel's choreography and our LAU dancers, we were able to make the struggles of women more concrete to the audience."

Reflections also featured a gender-fluid fashion show by LAU student Aniss Ezzedine that aimed at advocating diversity and equality, as well as an art show that incorporated paintings, photographs and ceramics, a gif and a short film.

Such interdisciplinary events are highly instrumental in promoting a renewed appreciation for the arts undisturbed by commercialization, says Egyptian violinist Saeid Kamal, who ran a workshop on the Arabic violin and performed with fellow musician Amro Salah on the last night of the Festival NEXT. "Commercial music has its place and purpose, but I love initiatives like this one that bring people together to create and enjoy music with artistic merit," adds Salah.

Watch full video: <http://comm.lau.edu.lb>



*"Before we had psychiatrists we had storytelling and the theatre is a place where we can open up."*

—Hector Aristizabal, Colombian theater director and psychologist





# SIXTH ANNUAL FUNDRAISING GALA DINNER FOCUSES ON INNOVATION

By Naseem Ferdowsi

Supporters and friends came together to celebrate LAU's achievements and excellence in innovation

LAU *Gala* 2017  
Partnered for Excellence *dinner*







Titled “Leading with Innovation,” the university’s sixth annual Fundraising Gala Dinner gathered more than 700 supporters and friends at Seaside Pavilion in Beirut on December 14. LAU’s unique capabilities and strategic plans to help ensure that students are equipped with the skills and knowledge to become the region’s next entrepreneurs, inventors and innovators took center stage.

“Business as usual is no longer an option for institutions of higher education and this has certainly not been an option for LAU — because the 21st century belongs to the innovators,” said LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra in his welcoming address.

Explaining the importance of innovation in a labor market that is quickly changing, making the university’s role in preparing its students more significant than ever, “Education is no longer sufficient, it is necessary — but innovation is absolutely essential,” he stressed.

The gala was also an occasion to commend the university’s supporters, many of whom were in attendance, including business leaders, politicians, philanthropists, community members, faculty, staff and alumni who have given generously to LAU. In fact, the

university’s family of donors raised \$16.6 million in fiscal year 2017, which will go toward scholarships and endowments, capital projects, grants, research, school activities and more.

Addressing the audience, Jabbra said, “This is a night to give credit to those who deserve credit. And it is you who have made sure that LAU became a powerhouse in higher education. It is you who have made sure that LAU became the best servant of the community and, in particular, the best servant of young people.”

In line with the evening’s focus on raising funds for LAU’s journey toward its strategic goals, a \$1.5 million gift was announced from Talal Shair, chairman and CEO of Dar al-Handasah. The contribution will support the School of Engineering’s recently constructed six-floor Engineering Laboratories and Research Center, which houses state-of-the-art facilities for faculty and students.

Innovation was present throughout the function, from music by composer and bandleader Guy Manoukian to wall-to-wall digital screens. The audience was also treated to a documentary on LAU’s innovative curriculum, facilities, programming and research projects, as

*“Education is necessary, but innovation is absolutely essential.”*

—LAU President Joseph G. Jabbra

well as inspiring student and graduate inventions.

“Every year is extremely special. This year we planned for months to incorporate the theme of innovation and to ensure that it touches every part of the evening’s experience by bringing in experts and our gala dinner committee, who made this magical event happen,” said LAU Assistant Vice President for Development Nassib N. Nasr.

LAU began holding its annual Fundraising Gala Dinner in Beirut in 2012. The inaugural gala raised an impressive \$7.5 million and successive events have had admirable fundraising results, all in support of the Gala Dinner Endowed Scholarship Fund, which provides support to deserving students who might otherwise not have an opportunity to gain a university education.





# Alumni homecoming



## LAU alumni reconnect, reminisce and celebrate

By Linda Dahdah

Hundreds of alumni take part in the 2017 homecoming and all-class reunions organized by the Alumni Relations Office

“My second family,” “My home,” “My memories,” “My life” where the recurrent phrases used by LAU alumni to describe what their alma mater meant to them, as they took part in a series of family-friendly activities organized during the 2017 annual homecoming held during the summer.

The celebration kicked off with the Annual Alumni Dinner, which gathered more than 400 alumni, LAU officials, faculty and staff at Beirut’s fashionable nightspot Seven Sisters.

Thanking the alumni for their commitment to the university and their key role in raising funds to cover scholarships for deserving students — alumni chapters raised more than \$1 million this year — President Joseph G. Jabbara praised the attendees saying, “You are special gifts to LAU. You are one

of the major reasons why LAU grows to prominence and preeminence, reaching its rightful place in the constellation of institutions of higher education not only in Lebanon, but also in the region and beyond.”

During the evening and in keeping with tradition, two alumni — nominated by their peers — were recognized for their outstanding professional achievements and commitment to the community.

Fouad Zmokhol (M.B.A. '99, B.S. '96) was visibly moved as he made it to the podium to receive the Alumni Achievement Award bestowed upon him. Zmokhol’s success as a young, innovative entrepreneur earned him the presidency of the Association of Lebanese Business People in the World in 2017, following a five-year-long mandate as president of the Lebanese Businessmen Association.



Zmokhol, who obtained a doctorate in business administration from Newport University (USA), is CEO and co-owner of Zimco Group — a holding that integrates a printing press, leather factory, diary publishing house and advertising agency — and CEO of SAPDIB (Africa). A writer and educator, he shares his expertise as a professor of managerial strategies and entrepreneurship at both Saint Joseph University and LAU.

“Receiving a recognition is always rewarding, but receiving an award from family members, professors, tutors and childhood friends is extremely touching,” Zmokhol said. “My professors at LAU taught me to never lose hope, to fight and persevere, and how to face both life and business challenges. These professors have not only become my friends, but also my advisors and tutors, and have kept

on encouraging me until this day.” At the end of his emotional speech, Zmokhol passed the award onto his mother for her unconditional support.

Fatin Ataya al Saadi (B.A. '72), recipient of the Alumni Recognition Award, established the Dar Jana International School in Jeddah, serving as its educational leader and chief administrator. She guided the development of the school’s curriculum, support services, infrastructure, policies and procedures, and led and implemented its growth plan from 27 students in 1999 to more than 6,000 students in 2016, as well as the expansion of its built space from 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> to 19,800 m<sup>2</sup>. Today it is common to find students from Dar Jana as part of the LAU student body.

Not being able to attend the alumni dinner, al Saadi passed on a message

through her brother, Fahim Ataya, who read it to those gathered on her behalf. Thanking the Alumni Relations Office, the Alumni Association and the professors she works with, she said: “LAU has always been a leader in education and I am proud to be an LAU alumna.”

A festive atmosphere also prevailed during the all-class reunions held in Byblos and Beirut, which saw alumni reconnect and reminisce about their days as university students.

“It is important for me to be here today to meet people, network with other alumni and hear more about the university,” said Roland Kfoury, who graduated in 2015 in electrical engineering. “LAU is about getting the right education, the right internship, in the right environment. It was always my home away from home.”



# Alumni homecoming



## **Mostafa Khattab (B.S. '02)**

"It's a great opportunity to see each other again and exchange thoughts and ideas after going in different directions. And to interact with our former professors and update ourselves with news about the university and the field we are in. To me LAU is my family, my home. It is all about the future, hope and youth."



May Abdelkhalek, a 1963 graduate in biology, feels blessed to be living in a house that overlooks the Beirut Campus. "My best memories are at LAU. I never miss a chance to come on campus and I made sure that my daughter graduated from here too."

The weeklong homecoming concluded with the Annual President's Forum Brunch that took place at Boulevard Beirut in Ain el Mreissi.

Those present were able to ask questions and share their thoughts with President Jabbra and alumni representatives. "The homecoming is a time to reconnect alumni with the university and with each other," said Assistant Vice President for Alumni Relations, Abdallah al Khal. "But it is also to celebrate the achievements of the alumni chapters and to thank them for all they did for LAU during the year."

**Nazik Abi Ali (B.S. '67)** "I always attend the homecoming reunion and love to mingle with other alumnae." And her daughter Lama Mo'dad (M.A. '11, B.A. '07): "I did both my B.A. and M.A. at LAU, so for a very long time this campus was literally my home — I spent hours and days in the library. By being back at LAU, I am reliving some of my best years."



**Bashir Sakka**, Beirut chapter president (A.A.S. '85) talking about the Alumni Relations Office: "Each year they honor us, but this year it's our turn to honor them. They are the reason we're gathered today. They are the reason we come back to LAU. They strengthen our sense of belonging and keep us connected with over 40 chapters around the world. This is a token of gratitude and appreciation."



**Hanan Chalhoub (B.S. '86)** "This is the fourth or fifth class reunion I've attended. I always meet people I knew or meet new people.... LAU is a launch pad for a solid career path and it doesn't stop once we graduate. I love how active and dynamic the alumni office is."



**Rasha Hawasli (Pharm. D. '08)** "I wanted to see the people that I haven't seen for so long. It's always good to go back to where you started... LAU has an emotional impact on me, especially the relationship I had with my professors. For me LAU means youth, happiness and success."

**Reem Wahoud (M.B.A. '04, B.S. '03)**

"I attend every year to see friends and former instructors. I feel like we are one family. It's like there are no boundaries between the students, the alumni and the president."

**Imad Khalil (B.S. '84)** "LAU, BUC at the time, is where I spent five of my very beautiful education years. It's where I discovered myself. It means a lot to me as a place of great friendships and excellent education in a family environment."



**Karine Kobrianos (Pharm.D. '07)** "I can't believe it's been 10 years already. LAU has changed completely in terms of buildings. It's so beautiful... I'm proud to have graduated from the best university in Lebanon and the only one accredited by ACPE."



**Robert Shafie (M.B.A. '84)** "I moved to the U.S. after graduating. Seven years ago, after living abroad for 27 years, I came back to visit Lebanon and went to the Alumni Relations Office. I instantly felt that I had returned to my roots, to where I belong. I feel very attached, in fact glued, to this university. Growing feelings of loyalty, gratitude and pride guide my relationship with my alma mater."



**Marie Hamparsoumian (B.S. '12)** "I work at LAU now, so I never left, but it feels nice to catch up with other alumni. LAU means everything to me, which is why I came back to work here. I encouraged my husband to come study at LAU too. LAU is a family, not just a university."



**Fadia Farah Halabi (M.B.A. '93, B.S. '90)** "I've been living in Kuwait for 11 years and I take part in different events organized by the alumni chapter there, but I also do my best to attend alumni events in Beirut whenever I'm in town. My son is coming to study here... We're very proud of the university's expansion and its competitive edge."



**Suad Mattar (B.S. '96, B.S. '92)** "I am here today to reconnect with old friends. I come every year and every time the feeling is amazing. LAU means a lot to me, it's my passport to life."



# Alumni update

## August



### Orientation

The New Students Orientation was held on both campuses on August 24 and 25! Once again, this bi-annual event allowed the Alumni Relations Office to introduce itself to the newcomers and familiarize them with its role.

### Summer party by South Lebanon chapter

More than 100 alumni and friends attended the end-of-summer party hosted by the South Lebanon chapter at Damour Country Club on August 30. Guests reconnected and conversed over a pleasant evening marked by a family-like atmosphere.



## September

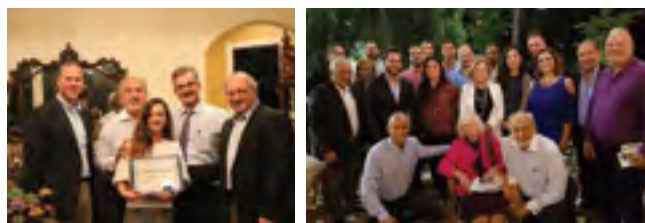
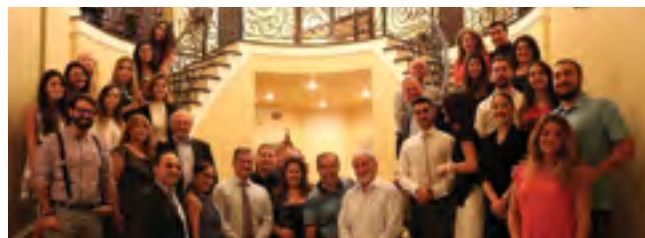


### Hitting the road with Abdallah and Ed

On their annual North America alumni chapter tour, Abdallah Al Khal (LAU Beirut's assistant vice president for Alumni Relations) and Ed Shiner (LAU NY's director of Alumni and Special Projects) visited no less than seven cities in Canada and the United States.

They began by joining the Boston/New England chapter for a Taste of Tuscany dinner, after which they crossed the border to meet up with the Montreal chapter for happy hour. The excitement continued with a dinner with the Ottawa chapter and a trip back across the border, where Ed and Abdallah explored Manhattan's Little Syria during a walking tour organized by the New York/New Jersey chapter. The gatherings also involved meetings with the chapter committees to discuss future plans and a communication strategy.

The second leg of the tour targeted Houston, Dallas and Cleveland. In Houston, Tania Shaheen (B.S. '98) and her husband Wissam Tayssoun graciously hosted LAU alumni and current pharmacy students. The traditional bi-annual event, for the university's Pharm.D. students doing their clinical rotations at



Methodist Hospital in Houston, saw their mentor Dr. Ray Hachem (president of the Houston Chapter of the American Lebanese Medical Association (ALMA)) present Cynthia Sadaka and Remy el Hage with the ALMA-LAU Pharm.D. Designated Scholarship Grant. "The experience had been amazing," said el Hage. "LAU has helped me a lot and given me many opportunities. It is because of LAU that I am here today."

Majed Saredidine (A.A.S. '84) and his wife Yola hosted the Dallas chapter gathering in Plano. More than 40 alumni and friends enjoyed networking and meeting fellow alumni. Al Khal addressed those attending, urging the alumni to stay connected. "LAU doesn't have any owners, we alumni are the collective owners. We are especially proud of you, our alumni, and your achievements," he added. For the last stop on Ed and Abdallah's tour, Ohio alumni gathered for the first time in Cleveland to discuss their future alumni chapter. Shiner encouraged their efforts, saying: "One of the most enjoyable aspects of my position is meeting with and visiting our alumni. The chapters grow and develop through these personal encounters and our North American alumni 'family' is enriched immeasurably."

## October



### SArD hosts its first alumni reunion

More than 120 alumni gathered at the first School of Architecture and Design (SArD) alumni reunion, organized jointly by the school and the Alumni Relations Office on October 10 at LAU Beirut. The evening was an occasion for graduates from a wide spectrum of specialties to revisit their days at their alma mater and reconnect with their professors, sharing each other's achievements and experiences.

Praising them for being faithful ambassadors of their university and exceptional agents of change in society, LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara urged them to share their acquired knowledge with students. "You give us momentum to redouble our efforts and do more for our students," he said.

Alumni invited to speak at the event included accomplished interior designer Joe Farah (B.A. '92), jewelry designer Virna Chakardemian (B.A. '00), alumnus and current adjunct faculty at SArD Elie Abs (B.A. '97) and graphic designer Ghaith Fleifel (B.A. '10). The alumni needed no reminding that LAU was "their home" and its community "their family," as they celebrated being reunited after many years and took selfies with professors they are not likely to forget.

### Bahrain family bowling day

The Bahrain chapter organized a family bowling tournament on October 14 at the Bowling Lounge in Budaiya. Whole families, parents and kids alike, enjoyed a day full of fun and challenging games.



### Engineering alumni catch up

Alumni and friends enjoyed a great evening at the School of Engineering chapter's annual fall gathering on October 21 at Beirut's C-Lounge Rooftop.



### Byblos chapter's fall gathering

The Byblos chapter organized a Fall Gathering at Ortega Spanish Bistro Bar, Badaro, on October 7. The event attracted more than 120 alumni and friends and was a great success.



### Brunch in Switzerland

LAU alumni and friends of the university gathered at a brunch hosted by the Switzerland chapter president Taline Ousounian Avakian (B.A. '72) on October 1. Assistant Vice President for Alumni Relations Abdallah Al Khal, who flew to Geneva especially for the event, took the opportunity to thank the committee members for their hard volunteer work and the attendees for their support. He updated the guests on the university's latest achievements and plans and shared news of other alumni chapters worldwide.

### BCW alumnae enjoy olive oil tasting and more

The BCW chapter organized a trip to Bassatin Baanoub Olive Grove located 60 km south of Beirut (between Saida and Jezzine) on October 25. The ladies enjoyed a full day that included a guided tour, tastings of organic olive oil as well as other organic food and lunch at Al Rif restaurant in Jezzine by the Bisri River.





# Staying connected

Retired journalist **Wafaa al Ghawi (B.A. '61)** is a member of both the Union of Journalists in Syria and the Union of Arab Journalists. For a number of years, Wafaa was the chairman of the department of foreign languages and head of the English division at Radio Damascus. The social work graduate, who went on to obtain a postgraduate degree in journalism at Syracuse University, recently moved to Boston to live with her daughter Alma Richeh, a lawyer and head of the Center for Arabic Culture.

Retired educator **Sharon Weeks Buess (A.A. '61)** mainly taught English and English as a Second Language at various public schools in the U.S. She did, however, teach English from 1969-78 at the Nazarene Evangelical School in Beirut. The language enthusiast went on to obtain her B.A. in Education from the Olivet Nazarene College in Illinois and her M.A. in English from Tennessee State University in Nashville. Sharon, who lives in Nashville, has been married for 54 years and has three children, nine grandchildren and six great grandchildren (so far).

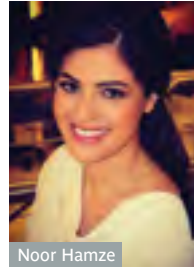
**Dia el Azzawi Tayara (B.A. '72)** joined AUB's University for Seniors in 2010, right after its inception, and has been hosting its Arabic book club since 2012. Previously, Dia worked with the Arab community in London, doing her best to define issues in the wider society through a monthly publication. Having completed her political science degree, she went on to obtain an M.A. in International Relations from AUB in 1988.

**Abraham (Abe) Itani (B.S. '82)** is working as a Certified Public Accountant and Insurance Broker at Itani Accounting & Tax Svcs., LLC. Previously, Abraham worked as a tax auditor and tax manager in the U.S. and Canada, specializing in taxation and expat. After completing his degree in business management, he went on to obtain a Certificate in Taxation from the University of California, Los Angeles. Abraham lives in New Jersey, where he is happily married to **Basima Kasim (B.S. '91)**. They have four children: Heyam, Omar, Assma and Kauter.

**Ghada Zeidan (B.S. '84)** is an educational consultant. The business management graduate went on to obtain



Nada Ghazal



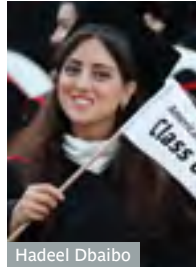
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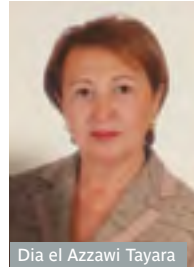
Ruba el Amine



Talal Chami



Hadeel Dbaiho



Dia el Azzawi Tayara



Zahy el Kassiss



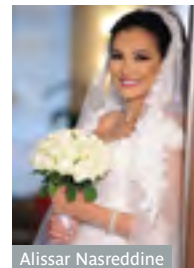
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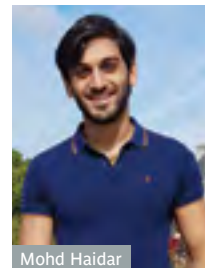
Khalil Tabbara



May Idriss



Alissar Nasreddine



Mohd Haidar



Vanessa Hajjar



Wafaa al Ghawi

her postgraduate degree from Leicester University in the U.K. Ghada has six children, three of whom are also LAU graduates.

**Dunia Beydoun (B.A. '85)** made a major career shift and is now a certified Stott Pilates instructor. Dunia took courses and workshops at Real Pilates JLT in Dubai, the only Merrithew™ licensed training center in the Middle East. The liberal arts graduate previously worked as a creative director in the domain of graph design.

Business marketing graduate **Ziad Kossaifi (B.S. '91)** is the owner of Lebanon's Saveurs du Monde catering services and Nuit Blanche event venue. Previously, Ziad was the General Manager of Modecor, a modern decor and wood products manufacturing company in Saudi Arabia.

Advertising design graduate **Nada Ghazal (A.A.S. '92)** has won Woman Entrepreneur of the Year at the Brilliant Lebanese Awards 2017, organized by BLC Bank. A ceremony took place at the Casino du Liban to announce the recipients of both the Woman Entrepreneur and the People's

Choice awards. The award — intended for women-led businesses with distinctive services or products that demonstrate a sustainable model and social responsibility — was announced on December 7.

Interior design graduate **Wassim Shahhal (B.S. '93)** is the General Manager of Al Ghanim and Debbas in Kuwait, where he lives with his wife and three children.

A graduate in what is now known as business information technology management, **Khalil Tabbara (B.S. '94)** is currently self-employed and living in Dubai after having previously held the position of Head of Sales and Marketing at the pan Arab daily al Araby al Jadeed, in Doha.

**Talal Chami (B.A. '96)** is an independent TV producer and director, as well as communication strategist. He has been in the TV, communication and PR business for the past 20 or so years and has been teaching TV production at AUST in Beirut for the past five. Talal is currently working on his thesis for his M.A. in Media Studies at AUB.

Business management graduate **Majdi Gharzeddeen (B.S. '98)** is the head of Investment Research and advisor for the Kuwait Investment Company, a leading financial services company in Kuwait.

Having graduated with a degree in business finance and banking, **Maya Hajjar (B.S. '99)** is the Beirut-based Regional Finance Director for Deloitte & Touche (M.E.).

Business graduate **Paul G. Aswad (B.S. '01)** has his own web design company in Montreal, Canada. [www.touchestudio.com](http://www.touchestudio.com)

**May Idriss (B.S. '02)** is the senior art director at the Beirut-based fashion accessories label Sarah's Bag. Previously, the graphic design graduate worked as a freelance designer supporting the development, creation and innovation of international and local mainstream collections. May is married to Karim Bibi, the chef and co-owner at Beirut based restaurant Beroe.

Political science graduate **Tala Khabbaz (B.A. '02)** has been working in the Protocol and PR department at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers for past 20 years. Tala lives in Lebanon with her husband Didier Raymond and their two children: Jean-Philippe and Caroline.

Business management graduate **Rabee Chams (M.B.A. '03, B.S. '00)** has just relocated to Lebanon from Kuwait, where he was the Group Internal Auditor at M2R Kuwait. Rabee is married with two children.

Graphic design graduate **Ruba el-Amine (B.S. '03)** is the CEO of Art.Cages, a design-oriented charitable organization in Lebanon. After serving as chairperson of the Department of Arts and Design at Lebanese International University (LIU), Ruba underwent a career shift by founding Art.Cages, which upcycles cages and creates a promotional merchandise, the proceeds of which support human rights, animal rescue, and environmental NGOs.

Computer science graduate **Saeed Raheel (M.S. '03, B.S. '98)** is currently the chairperson of the Computer Science Department at AUST, to which he brought 10 years of professional experience in software engineering. Saeed obtained his

Ph.D. in Computer Science from Lumière University Lyon 2 in Lyon, France. He now lives in Beirut and is married with five children.

Business marketing graduate **Ghaith Samhoun (B.S. '03)** is the Trade Marketing Manager at Lactalis International. Ghaith lives in al Khobar and is married with two children: Louma and Jude.

**Feras Yehia (B.S. '04)** is the head of Analytics for the Middle East at Experian, a global leader in consumer and business credit reporting and marketing services and a constituent of the United Kingdom's FTSE 100 index. After completing his degree in what is now known as Business Information Technology Management, Feras went on to obtain a Specialized Diploma in Banking Studies from USJ in 2009, followed by an Advanced Diploma in Banking Management in 2012, and successfully completed the requirements for a B.A. in Banking and Finance from the university.

**Prince Nasr Harfouche (M.B.A. '05)** just got promoted to Principal Equity Partner leading Data Science & Cognitive insights practice for Banking & Security at Deloitte U.S. in New York. Prince is currently also a Ph.D. candidate at New York State University.

**Mona Zoughaib (M.B.A. '05, B.S. '93)** is the head of PMO at Middle East Airlines and advisor to the CIO. Before moving into business and IT consultancy and joining Fransabank as the head of IT project management and quality assurance, followed a stint at Byblos Bank as senior project manager, Mona had worked at Arab Bank. Having obtained her Ph.D. in HRMIS



Computer engineering graduate **Bassel Jaleldine (B.E. '17)** and mechanical engineering graduate **Ibrahim Ezzeddine (B.E. '16)** have joined forces to launch the startup Cherpa, an online platform meant to help youth learn and engage more with the field of robotics. In October 2017, Cherpa won funding worth \$15,000 during Dubai's GITEX Technology Week Exhibition's Best Youth Startup. Previously, Cherpa had already received \$30,000 from the Beirut-based startup accelerator Speed@BDD, supplemented by an additional \$50,000 in the accelerator's SEED BOOST competition. The door to Silicon Valley itself was open by Blackbox.vc, which selected Cherpa's founders to join a two-week acceleration program in California. "We see Cherpa in every school and we also see self-learners relying on Cherpa to help them understand the basics of robotics," say the partners, who transformed their dorm room at LAU into a "lab" and co-founded LAU's Robotics Club.



# Staying connected

and Project Management at Paris Descartes University, she also teaches part-time at four universities: Lebanese, Haigazian, Rafic Hariri and AUB. Mona is vice president and marketing director of PMI's Lebanon Chapter and lives in Beirut, where she is married to fellow computer science graduate **Hadi Araoui (B.S. '93)**, with whom she has three children: Mohammad, Wassim and Moyenne.

**Lana Khalaf (M.B.A. '06)** is the country manager at Microsoft Qatar in Doha, having previously served as the company's public sector director.

**Kamal al Khatib (M.B.A. '06)** is deputy division head at the Capital Markets Authority of Lebanon. Kamal currently lives in Beirut.

Computer science graduate **Marwan Abi Khalil (M.S. '08)** is the CEO - Digital Strategist of VIBRANTlab, a full-service digital marketing agency he founded in Lebanon that helps businesses connect with their target audiences through intelligent design, marketing and technology. [www.vibrantlab.com](http://www.vibrantlab.com)

**Walid al Nahdi (B.S. '08)** works as a senior associate for business development in the Asset Management Department of Jadwa Investment in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Walid began his career as a buy side investment research analyst, after which he moved to wealth management before going into business development. Having graduated with a degree in Business Banking and Finance, he obtained his M.B.A. this year from Hult International Business School, San Francisco, Shanghai, London.

**Elie-Jacques Fares (B.S. '08)** is an assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences at AUB. After having completed his degree in biology, Elie-Jacques went on to obtain his Doctorate of Philosophy in Natural Science from the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. Elie-Jacques is married and lives in Beirut.

**Nathalie Maalouf (B.S. '08)** currently works as a software developer at Banque Libano-Francaise in Lebanon. After having completed her degree in business information technology management, Nathalie went on to obtain an M.B.A. from the University of Leicester in the U.K.

**Racha Sabbagh Dit Hawasli (Pharm.D. '08, B.S. '07)** is a consultant at the Centre for Clinical and Health Outcome for Access (CCHO), a healthcare consultancy firm that houses the first center for health economics and outcome research dedicated to the MENA region. Based in Lebanon, the center provides market access, health economics and research services for both the public and private sectors in the healthcare industry. Previously, Racha held community and hospital pharmacy positions, as well as being a teaching assistant at Kingston University London, where she is currently working towards her Ph.D. in Pharmacy and Toxicology.

Having completed her degree in graphic design with an emphasis on print design, **Anna Sleiman (B.S. '09)** is now working as a senior media manager at Starcom Mediavest Group in Dubai.

**Carmen Zaarouri (B.S. '09)** was recently promoted to Account Director (Levant) at Mirum Agency, previously Cleartag, where she had worked as a project manager. Carmen completed her degree in business information technology management and currently lives in Lebanon.

**Sarah Alaeddine (B.S. '11)** worked as a pharmacist at the Rafic Hariri University Hospital and a part time hospital preceptor at LAU before moving to Nigeria, where she currently resides with her husband. Sarah had previously obtained an M.S. in Clinical Pharmacy, International Practice and Policy from University College London.

**Hadeel Dbaiibo (B.A. '11)** is the outreach coordinator for the TAMAM Project at AUB's Department of Education. Previously, Hadeel had worked in the education sector for five years in positions ranging from preschool teacher to learning mentor at War Child Holland in the UNHCR Program to research assistant at LAES and CLS. She has also had several experiences in youth-empowering NGOs. After completing a degree in education, she went on to obtain an M.A. in Education in Elementary English Language from AUB.

Having completed his degree in business marketing, **Akram Narsh (B.S. '11)** now works as a managing director at SBE, a multinational consulting company based in Switzerland.

**Dory Azzam (B.S. '12)** is the Internal Audit Department manager at the Mediterranean and Gulf Insurance and Reinsurance (Medgulf). After graduating with a degree in business banking and finance, Dory moved to Angola but soon returned to Lebanon to start his career at Medgulf as a junior internal auditor. Shortly thereafter he was promoted to senior internal auditor responsible for Lebanon, Bahrain and Qatar and then head of the Internal Audit Department. During this time, he founded, along with a group of friends, *Moubadarat wa Kararat* (Initiatives and Decisions), an NGO specializing in development, advocacy and leadership, for which Dory acts as financial manager. His younger brother Michel is currently an undergraduate at LAU majoring in computer science.

**Abdo Salam Hamade (B.A. '12)** is a quality systems manager at Dalla'a General Hospital, as well as being a healthcare quality and management consultant. The political science and international affairs graduate went on to obtain an M.S. in



Lebanese writer **Emily Nasrallah (A.A. '56)** counted among the recipients of the 2017 Goethe Medal for outstanding service for international cultural dialogue. Every year, the Goethe-Institut honors non-Germans for their work by giving them the Goethe medal, an official decoration of the Federal Republic of Germany. Themed "language is the key" this year, the award highlighted the work of three courageous women who took a stance on taboo subjects in their societies. Nasrallah is one of the most renowned authors in the Middle East. Her literary work mostly focuses on the village life in the South of Lebanon, women's rights activism, and the Lebanese civil war.



**Tania Saleh's (B.A. '90)** musical collaboration with Cairokee opened the Shubbak Festival's music program in London, showcasing Arab contemporary artists at the Barbican Center on July 1. Cairokee is an Egyptian rock band that voices the social and political concerns of the youth while Saleh is a Lebanese artist and songwriter who blends tarab, mawwal and dabke traditional styles of singing and music with modern musical techniques like alternative rock and jazz to embody beautiful musical patterns. Founded by the Mayor of London in 2011, the Shubbak Festival is the "largest biennial festival of contemporary Arab culture" in London, involving various forms of art, including "visual arts, film, music, theatre, dance, literature and debate." It allows people to explore the various artistic creations of the contemporary Arab art scene. Earlier in the year Saleh had presented her photography, printmaking, ceramics, drawing and other creative industry-related works in an exhibition at her alma mater.

Less than two weeks after being showcased at LAU's inaugural graduating class fashion show, which celebrated the university's 16 fashion graduating students, outfits made by designer **Nour Daher (B.A. '17)** were being modeled on a Milan catwalk. The collection earned her the Stone Special Prize by Origin Passion and Beliefs at the 24th edition of the International Lab of Mittelmoda—Fashion Award, a renowned international fashion competition for budding designers. Daher, whose trip was funded by LAU, was selected by a jury panel in Milan from a list of 23 finalists out of 4,000 applicants. Daher's winning outfits, which feature flowers and bold colors, were part of her graduate collection, named "Relics." Moved by the experience of model, photographer and war correspondent Lee Miller, who "transformed her life from being in front of camera to being behind the camera," Daher sought out old family photographs, stained letters, and enshrined memory boxes for inspiration.



Public Health at AUB and is currently a Doctorate in Business Administration (Healthcare) candidate for 2019 at the Jean Monnet University in Saint Etienne, France. Abdo Salam is engaged to chemistry graduate **Fatima Younes (B.S. '16)**, who is currently a medical student at the Lebanese University.

**Noor Hamze (B.A. '12)** is an applied behavior analysis therapist at AUBMC. Having completed a degree in psychology, Noor went on to obtain a M.S. in Clinical Psychology from Lebanon's Haigazian University.

Communication arts graduate **Nader Houella (M.B.A. '12, B.A. '08)** has been newly appointed as a senior communication officer for SETS International, a regional multidisciplinary engineering in Lebanon.

**Ranim Daw (B.S. '13)** is a research assistant at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office and Biology Department of AUB, where she is pursuing an M.S. in Biology. During Ranim's time at LAU, where she completed a degree in biology, she was a field researcher as part of the Harvard-LAU collaboration.

Business management graduate **Ibrahim Abi Saab (B.S. '14)** is the digital business development manager (Middle East & North Africa) for BBC News in Dubai. Before relocating to the UAE, Ibrahim worked with Media Watch in Lebanon.

**Dina Arakji (B.A. '14)** is a Syria campaign and research assistant at Crisis Action in Lebanon. Having completed a degree in political science and international affairs, Dina went on to obtain an M.A. in International Security (Defense and Security Economics and Middle East concentrations)

from Sciences Po Paris, where she held a research assistantship at the FNSP department d'economie. Dina has had two Op-Eds published in the Middle East Monitor.

**Ranim Bidawi (B.A. '14)** works as the assistant manager at Mark Hachem Gallery in Beirut. After completing her degree in fine arts, Ranim pursued an M.F.A. at Falmouth University in the U.K. During this time, she interned at Ocean Studios and Penlee House, as well as volunteering with organizations that help elderly people with dementia through art therapy. Ramin also worked as an assistant at the Purdy Hicks Gallery in London before returning to Lebanon in 2017.

**Moussa Chalah (M.D. '14)** is a clinical research fellow at Henri Mondor Hospital and Ph.D. candidate (pathophysiology and therapeutic interventions in multiple sclerosis) at University Paris Est. in Créteil,



# Staying connected

France, where he had completed his M.S. in Neurosciences. Moussa, who lives in Paris, lectures at numerous international neuroscience conferences, as well as being the author of more than 20 PubMed indexed publications on the use of noninvasive brain stimulation techniques in treating cognitive and affective symptoms in multiple sclerosis.

**Zahy el Kassis (B.S. '14)** just got promoted as account director for Gulf-LinkedIn Dubai, after having worked as a senior talent and brand consultant for the company in Dublin. The business economics graduate went to obtain a M.S. in Business Development at the Grenoble Graduate School of Business in France.

**Alissar Nasreddine (B.S. '14)** was working as a marketing and business development executive at Yields Training in Beirut before the company relocated to Saudi Arabia. Before relocating to Lebanon herself, Alissar worked at Meirc Training and Consulting in Dubai. The international business graduate lives in Beirut and has just gotten married. Mabrouk!

**Mohamad Sweidan (B.S. '14)** is the business development manager at King Beton in Lebanon, where he began his career as a business development officer. Having completed his degree in business information technology management, he went on to obtain an E.M.B.A. from Jean Monnet University in Saint-Etienne, France. He lives in Beirut with his wife of nine months, who is expecting their first child.

**Ghinwa Azzi (B.Arch. '15)** is working as an instructor and supervisor of ArD TechLab at AUB's Faculty of Engineering & Architecture in the Department of Architecture & Design. Ghinwa is also currently pursuing her M.B.A. at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik alongside a Graduate Diploma in Management at HEC Montréal.

**Walid Baroud (B.E. '15)** is an automotive solutions manager at FEV SA in Paris, where he previously held the position of project engineer. Having completed his degree in mechanical engineering, Walid went on to obtain a M.S. in Powertrain Engineering from IFP School (ENSPM) in Rueil-Malmaison, France.

**Rita Wilson Dib (M.D. '15)** is a post-doctoral research fellow at the University

of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, where she now lives.

Computer engineering graduate **Mohamad Haidar (B.E. '15)** is currently working as an R&D engineer at Nextthink located in Lausanne, Switzerland (nextthink.com). Two and a half years of hard work paid off in tons of experience and knowledge when Koemei, a bootstrapped startup he worked on, was acquired and until his next venture matures, Mohamad joined small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to learn their hacks and tips.

**Yousef Kandalaft (B.S. '15)** is currently perusing his master's in Computer Science at the Technical University of Munich (TUM), where he lives. Yousef had worked at Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited (DTTL) as an associate IT auditor and consultant in both the company's Damascus and Beirut offices straight after graduating with a degree in computer science.

**Ibrahim Katibah (M.D. '15)** recently took up residency as an internal medicine resident at the Roger Williams Medical Center in Rhode Island, U.S.

Political science and international affairs graduate **Vanessa Hajjar (B.A. '16)** is currently working as an assistant educational adviser at EducationUSA, an American State Department network with more than 400 offices in over 171 countries around the world promoting higher education to students wishing to study in the U.S.

Nutrition graduate **Sabina Issa (B.S. '16)** is currently an intern at Neevie Santé Diet Clinic and Catering.

Social work graduate **Sarah Kaddoura (B.A. '16)** has recently taken a new job as a sexuality hotline coordinator at the A Project in Beirut. Sarah was previously the bridge program assistant and grant officer at Unite Lebanon Youth Project and she had also worked as a research assistant with the NGO Shamaa. She was one of the recipients of a group project grant that launched a booklet documenting transgender lives in Lebanon called Takalami.

Having studied political science and international affairs as an undergraduate, **Dania Kawwam (M.A. '16, B.A. '96)** went on to obtain her postgraduate degree in

education. Dania lives in Lebanon, where is married and has three daughters: Sally, Celine and Cybelle.

Having graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering, **Hassan Makki (B.E. '16)** now works as a project coordinator at Otis Elevators in Lebanon.

Communication arts graduate **Mohamed Saad (B.A. '16)** has gone on to start his own company, ClockArt Production, in Beirut.

**Nicole Salloum (B.E. '16)** works as a management consultant at Capgemini Consulting, which specializes in advising and supporting enterprises in significant transformation, from innovative strategy to execution and with an unstinting focus on results. Having completed her degree in mechanical engineering, Nicole went on to obtain an M.S. in Strategic Management from HEC Paris.

**Amanda Shaalan (B.S. '16)** is currently undertaking an internship. After completing her degree in nutrition, Amanda went on to become a certified dietician.

Chemistry graduate **Yasmin Audi (B.S. '17)** now teaches science for grades 8 and 9 at Al Mawakeb School Barsha in Dubai.

**Hassan Chocor (B.S. '17)** is a product security specialist for Alfa Telecom in Lebanon. The computer science graduate has been placed on the Google Hall of Fame for discovering a security vulnerability in their play store payment and refund system. [www.bughunter.withgoogle.com/profile/037f0c95-712b-496a-8e71-2416973f5a91](http://www.bughunter.withgoogle.com/profile/037f0c95-712b-496a-8e71-2416973f5a91)

Having obtained his degree in industrial engineering, **Joseph Daccak (B.E. '17)** now works as a business analyst in management consulting for Management Solutions Experts (MSE) in Lebanon.

Business administration graduate **Samer Dayya (E.M.B.A. '17)** is a principal branch manager at BLOM Bank in Lebanon.

**Rami Rabeh (E.M.B.A. '17)** is a senior accountant at Clemenceau Medical Center in Beirut. Rami has just become a father. Mabrouk!



# LAU's new strategic plan promotes closer ties with community

By Naseem Ferdowsi

## Alumnus Joe Abi Ghosn's donation boosts engineering research



*"I am very proud to give back to a university that has provided me with so much culture and experience."*



Reaching out to alumni, friends and corporations for support is key to implement the university's strategic plan that aims to foster intellectual capital and strengthen research, be at the cutting-edge of innovation technologies and disseminate knowledge beyond our frontiers. "Such associations allow alumni to show appreciation to their alma mater and leave a lasting mark, while providing the university with the resources needed in its pursuit of academic excellence," says Nicole Barghoud, LAU director of development of what she calls "a win-win situation."

CEO of ENJM and 2001 graduate, Joe Abi Ghosn, who has pledged \$160,000 toward the naming of a facility — in this case the Edward Abi Ghosn Internal Combustion Engines Lab — is an prime example of such an association. Students and faculty of LAU's School of Engineering are now able to take their research one step further thanks to the new lab that bears the alumnus' father's name within the new Engineering Laboratories and Research Center on the university's Byblos campus.

"Joe has never forgotten what LAU meant to him," said President Joseph G. Jabbra in his speech at the ceremony. "No matter the situation and whenever we need him, he has been very generous toward our causes and various special initiatives. We are so grateful."

And signifying his commitment to his alma mater, Abi Ghosn stressed, "I am very proud to give back to a university that has provided me with so much culture and experience."

Students and faculty are already making use of the Edward Abi Ghosn Internal Combustion Engines Lab in courses such as internal combustion engines and power trains, as well as courses dealing with the environmental impact of emissions. The high-tech lab includes gasoline and diesel engines that are equipped with complex and efficient instrumentation, allowing students to measure important performance parameters that are useful in engine design and development. Such parameters include power, torque, speed and fuel consumption.

"The lab provides a teaching and learning environment that helps faculty impart knowledge to students in a practical way, thus enhancing the theory taught in various courses," explains George E. Nasr, dean of the School of Engineering. "Students are very much enjoying this practical aspect since, to most of them, it constitutes their very first experience with internal combustion engines."

Abi Ghosn has had a strong affinity to LAU since graduating, and often links the success of his companies to his time spent at the university. This has encouraged him to be an active alumnus, as well as a donor to the institution since 2014.

"Joe is an alumnus who really stands out," points out Abdallah Al Khal, assistant vice president for Alumni Relations. "I was very proud to see that one of our very own is supporting his alma mater, as this shows trust in the university and encourages other alumni to follow suit."



# WHY I GIVE BACK

## **Robert Shafie** (M.B.A. '84)



The holder of a Ph.D. in cognitive psychology, Robert Shafie is a member of American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH), the New England Society of Clinical Hypnosis (NESCH) and the International Honor Society in Psychology (PSI CHI) and currently works as a cognitive research analyst for Dr. Brown & Associates Group of Boston, Massachusetts. Shafie is also the president of LAU's New England alumni chapter.

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

As alumni, we had the privilege of receiving an education and building up families, something that would not have been possible without the generosity of former students and other altruistic donors. In gratitude and appreciation to those who made us realize a better and brighter future for ourselves, our role now is to give back from the heart. The happiest people are those who give without expecting anything in return.

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

I strongly encourage all LAU students and alumni to remain loyal, devoted and consistent in developing the role of the LAU alumni.

### **Why is your involvement with the New England alumni chapter so important for you?**

LAU is a continuous relationship and commitment. Graduating from LAU is not the end of this relationship. Instead, your graduation is another stage in your life and your role is to expand this relationship beyond the scope of your individual commitment to a wider family commitment with existing and new alumni. Our New England chapter is a healthy example that reflects the role and the purpose of LAU: One cause, one goal and one family.

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

Behind every success, there is a story and LAU's President Joseph G. Jabbra is an excellent example of a bright and shining icon, who brings hope and success to this institution. Every time I visit my alma mater, I see a substantial improvement in both academic quality and building structures. The university is steadily achieving its academic goal and its success is reflected in the expansion of its Beirut and Byblos campuses, and New York Headquarters and Academic Center.

In my opinion, because Lebanon is going through critical challenges in terms of its current financial, social and demographic issues, LAU could play an essential role by employing its academic potentials and expertise to create an academic emergency team to tackle these issues.

# CREATING A LASTING LEGACY



## ✧ TALAL SHAIR ✧

*The Shair family has been a longtime friend and supporter of LAU. Their commitment to the university has spanned an incredible 31 years, beginning with the generosity of the late Kamal Shair, co-founder of the international project design, management and supervision consultancy Dar al-Handasah.*

*Kamal's son, Talal Shair, shares his father's devotion to the community and the belief that education has the power to transform a person's life. Consequently, the younger Shair is giving back in big ways both personally and through Dar al-Handasah, of which he is the chairman and CEO. Whether through generous financial gifts or offering expertise and knowledge, he is giving back more than his fair share.*

*Indeed, giving back is ingrained both in the Shair family values and in Dar al-Handasah, which as a company has been active in corporate social responsibility for years, supporting organizations in the fields of education, culture, society, health, and the environment.*

*Serving on LAU's Board of International Advisors, both Talal and his wife Maha are extraordinary supporters of LAU, helping to create scholarships through their annual commitment towards the Gala Dinner Endowed Scholarship Fund benefiting needy and deserving students, as well as through many additional gifts throughout the years.*



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For more information, please contact:

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

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





#### BEIRUT CAMPUS

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

#### BYBLOS CAMPUS

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

#### NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS & ACADEMIC CENTER

211 East, 46<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
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