Sharjah Voluntary Award 2010 – AUS’s exemplary community work accomplishment

A US student volunteers gathered at the Student Center on December 26 to celebrate receiving the prestigious Sharjah Voluntary Award 2010. The event was attended by Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Salem Yousef Al Qaseer, Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs; Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdullah Al Thani, Director of the Office of His Highness the AUS President; Munketh Taha, Director of Student Development and Organizations; Aisha Ali, Manager of Community Services; Yousef Al Jaberi, Student Council President; and a large number of staff and students.

At a special ceremony held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Ruler of Sharjah and Supreme Council Member, on December 16, Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs accepted this award from His Excellency Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Bin Sultan Al Qassimi, Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Sharjah.

AUS won this award in the educational institutions category of the Eighth Local and Fourth Arab Voluntary Awards for its exemplary voluntary work in the region. To apply for the award, the OSA’s Community Services Division submitted a portfolio of its community service work, projects, campaigns and initiatives. This portfolio was reviewed by the awards committee along with those of 15 other educational institutions.

“I am so grateful that our student volunteers’ efforts have been recognized on a regional level. This

UAE National Day – A cultural tribute for the AUS community

The UAE National Day is celebrated on the AUS campus every year along with the celebrations across all seven emirates. For this year’s celebration, the Emirati Cultural Club brought UAE culture and traditions to the campus community through UAE National Day celebrations held on two consecutive days.

On November 28, the celebration began with a parade featuring four horses carrying the UAE flag and a procession of police vehicles. The Heritage Village was then opened in a ceremony attended by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalid Bin Shakhboot Al Nahyan; Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdullah Al Thani, Director of the Office of the AUS President; Dr. Moza

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VCSA Column
Student Retreats – A Student Affairs informal initiative

We initiated off-campus student retreats this semester for Community Services volunteers, sports teams and our staff to appreciate student efforts in engaging in extracurricular activities, to build interpersonal relationships with students as well as with staff, and for me to interact with both in an informal setting. The retreats, filled with fun and entertaining activities, were a way to unwind beyond the borders of campus.

Bab Al Shams in Dubai and the Banyan Tree in Ras Al Khaimah are heritage locations that students and staff appreciated to the core. Students got to know their peers from different colleges and schools, and were able to socialize and bond with staff from the Office of Student Affairs as well as others. These were fulfilling learning experiences for all of us, as we all hail from different nations but are knit by a common thread of extracurricular engagement that brings us together.

We continued raising the bar for our active students’ development by engaging them in more stimulating and challenging extracurricular projects. I am glad that our energetic and high caliber students have proved their potential in setting exemplary records. Our Sharjah Voluntary Award for Excellence in Community Service is the fruit of our students’ humanitarian work and their selfless service to society. Our student teams’ winning performances on and off campus in sporting events are very apparent every semester, such as our cricket team’s victory in bringing home the Skyline Cup.

Informal retreats are in recognition of the determination, dedication, passion, energy, involvement and time our students commit to extracurricular activities while excelling in academic achievement. This combination can definitely shape them into future leaders, as is the goal of Student Affairs.

I hope to increase the number of such retreats, as such informal milieux build relationships, are enjoyable, and implant a lasting impression of the AUS experience for both students and staff.

Student Council hosts desert safari

In collaboration with the Office of Student Affairs’ (OSA) Student Activities Office, the Student Council at AUS organized a desert safari in the Hatta desert on November 5. More than 200 students joined the trip.

The students enjoyed dune bashing in off-road vehicles, henna tattooing, photo shoots, games, and music with a live DJ, followed by a barbecue dinner at the camp. They also visited Nazwa, a popular picnic spot surrounded by hills and mountains and renowned for its scenic beauty.

The students were thankful for the relaxing experience and for the opportunity to spend time with their friends and classmates in an off-campus setting. The OSA is looking forward to organizing more trips to keep student life enjoyable and engaging.
AUS holds successful Awareness Day

This year’s Community Services Awareness Day saw the participation of more than 20 governmental and private organizations in raising awareness of health, environmental, social and traffic issues. This is one of the Office of Student Affairs’ (OSA) most popular events as it reaches out to the campus community as well as the general public. This year’s Awareness Day saw an increase in visitors from Sharjah, Dubai and Ajman, especially from private schools.

Thirty student volunteers helped with ushering and performed various tasks for the participating organizations, which conducted presentations and distributed informative material. Health organizations conducted individual medical exams and fitness tests, ranging from dental checkups to blood sugar tests. Many visitors donated blood through a blood donation campaign held by Al Wasl Hospital, Dubai.

“Events such as these remind our students and other members of our community to look after their health and wellbeing. I am very pleased to see such events take place on campus, as the large number of people in attendance today reflects the level of interest of our campus community toward matters of health, safety and wellness,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Participating organizations were Health Promotion, Friends of Cancer Patients, Friends of Arthritis Patients, Friends of Diabetes Patients, all of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, Sharjah; Sharjah Police; Sharjah Civil Defense; Al Qassimi Hospital, Sharjah; Sharjah Social Empowerment Foundation; Department of Interpretation and Education, Sharjah Museums Department; Environment and Protected Areas Authority, Sharjah; Sharjah Medical District (Preventive Medicine); Maternal and Child Healthcare Center, Sharjah; Emirates Volunteers Association, Sharjah; College of Dentistry, University of Sharjah; Takatof; Human Appeal International, Ajman; Department of Health and Medical Services, Dubai (Blood Donation Center); Dubai Foundation for Women and Children; Safe and Sound, Dubai; and the AUS Office of Sustainability.
Students share their talents on stage

Twenty eight students from AUS featured in the AUS Got Talent contest on January 10 and 12. The students were selected from the 75 students auditioned prior to the competition. The Power Hit Radio Club (PHR), in collaboration with Office of Student Affairs’ Student Activities Office, organized this event. More than 1,300 AUS community members attended the preliminary and final rounds of the talent show, which were held on the Main Plaza.

During the preliminary round, contestants demonstrated a wide variety of entertaining performances including beat-boxing, break-dancing, and classical as well as modern singing. Serving as judges, professional disc jockeys DJ Bliss and DJ Sal selected 10 contestants for the final round.

Rapper Amr Khalifa won first prize and a recording deal with Sal Productions to produce a track. Sara Hasanin sang her own original song and won second place. Freestyle break dancers Bassim Iskander and Ibrahim Qasim tied in third place. Khadija Mahmoud won PHR’s Facebook promotion, which was a raffle draw for all those who “liked” PHR’s Facebook status update. The winners received valuable prizes such as sound systems and music players. Additionally, DJ Bliss will select one of the finalists to be featured in his Dubai One TV show 20 Something.

“The AUS Got Talent contest is a much awaited annual event for musical enthusiasts and talented students. Besides providing entertainment, it provides a platform for our students to display their talents and perform before a large audience,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Student volunteers help at animal shelter

AUS student volunteers helped run the Sharjah Cats and Dogs Shelter (SCADS) Open Day held at SCAD’s headquarters on November 5. The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) Community Services Division organized the group of 25 students for the Animal Welfare Program. The student volunteers provided general assistance to the event organizers. Volunteers stated that they learned about animal welfare and the promotion of the rights of animals. OSA’s Animal Welfare Program aims to facilitate humane treatment and increased protection of animals in the UAE.
AUS Debate Club emerged winners in the Seventh AUS Intercollegiate Debating Championship against a close final with BITS Pilani Dubai.

The debate topic of the final, “This house believes that the United Nations should take the lead in fighting the war on terror,” gave both teams equal opportunity to explain and defend their point of view, with the AUS team supporting the statement while the BITS Pilani team strongly opposed it. Both the teams showed skilled and balanced participants able to discuss in both a sharp and persuasive manner.

The AUS team, comprising of Akshay Kothari, Mohammed Hingora, Mustafa Hingora and Mohammed Raza, secured the top honors against Nihar Jain, Ashfaq Hazari, Rohitash Gupta and Mukund Vasudev of BITS Pilani in the championship final held at AUS on December 23.

The winner of the Best Speaker of the final and the semi-final was Mohammed Hingora from the AUS team who, along with Thana Ansari of the Gulf Medical University (GMU) team, secured the Overall Best Speaker award. Mahendra Kishore of the University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD) was declared the Best Speaker of Knock-Outs, while Ashfaq Hazari from BITS Pilani was awarded the Best Speaker of Quarter-Finals. As a result, AUS regained the winner’s title. They had previously won the championship for four consecutive years from 2004–2007.

This year’s event constituted 12 universities, 18 teams and 74 participants from across the UAE competing for the title of Debating Champions. Moreover, there were three days of intense debates over seven topics covering environmental, social and political problems facing the world today. The event officially began on December 17, beginning with knock-out rounds followed with the quarter and semi-finals spread over the next two days.

The debates are structured so that three speakers and a resource person form a team and contest with a similar team on the other side. Each speaker had to deliver a speech of 6.5 to 8 minutes on topics provided in advance. The event was judged by certified Toastmasters, judges and advisors of participating universities.

“I commend our students for the wonderful job they have done in organizing this event. They have worked hard for the last two months to make this event successful. I also congratulate them for regaining the winner’s title,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. “I appreciate and recognize the efforts of the faculty coaches Dr. Laila Noman and Dr. Don Love as well as club advisor Ali Khawaja for their guidance and support to the students,” she added.

This championship is one of the most prestigious debating competitions held in the UAE and attracts a diverse group of participants. Debating events open a new world of intellectual discourse supported by facts and figures, as well as hone the individual student’s communication and conflict resolution skills. Such events further enhance the student’s ability to develop independent thought and to voice convictions intelligently and concisely, in addition to building their leadership qualities.

The event was organized by the AUS Debate Club, the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Activities Division and the Student Council.
Realms literary magazine launches 10th issue

The 10th issue of the student-run literary magazine Realms was launched on December 22 at a special ceremony held at AUS. The launch was attended by Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Munketh Taha, Director of Student Development and Organizations; Mr. Ezz Taha, Manager of Student Activities; and Dr. Nicholas Karavatos, Faculty Advisor to the Realms Club; along with students, faculty and staff members. The launch concluded with copies of Realms being handed out, enabling members of the AUS community to sample some of the students’ best writings.

Selecting the finest of the submitted poems and short stories for publication was not an easy task, the team in charge of managing Realms reported, with so much dynamic and original content being submitted by the 5,000-strong student body. “Our AUS students are highly talented. Realms sets a premise for our students to reveal their language, storywriting and creative abilities to the public. I am amazed at the emotions that are breaking free and the imagination that comes out of our students in the form of writing in Realms,” said Dr. Al Shehhi.

AUS students raise funds for Pakistan flood victims

More than 30 AUS students volunteered with the university’s Office of Student Affairs (OSA) to raise funds to support the victims of the recent flooding in Pakistan. In partnership with Sharjah Charity International (SCI), the OSA’s Community Services Division launched the fundraising campaign during the month of October. A grand total of Dhs. 17,305 was raised from donations during the campaign.

In a special donation handover ceremony, Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor; Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulla Al-Thani, Director General of the Office of the AUS President; Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Salem Al Qaseer, Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs; senior OSA officials and student volunteers presented the accumulated donation to Mohammed Hussein Al Sayed of SCI, responsible for arranging to deliver the donation to the flood victims.

Dr. Al Shehhi thanked the student volunteers for their efforts and contributions to support the cause.
MCM Club holds art exhibition

The Mass Communication Club (MCM) in collaboration with the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Activities Office held a successful art exhibition at the university’s Student Center on January 4. AUS students from various schools and colleges displayed their work in the form of paintings, photographs and posters.

The exhibition’s theme was inspired by MCM Club president Alanoud Ali, who said, “Expressions are a major part of communication; this exhibition is a display of the creativity of AUS students.” Apart from being a showcase of art, the exhibition also served as a competition judged by Ana Gavassa, Mass Communication Instructor, and Dr. Martin Giesen, Professor of Fine Arts.

The opening ceremony was attended by Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Munketh Taha, Director of Student Development and Organizations; Ezz Taha, Manager of Student Activities; and club members. “I feel very proud. This exhibition is a great reflection of the potential and talent of our students,” said Dr. Al Shehhi.

OSA appreciates student volunteers

The Office of Student Affairs’ (OSA) Community Services Division organized a leisure retreat on January 6, in appreciation of the effort and hard work of student volunteers during the fall semester.

Thirty two student volunteers participated in the retreat held at the Bab Al Shams Desert Resort, Dubai. The students took part in various activities including camel and horse rides, a tour of the heritage museum, folk dancing and dinner.

The event was attended by Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Munketh Taha, Director of Student Development and Organizations; Aisha Ali, Manager of Community Services; and other OSA staff.

Addressing the students at the retreat, Dr. Al Shehhi said, “This retreat is in recognition of your achievements, and active participation in voluntary and community services.”
OSA conducts vocational skills training for student employees

The Office of Student Affairs’ (OSA) Student Employment Office (SEO) conducted its first Vocational Skills Training Program for the academic year on November 7. The program, entitled “Communication Skills,” was led by Dr. Mahboub Hashem, AUS Department of Mass Communication. The program was attended by more than 60 student employees.

Dr. Hashem’s training defined communication, discussed its most important elements and principles and explained key skills for optimum communication. He noted that although people communicate throughout their lives, communication can be improved through study and practice that will help individuals succeed in school, work and home, as well as in personal and professional relationships.

The event was attended by Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Munketh Taha, Director of Student Development and Organizations; and other OSA officials. Dr. Al Shehhi thanked the students for showing interest in the learning opportunity and attending the training session. She expressed her appreciation to Dr. Hashem for continuously partnering with the OSA in many of its voluntary projects and for sharing his time and expertise with the students.

The training was part of a series of training sessions under the Vocational Skills Training Program launched in the previous academic year to help students improve their skills and gain a deeper understanding toward their responsibilities while employed.

The students were very appreciative of the relevance and insight of the program, and in response, the SEO has scheduled three more training sessions for the academic year.

AUS student volunteers reach out to the needy

Supporting a worthy cause, AUS’s Community Services Division of the Office of Student Affairs launched the “Food for the Needy” campaign, 25 student volunteers ran a weeklong campus-wide fundraising campaign that generated a generous volume of cash donations from AUS community members.

A truck load of groceries and other food items were purchased from the donations, and distributed to 470 families under the care of the Al Ihsan Charity Center. Student volunteers, along with the staff and representatives from the charity center, distributed the food on December 28 in the center’s compound in Ajman.

“This campaign is part of the many projects that the Office of Student Affairs is organizing to promote productive relations with the external community. We are engaging students in social work so they realize the true value of helping others and are empathetic towards societal needs. I appreciate the AUS community for supporting this campaign generously,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

The student volunteers are part of the Community Services Division’s group Volunteers in Action for the UAE, whose activities are specifically aimed to benefit the needy under the care of UAE charities.
AUS students secure top three diplomacy awards during BUMUN 2010

AUS students Hossam Shoman, Mohammad Hukan and Mohamed Metwally won the Diplomacy Awards for Outstanding Performance in the sixth annual Bahrain Universities Model United Nations (BUMUN) held in Bahrain December 4–5.

The seven outstanding students who represented AUS at BUMUN 2010 were Quratulain Shahzad, Moutaz Faisal, Mohammad Hukan, Budour Al Fahim, Hossam Shoman, Mohamed Metwally and Sabika Zehra. Of the seven, four students won honors. Mohamed Metwally won the Diplomacy Award for the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Mohammed Hukan and Hossam Shoman were granted the Diplomacy Award for General Assembly, and Sabika Zehra received an Honorary Participation Award for the Security Council. The AUS team members represented the UAE, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Tanzania.

“Our students did exceptionally well during BUMUN 2010. Their dedication and commitment is a result of their outstanding performance. The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) will continue to engage students in such stimulating events and allow them opportunities for development and participation to enhance their overall educational experience,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

“BUMUN was a phenomenal experience. It gave us an opportunity to meet some of the greatest thinkers from our generation, and I am proud to have won the diplomacy award for ECOSOC. To be appointed as the chair of the ECOSOC committee for the next BUMUN in 2011 proves what AUS students are made of,” asserted Mohamed Metwally, an electrical engineering major.

“It was an amazing new experience. I learned a lot from it and met a lot of different students from various universities. I improved my communication skills and I do advise any student who gets an opportunity to be part of this experience to do so without hesitation,” said Mohammad Hukan, another student majoring in electrical engineering.

“I would like to thank AUS for giving me this wonderful opportunity. It was a brilliant learning experience. Representing AUS in BUMUN was a matter of great honor. It was quite a challenge to live up to AUS’s reputation,” said Sabika Zehra, an international studies major.

The event was held under the patronage of His Excellency Mr. Hisham Mohammed Al Jowder, President of the General Organization for Youth and Sports. This is the third consecutive year that AUS has participated in the event.

The students’ participation in the event was organized by the OSA’s Student Leadership Program.
The Office of Student Affairs’ (OSA) Student Leadership Program organized its third training session this semester under the Student Training and Workshop Series. The Live Excited Achieve Potential (LEAP) Youth Leadership Workshop on November 27 was a full-day workshop conducted by General Electric’s Human Resources Manager. The workshop helped students learn ways to triumph over self-limiting beliefs. In addition, they discussed topics focusing on optimism and motivation, and vision for the future.

Participants were asked to think about what one wants from life and what can stop one from achieving this, how one can improve and achieve their goals, and what their plan is for the future. Students were asked to create a timeline charting past achievements and future goals.

“The Student Training and Workshop Series offers opportunities for students to get one-on-one training and professional guidance. We encourage more students to join the Student Leadership Program and take advantage of these opportunities brought to campus,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

“All the trainings I attended through the Student Training and Workshop Series have redefined the concept of personal development in me. Each one tackled a different aspect of what makes me tomorrow’s leader. They were very beneficial, and with every workshop we learned something new that helped in real life. The LEAP was a journey of self discovery; it was about learning new skills and how to unleash full leadership potential,” said Mohamed Metwally, a student participating in the Peer Leader program.

ATTENTION STUDENTS!

Are you interested in enhancing your leadership profile?
An opportunity of a lifetime awaits you...
Be part of the
First AUS Student Leadership Conference
Tuesday, April 26, 2011

We are recruiting for the organizing committee. Interested? Please e-mail a one-page summary of your campus activities and work experience to osasl@aus.edu. Or, visit the Student Leadership Program Office, Student Center A250, First Floor.
Community Services strengthens ties with Sharjah Social Empowerment Foundation

The Office of Student Affairs’ Community Services Division signed an agreement of mutual cooperation and understanding with the Sharjah Social Empowerment Foundation (SSEF), one of its main partners, strengthening the effort to create a productive relationship. SSEF is a major social services provider in Sharjah that specializes in empowering orphaned youth and adults to become more active and productive members of the community.

The agreement was signed at AUS by Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS, and Hissa Ahmed, Media Officer of SSEF. The signing ceremony was attended by Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Salem Al Qaseer, Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs; Munira Omar, Associate Director, SSEF; and Nawal Yassir, Manager of Social Research, SSEF.

The agreement strengthens an already flourishing relationship between AUS and SSEF. Community Services volunteers have already gained experience working on an SSEF orphan’s house for the Hand in Hand Renovating an Orphan’s Home project. In addition, AUS awarded an orphaned youth from SSEF with a Community Services Charity Scholarship for his excellent academic achievement in secondary school.

Dr. Al Shehhi said this agreement came as part of AUS’s belief in the importance of implementing joint projects with SSEF and the Supreme Council for Family Affairs. She pointed to the many projects already implemented with SSEF, stressing the importance of helping orphaned students pursue higher education and of AUS students participating in social work.

is well-deserved acknowledgement for them indeed,” said Dr. Al Shehhi. “I commend the Community Services Division for keeping up with the university’s strategic aim of promoting and maintaining productive relations with society at large.”

Dana El-Assi, a senior student majoring in architecture, said that she had been involved with the Community Service Division for four years. “At the beginning, our activities were restricted to on-campus events but over the years, our work has expanded to include projects and activities beyond our campus. This celebration appreciates and recognizes our efforts,” she said.
The 10th FINA World Swimming Championships organizers praised 37 students from AUS for their valuable contribution in the international event. “We truly appreciate the volunteers’ contributions; it is because of their support that the event proved successful. The UAE has shown the world that it is capable of organizing events of this magnitude. We thank AUS for providing a group of highly talented students to support us, and we look forward to working with them in future,” said Dr. Obaid Al Shamsi, FINA 2010 Championship Director. Over 1,000 athletes from 120 countries competed in the four-day event held December 15−19 in Dubai.

AUS students served as volunteer organizers and were the biggest group of volunteers from a single institution. Around 450 volunteers from across the UAE supported the event. The volunteers worked closely with the local organizing committee and were assigned duties in media operations, hospitality, spectator services, and event assistance. “FINA 2010 was one of the most wonderful volunteering opportunities I have ever experienced. We did not only participate as individual volunteers but as one great team that represented AUS,” said Hossam Shoman, a student volunteer from the hospitality team.

Mohamed Metwally, a student volunteer from the media operations team, added: “FINA’s collaboration with the UAE to bring forth the FINA World Championships was remarkable. The intensive preparations and the investments in time, money and effort were nothing short of wondrous. I personally have never witnessed an event of this magnitude and diversity.”

A special recognition ceremony for volunteers was held at in Dubai on December 21. Three AUS students received special awards for their outstanding performance: Ahmed Tarek Elsayed for the most humorous volunteer, Salwa Al Tajjar for the most flexible volunteer and Hakam Marwan Kashmouleh for the most passionate volunteer. Other volunteers also received certificates, medals and gifts as tokens of appreciation from the organizers.

“As the AUS Office of Student Affairs (OSA) moves toward expanding volunteer opportunities at the international level, our students’ work at the FINA championships was a unique opportunity for them to gain valuable experience about the diversity and complexity of international events. I feel proud that our students’ achievements were recognized,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

The students’ participation in the event was organized by the OSA Community Services Division.
Ten students completed training in peer mediation conducted by the Judicial Affairs Office of the university’s Office of Student Affairs (OSA). Students Ewan Abbasi, Sara Ahmad, Samar Al Araj, Yousef Chehade, Rym Atbi, Noira Khan, Nooria Azizi, Noor Farooqi, Zulaikhatu Usman and Mustafa Harbaji were presented with certificates of completion by Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs in a special ceremony held January 5 at the Student Center.

The Peer Mediation training program was spread over a period of three weeks in October 2010. Waseem Libzo, Mediation Coordinator of Judicial Affairs, conducted the training sessions, which helped students learn what a conflict situation is and what the roots and outcomes are. They also learned the benefits of mediation, the responsibilities of a peer mediation coordinator and the steps of conducting peer mediation. Students were evaluated at the end of the program, and are now active on the Peer Mediation Forum. Peer Mediation Forum is involved in generating a mission, vision and goals for the forum and also engaged in preparing a constitution for our Student Peer Coordinators trained in Mediation.

“Peer mediation is one of many unique initiatives that the OSA has introduced,” said Dr. Al Shehhi. “We are the first university in the region to offer peer mediation training for students. I commend the work of the Judicial Affairs team for making this program possible.”

“I appreciate Dr. Moza Al Shehhi and the Judicial Affairs team for this unforgettable experience. I feel I’ve achieved so much,” said Rym Atbi. “I want to call my parents and tell them of my accomplishment. I’m so happy,” added Ewan Abbasi.

The ceremony was attended by Munketh Taha, the Director of the Student Development and Organizations Department; Haifa Ismail, Director of the Student Leadership Program; Juliet Coutinho, Judicial Affairs Manager; and many OSA staff members.
Graduating students honored by Residential Halls

In honor of graduating AUS students residing in the university’s residential halls, the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) held farewell events in the women’s and men’s residential halls on December 21 and 28, respectively.

Over 150 students celebrated the farewell of 70 graduating women at the GH Women’s Residential Hall, and over 200 students celebrated the farewell for 90 graduating men in the CD Men’s Residential Hall. Activities at the events included speeches from student resident assistants, musical performances, cultural dances, karaoke, stand-up comedy, games and dinner.

“We organize these events to honor our students who have considered AUS as their home away from home. It is our aim to provide them with memorable experiences that they will cherish throughout their lives,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. “These events are also held in support of AUS’s initiative of developing a physical and social environment that enhances the quality of campus life and encourages student involvement,” she added.

The events were collaboratively organized by the OSA’s Student Residential Life Department and the student-run Student Residential Life Association.

Cricketers retain Skyline Cup with convincing win

AUS beat Skyline University College (SUC) by five wickets in the final of the 12th Skyline Cup at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium on December 8. AUS cricketers, also holders of the cup in 2009, exhibited a splendid performance with the bat and ball throughout the tournament. Making their way to the semifinals, they out-played Szabist University Dubai, Skyline University College (SUC) and MAHE Manipal University Dubai.

In the semifinals, the AUS team neutralized BITS Pilani’s attack with accurate bowling by Shehzada Harris Attique, Fahad Tariq, Sayed Jaffer Al Naqvi, Jagraj Singh andSohaib Ali Khan, reaching the finals to face SUC in the Sharjah stadium.

In an exciting final match, AUS elected to bat first, and SUC scored 136 runs in the allotted 20 overs. AUS cricketers chased the target in 18.3 overs at a loss of five wickets only. Fahad Tariq of AUS scored 81 runs in the final match, securing the Man of the Match and Man of the Series titles. Shehzada Harris Attique of AUS was declared the Best Batsman of the tournament.
The Office of Student Affairs’ (OSA) Student Residential Life Department launched the Similar Interest Groups program as part of its continued efforts to improve residential life for students at AUS. This program is aimed at encouraging students with common interests, hobbies, educational goals and sports interests to interact and spend their leisure time in a productive manner. Through this program, Residential Life hopes to ease the transitional period of new residents and provide them with a platform to connect with their peers.

“This program provides meaningful engagement to our students and adds to the variety of learning-based activities we offer our students living in the residential halls,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

In two events held in December, 30 students in the women’s CD residential hall have shown common interests in poetry, East Asian drama, sketching and book reading while 40 students in the men’s CD residential halls spoke about their interest in world architecture and British football clubs.

Student employees working as Resident Assistants and Desk Attendants in the Residential Halls expressed their appreciation to the OSA for launching new activities that helped them improve their communication and leadership skills.
**Echoes** reflects student opinions about the services offered by the Office of Student Affairs. The section provides an opportunity for students to express their views and experiences with student extracurricular activities.

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**Mohammad Hukan**  
Junior  
Electrical Engineering  
AUS delegate to the BUMUN 2010 conference

My experience in BUMUN 2010 was one of my best experiences with the leadership program. I spent three amazing days improving my skills, especially in debating, and meeting new students from different universities and countries, and learning about the protocols and procedures of the United Nations. It was a great opportunity for me to represent AUS and the UAE.

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**Yoossuf Al-Khanchi**  
Senior  
Civil Engineering  
President of AUS Games Club

It’s true that AUS provides us with the best educational facilities. However the picture isn’t complete without the recreational activities that the Student Activities Office (SAO) hosts. In general, the SAO works hard to provide AUS students on campus with the best events. Yet the most interesting thing about those events is that they are new and not repetitive, presenting a wide variety of different activities to serve everyone’s interest. Personally, as the Games Club president, whenever a new event was to be prepared, SAO was extremely helpful and understanding, yet encouraging and demanding to make sure that every event is different, innovative and well organized.

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**Samer Yahya Baseet**  
Senior  
Electrical Engineering  
Men’s Swimming Team Member

The Student Athletics and Recreation Department did a wonderful job of organizing the AUS Men’s Intercollegiate Swimming Competitions on Dec. 28 and AUS swimmers rose to the occasion and won the championship. This event helped the experienced swimmers as well as the budding swimmers to enhance their competition skills. We are looking forward to more competitions of this nature.

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**Budour Al Fahim**  
Junior  
Finance  
AUS delegate to the BUMUN 2010 conference

BUMUN was unlike anything I ever expected. Even though debating against other representatives of different countries was challenging, the taste of victory at the end was oh-so-sweet! And as a result, this experience has left me anticipating more.

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**Yoossuf Al-Khanchi**  
Senior  
Civil Engineering  
President of AUS Games Club

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**Hossam Shoman**  
Junior  
Electrical Engineering and Mathematics  
AUS delegate to the BUMUN 2010 conference

BUMUN 2010 was an amazing conference! It was where students meet up together, bridge their ideas, express their skills, and collaborate with each other to solve some of the basic issues holding our globe back. The students I saw are people who are ready to work and implement a change to assure that peace spreads in our community and between countries. We discussed the millennium development goals, climate change and the presence of the Taliban in Pakistan. Those three topics widened my view in the field of politics and improved my debating and public speaking skills. Taking the Diplomacy Award in the General Assembly council, made me, my parents and AUS proud of such an achievement. I was also assigned as the chair of the General Assembly of the next BUMUN in 2011, which is making me look more into politics and to keep updated with the latest news. I recommend all ambitious students to apply, because through unity we can achieve peace and harmony.
We began the 12th Skyline Cup as the defending champions and the favorites to win the trophy. Our preparation for the tournament was very good as we had regular practices. During the tournament we came across many strong teams, but ultimately we were able to come through and win the tournament due to our team spirit and unity. We were led well by our captain, Fahad Tariq, and are thankful to Coach VC James for offering great support.

Pramod Rasitha
Senior
Electrical Engineering
Cricket Team Member

Since joining the leadership program I feel I have truly become a part of the AUS community. It’s not only helped me improve my leadership skills but I feel that I’m more socially active. Through this program I’ve met some great people and was fortunate enough to be selected for the Peer Leadership Program as well as the BUMUN conference this semester. Both have been exceptional opportunities that enriched my student life.

I was able to meet several new freshmen through the Peer Leaders Program and this allowed me to help them. Being selected for BUMUN was the highlight of the semester for me because I was able to represent my university abroad. Overall, it’s been a fulfilling experience and I’d recommend all students to take advantage of this great program.

Quratulain Ahmad Shahzad
Senior
Environmental Science

The AUS Men’s Intercollegiate Swimming Competition was very successful and I’m happy that AUS won it comfortably. Also I’m delighted to have won three gold medals. These competitions motivate swimmers.

Tareef Al Bassam
Freshman
Finance
Men’s Swimming Team Member

I’ve been an active member of the Student Leadership Program since August 2010, and it’s been, and still is, one of the most rewarding experiences I’ve had at AUS. It’s opened up new possibilities for me. One of these included being an integral part of the Peer Leaders Program. By taking on the role of a Peer Leader and mentoring new students, I’ve been able to gain not only new friends, but also a sense of satisfaction from the success and recognition this role and program achieved.

Fatima Tariq
Junior
Mass Communication

Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Salem Al Qaseer, Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs; Munketh Taha, Director of Student Development and Organizations; Ezz Taha, Manager of Student Activities; and the Student Activities team.

Highlights of the Heritage Village included an Emirati national band singing traditional songs, traditional jalsa seating, an antiques display, a photo gallery, and the serving of igemät and khebz rgag, which are popular traditional foods. The indoor activities began afterwards in the Main Auditorium, with songs from the AUS Arabic Choir and AUS Choral Ensemble, followed by a recital of poetry by AUS students. There was also a performance of yola, a traditional Emirati men’s dance, and a performance by children of the Al Andalus School. Additionally, the poetry night by the famous Emirati poet, Hamad Bin Ahmed Bin Sougat Al Falasy, highlighted the UAE’s love of poetry and proved popular with the audience.

On November 29, the second and last day of the celebrations, the Heritage Village continued with the national band, henna, the photo gallery and traditional food.

The event was successively collaborated by the Emirati Cultural Club board members and Office of Student Affairs’ Student Activities staff.
Fourteen student-athletes from AUS were awarded AUS Athletic Scholarships for Fall 2010 semester. Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS, along with Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, presented the winners with their awards at a ceremony held November 2 in the Chancellor’s office.

The scholarship recipients are Hamad Saleh Alkawari, Ivan Znamenskiy and Talal H. Al Marzoogi for men’s soccer; Yassin M. Fares and Khaled I. Ismail for men’s basketball; Adey A. El Amasy and Hisham Amin Alayan for men’s volleyball; Fahad Tariq Raja and Syed Jaffer Naqvi for cricket; Tarun Shyam for men’s badminton; Joudi E. Mahfouz and Julie Maha Doughan for women’s basketball; Eman Sami Saadieh for women’s volleyball; and Shaheen S. Khoja for women’s table tennis.

The scholarships consist of a 50 percent tuition remission and are granted on a renewable semester basis. The scholarship program aims to encourage, improve and develop sports at the university. It also aims to support the student-athletes who have limited financial resources and who demonstrate athletic excellence as well as outstanding sports qualities.

Student-athletes attend special assembly

The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) organized a special assembly for student-athletes to recognize their recent achievements and to build rapport between the sports teams. Hosted by the OSA’s Student Athletics and Recreation Department, the November 30 event drew over 200 student athletes from 22 sports teams.

The event was attended by Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Munketh Taha, Director of Student Development and Organizations; Dr. Mohamed Helal, Manager of Sports Programs; and sport coaches, trainers and staff.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Al Shehhi welcomed the athletes and staff and thanked them for attending the gathering. She expressed her gratitude to the athletes for their achievements and efforts in representing AUS in sporting competitions across the UAE.

“Improving the level of our performance is not an easy task; however, receiving support and appreciation of what we do motivates us to perform better in the tournaments to come. I would like to thank OSA for supporting AUS athletes and for the wonderful gathering,” said volleyball player Mohammad Abdulmoti.

M. Mansour Mbengue, a player on the basketball team, said, “Many thanks to OSA for providing us with excellent jerseys, track suits, shoes and sports bags. We are really pleased with this supportive gesture. The gathering was well organized and we all enjoyed it. Special thanks to Dr. Al Shehhi and Dr. Taha for showing their appreciation towards the athletes and for honoring us with their presence in this gathering.”

All of the sports teams were introduced, as well as the coaches and staff. After the meeting, sporting gear was distributed to the athletes and the event was concluded with a barbecue dinner.

After the success of the first gathering, the OSA plans to organize similar events every semester.
AUS student-athletes took the gold in the First AUS Men’s Intercollegiate Swimming Competition held on December 28. More than 50 swimmers from AUS, University of Sharjah, Sharjah Police Academy, Emirates Aviation College, Ajman University of Science and Technology, Preston University Ajman and MAHE Manipal University Dubai competed in the 50 and 100 meters freestyle, butterfly, breast stroke, back stroke and 4 x 50 meters medley relay in the one-day event organized by the Student Athletics and Recreation Department of the Office of Student Affairs (OSA).

AUS swimmers Tareef Al Bassam and Samer Baseet won the top spots with three gold medals each, while Loay Al Mujadidi, Shady Gomaa, Muhammad Yazan and Hossam Shoman won silver medals. In the keenly contested 4 x 50 meters medley relay, the AUS team claimed the gold, keeping the University of Sharjah team trailing by 15 meters. AUS was declared the winner with a total of 118 points and the University of Sharjah second with 81 points followed by the Sharjah Police Academy with 30 points to win third place. In the awards ceremony attended by university delegates, coaches, athletes and staff, the winners were presented with the trophies and medals by Munketh Taha, Director of Student Development and Organizations, and Dr. Mohamed Helal, Manager of Sports Programs.

“This year, many new talented athletes made it to the AUS varsity swimming team,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. “This competition is one of our many endeavors to strengthen our partnerships with higher educational institutions. I congratulate our athletes for this great achievement, and I commend the athletics staff for a well organized event,” she added.
OSA organizes leisure retreat for student-athletes

The Office of Student Affairs’ (OSA) Student Athletics and Recreation Department organized a leisure retreat on January 7 in appreciation of the achievement and effort of student athletes during the fall semester.

Sixty student athletes representing various sports teams joined the retreat held at the Banyan Tree Al Wadi Resort, Ras Al Khaimah. The activities included a nature walk, camel rides, bird watching, a falcon show, archery, horse riding and lunch.

The event was attended by Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Munketh Taha, Director of Student Development and Organizations; Dr. Mohamed Helal, Manager of Sports Programs; and other OSA staff.

The students expressed their appreciation to the OSA for organizing such an event. “In spite of my hectic academic schedule and projects to prepare, I made time for this retreat and I found it really fulfilling and well worth it,” said Tareef Tamim, a member of the AUS swimming team.

Addressing the students, Dr. Al Shehhi said, “This retreat is an opportunity for you to unwind and rid yourself of the stress of balancing your rigorous academic commitments with your extracurricular engagements.”