AUS holds Charity Mini-Marathon

Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Ruler of Sharjah and President of AUS, the Office of Student Affairs in association with the Sharjah Sports Council held the Charity Mini-Marathon November 26, 2011 with the theme “Volunteering: A Service of Giving.”

The charity run attracted more than 1,000 students from schools and universities, people with special needs, representatives from private and governmental organizations, and members of the AUS community. Participants in the race were categorized according to their age groups and ran the distance from three starting points, the longest of which is four kilometers starting from the University City gate leading to the finish line at the main AUS roundabout.

Over 90 AUS students volunteered in organizing the event and provided support to the participants. Funds

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AUS commemorates UAE’s 40th National Day

AUS commemorated the UAE’s 40th Anniversary Celebration with a two-day event held November 29 and 30, at the university’s Main Plaza.

The event featured a heritage village, a photo gallery, poetry, a national parade and a cultural band, all aimed to highlight the UAE’s rich culture.

Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, congratulated the leaders and the people of UAE on the occasion. She said, “This year’s UAE National Day celebration at AUS is distinctive, as many students have become increasingly supportive

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VCSA Column

Dr. Moza Al Shehhi
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

The economic slowdown has impacted student affairs services and program budgeting worldwide, but at AUS we still stand without letting these changes impact the effectiveness and efficiency of our services. How is this possible? Our student body's faith in us is our greatest motivation to do more, to give more and improve the standard of our services and programs to meet their demands. This is not an easy task but working closely with students has enabled me to read students’ minds and understand their needs. Communicating with students has brought me close to understanding the challenges they are facing today and work together towards win-win solutions. Is it possible always to know what is wanted? Not all students are expressive of their needs and many hesitate to come forward to raise their concerns. This communication gap is narrowed through open forums. An open interaction gives students the right to criticize our services and programs openly; debate; share their ideas to implement events and activities; suggest development of processes; introduce new ways of networking nationally and internationally; discuss ways of getting closer to community; creating awareness on varied Office of Student Affairs services and events among AUS community and beyond; and more. They understand our constraints and our capacities as the Office of Student Affairs.

Post-event feedback and internal surveys also express student satisfaction level with our services and programs. These observations, survey results, feedbacks, program and event success stories, student portfolios, student event participation rate are tools that assess student affairs services and programs effectiveness and efficiency. Our successes and failures help us build strategies, strengthen programs and improve services to see delighted students. More and more students join non-academic extracurricular activities as they are essential for their all-round development.

More than a decade has passed that our assessment mechanisms and outcome of assessment has been impacting our decision making on existing and introduction of new programs, events and services. Our strategic planning focuses on student development through non-academic student support services and we are proud that every activity of ours works towards student learning and fulfillment. Insha’Allah this progress will continue in the direction of a better tomorrow for student life at AUS.

AUS community members participate in Healthy Heart Campaign

Students, faculty and staff members from AUS turned out for the Healthy Heart Campaign held at the university's Student Center on October 19. Participants received registration cards and were given free checks to know their body mass index and the level of their blood pressure, cholesterol and sugar. Smokers received counseling on quitting smoking and their blood carbon monoxide levels were measured.

“The Office of Student Affairs ensures that health campaigns are organized throughout the year. It is our intent to promote health and wellness among our community members as well as educate our students on health risks brought about by smoking, sedentary lifestyle and wrong eating habits,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

The event was organized by the Office of Student Affairs’ Community Services Office in collaboration with the Preventive Medicine Department, Sharjah Medical District.
AUS student Club Fair highlights campus diversity

Students from AUS were introduced to a wide variety of student clubs and organizations on campus at the AUS Club Fair, held October 3-4, at the AUS Student Center. The event is organized by the Office of Student Affairs.

The fair was inaugurated by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al Thani, Director of the Office of the AUS President; Dr. Thomas Hochstettler, AUS Provost; and Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. It was also attended by Salem Al Qaseer, Vice Chancellor of Public Affairs; Dr. Cleve McDaniel, Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration; and other senior university officials. Luis A. Garcia, President of the AUS Student Council, was also present at the inauguration.

One of the university’s largest events, the fair showcases how student participation in one or more of the 57 student-led organizations on campus helps them pursue their personal interests outside the classroom as well as build leadership skills.

“We have more than 57 student clubs participating in this semester’s Club Fair. The expanded activity space of our Student Center has made it possible for us to organize the fair even better,” said Dr. Al Shehhi, also noting that this year the stalls are grouped by interest and region.

She said that Club Fair introduced students to the many ethnic and interest-oriented clubs prevalent on campus and gave them the opportunity to join these clubs. “The Office of Student Affairs departments are also represented in the fair to familiarize students with our services. I hope that our students take advantage of the extracurricular opportunities offered to them. This important event also serves as a platform for cultural clubs to increase their membership and to plan for the upcoming Global Day, the biggest event at AUS,” she added.

The Club Fair drew a large audience, comprising students, faculty and staff. Colorful stalls with national flags, posters, multimedia displays and music filled up the Student Center. Many students wore their national dresses and gave samples of their traditional foods, reflecting the vibrant, multicultural campus environment.

Some freshman students have described the clubs as having a lot of fun activities. Students get to meet and interact with other people from different majors. Clubs give students the opportunity to build on their skills, such as leadership.

The numerous clubs at the event included the Asian Cultural Club, Book Club, Math Club, Management Information System (MIS) Club, Finance Club, AUS Marketing Club and the Economics Club, among others. A new interest-oriented club called the Modern Visual Arts Club was also established this semester.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
More than 500 active students attend OSA student forums

More than 500 AUS students actively engaged in extracurricular activities attended a series of forums held by the Office of Student Affairs in October. The students represented various student groups on campus including the Student Council, leadership focus groups, interest-oriented and ethnics clubs, sports teams, peer mediation coordinators and community services volunteers.

The Office of Student Affairs panel was headed by Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs with her team of directors and managers from different Office of Student Affairs departments. Dr. Al Shehhi welcomed the students and introduced them to the Office of Student Affairs team. “It has become customary for us to start the academic year with a student dialogue. This productive channel of communication between the Office of Student Affairs and the students guides us in understanding our students’ evolving needs for activities and enables us to share our views regarding their concerns,” said Dr. Al Shehhi, addressing the students. “We consider the forums as one of our assessment tools in evaluating our programs and services,” she added.

Prior to the open discussion, the students arranged a brief presentation to showcase their experiences with the Office of Student Affairs’ activities and programs and how they have benefitted from them.

Following the presentations, the students highlighted concerns regarding student life including the new AUS website; sports facilities; health insurance for student-athletes; quality of sports equipment; event sponsorship; food court restaurants; Wi-Fi and computer labs in the residential halls; opening the library for 24 hours and the tuition fee increase, among others. The students also discussed their biggest event at AUS, Global Day and suggested ways on how they can help improve the designs of the pavilions.

The Office of Student Affairs organizes student forums at the beginning of each semester to discuss issues affecting student life and to further extracurricular activities in the university. The student forums were organized by the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Development and Organizations Department.
Hundreds of students attended a week of orientation activities and programs hosted by the Office of Student Affairs at AUS for new students registered for the academic year 2011–2012. The activities were organized to help incoming students transition into life at AUS, become aware of the extracurricular offerings and learn to participate and adapt to life at the university.

Organized activities included information sessions, fun and intellectually stimulating games, educational and entertaining trips, movies and a dinner reception. The week's events started on September 9, with the Office of Student Affairs welcoming new students and their parents and answering their queries. More than 800 orientation packets containing important information on AUS and its services were distributed to the students.

A group of returning students from various student clubs and organizations constituted the orientation team and worked with Office of Student Affairs staff in assisting the newcomers. The team comprised experienced and reputed students with good academic records who eased the transition of the newcomers into university life.

“This is the start of a new journey in your lives,” said Dr. Peter Heath, AUS Chancellor, in his address to the freshmen. “Always remember that we are one big family here at AUS and we are here to work with you and serve you. We have the best extracurricular activities in the region and I will be glad to see you making the best of these opportunities.”

Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, also addressed the students said, “Our doors are always open for you so please don’t hesitate to approach us; our team is always ready to help you. Student Affairs services and facilities are for you to make your student life at AUS purposeful and exciting. We wish you the best and will work in tandem with the Student Council, your voice at the university, to create a better student life.”

A freshman reception dinner was also organized and was attended by around 600 students in the presence of the Dr. Heath, Dr. Moza and other senior university officials where Office of Student Affairs administrators interacted with new students and familiarized them on the non-academic services offered by Student Affairs and wished them success during their time at AUS.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
of the celebrations. Students from different nationalities have jointly organized celebratory events with their fellow Emirati students to mark this special national occasion.”

Ali Al Sharqi, the president of the Emirati Club said, “We are very proud to celebrate our 40th National Day, and we are very thankful that many students from different nationalities, faculty and staff are celebrating our country's 40th anniversary with us. I hope this event will help all of us to celebrate our country and to learn and appreciate the Emirati culture and heritage.”

Prior to this main event, two preliminary events were held, namely the Spirit of the UAE and Charity Mini-Marathon Festival.

The Spirit of the UAE event was held November 23. In that inaugural event, students from different nationalities represented at AUS wore red, green, white and black shirts and arranged themselves to form the number 40 on the university’s Main Plaza.

That was followed by the Charity Mini-Marathon Festival on November 26, which attracted more than 1,000 students from schools and universities across the UAE, people with special needs, representatives from private and governmental organizations, and members of the AUS community. Participants ran three different distances between the Sharjah University City gate and the main AUS roundabout.

The UAE National Day is celebrated yearly at AUS. This year’s event was also attended by AUS Chancellor Peter Heath; Salem Al Qaseer, Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs; as well as faculty; staff; students and members of the public.

“I thank our students for sharing the spirit of patriotism with the UAE people and send congratulations to the leaders and the people of UAE on this great occasion,” Dr. Al Shehhi said.

The celebrations were organized by the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Activities Office in collaboration with the Emirati Cultural Club.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
The Johnny Rodgers Band performed to a packed crowd at the AUS Student Center on September 26. Organized by the AUS Office of Student Affairs’ Student Multicultural Learning Program, in cooperation with the Consulate General of the United States in Dubai, the event was attended by AUS Chancellor Dr. Peter Heath as well as senior AUS and American Mission officials.

During the concert at AUS, which was part of the band’s tour of the Middle East to promote cultural exchange, the band performed various styles, from classic to jazz. The audience was enraptured and included throughout the performance as lead vocalist Johnny Rodgers jumped off stage and walked through the crowd, involving students and having them sing and clap in tune.

At the end of the hour-long concert, AUS Chancellor Dr. Heath presented the band with a token of appreciation. The band also handed out autographed CDs to students.

Formed in 2003, the band includes Johnny Rodgers on piano and vocals, Joe Ravo on guitar, Brian Glassman on bass and Danny Mallon on drums, vocals and percussion. The band is currently on a six-country tour in the Middle East with the Musical Overtures cultural exchange program sponsored by the US State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
AUS awards scholarships to active students

AUS honored six outstanding students by presenting them with the Active Student Scholarship awards at a special ceremony held on campus on October 27. Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS, along with Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, and other officials of the Office of Student Affairs presented the winners with their awards.

“You are the pride and joy of the Office of Student Affairs,” said Dr. Heath, addressing the scholarship winners. “Because of their activities, and what you represent, there’s a wonderful balance in this university between real life activities and academia,” he added.

Dr. Al Shehhi explained how student recognition contributes to strengthening student activities at AUS. “These students are excellent role models. They have seized the various extracurricular opportunities offered by AUS and benefited from them in many ways. Their contribution to student life is highly valuable to us, and we acknowledge their hard work and commitment by awarding them this scholarship. I congratulate all the winners and wish them continued success at AUS,” she added.

The scholarship were awarded to Deeppriya Kejriwal from the School of Business and Management; Bedoor Khalil from the College of Arts and Sciences; and Abdullah Al Alami, Osama Alhasan, Mohammad Omar Hukan and Sherok Metwaly from the College of Engineering.

“I’m really delighted that I got this great opportunity,” said Bedoor Khalil, one of the recipients of the scholarship. “I put my soul into my work with community services, especially with the work involving orphans and the elderly,” she added.

The Active Student Scholarships are awarded to undergraduate sophomore, junior and senior students who have excelled in extracurricular activities and whose efforts have produced exceptional results. Whether they take part in community service projects, are a part of the Student Leadership Program, or are a member of various clubs, all recipients have shown exceptional dedication to these activities.

The scholarships consist of up to 50 percent tuition remission and are granted on a renewable semester basis. The scholarship program aims to encourage and support students who have served the community and the university. It also aspires to support students who have limited financial resources and live an active life on campus.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
Blood Donation Drive held on AUS Campus

Over 150 members of the AUS community gave the gift of life at an on-campus blood donation drive held on October 11.

Commenting on the drive, Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs said, “The positive turnout of this blood drive was a testament of the AUS community's commitment to saving lives. Our students' increasing awareness about blood drive was key to this event's success. This campaign is one of the Office of Student Affairs' many initiatives to promote productive relations with the external community. I thank the student volunteers for their time and effort in supporting this campaign.”

“This is my first time giving blood. I am doing it because I really want to motivate others to do the same,” said Hanadi Al Naqbi, an engineering student.

Al Naqbi is just one of many students and other members of the campus community who participated at the successful blood donation drive held at the Student Center.

Donating blood was also a first for Tammam El Atrache, a finance student.

“No one just lives here by himself. By giving blood, you are contributing to a good cause and helping others out,” he said.

The campaign was held in conjunction with the Community Services Division of the Office of Student Affairs and the Dubai Blood Donation Center.

“Volunteering for Community Services is amazing. There are so many people this year seeing the need to donate blood because of the number of accidents occurring,” said Rihab Badshah, a management information systems student who has been volunteering with the Community Services Division for over a year.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department

More than 100 students join trip to Gitex Exhibition

The AUS Computer Club, together with the Office of Student Affairs, organized a trip to the annual Gitex exhibition on October 13. More than 100 students joined the trip to shop for bargains and learn about the latest electronics. Students also had the opportunity to try out many of these electronics including mobile phones, computers, MP3 players and many others.

Many of the students who joined the trip are dorm residents who took advantage of the special arrangements prepared by the Office of Student Affairs.
AUS community pledge not to use mobile phones behind the wheel

The Office of Student Affairs at AUS launched the I Pledge campaign, in an effort to curb mobile phone use behind the wheel, October 17, at the university’s Student Center. The campaign was launched by Sheikh Mohammed Al Thani, Director of the AUS President’s Office, who also pledged his support for the campaign.

In addition to logging on the website, people could also scan the provided barcode with their smartphones, which would take them directly to the site where they would register and pledge their support.

“This is a very important issue and I encourage all students, faculty and staff to pledge their support for this campaign against texting and talking on the phone while driving,” said Sheikh Al Thani.

“Many road accidents are caused by motorists being occupied with their mobile phones while driving. This dangerous habit is completely avoidable if people will just refrain from using their mobile phones behind the wheel. We are very enthusiastic to launch the I Pledge campaign on our campus due to the large youth population we have at AUS. This campaign is one way to educate our students about the danger of using mobile phones while driving,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Also present at the launch of the campaign were other senior university officials including Salem Al Qaseer, Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs, and Munketh Taha, Director of Student Development and Organizations.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
A US students celebrated Eid Al Adha on campus with a cultural charity event. Held November 2 at the university’s Student Center.

The cultural charity event was a fundraiser lunch featuring cuisines from different countries. Students, faculty and staff queued up to buy lunch coupons for a unique experience of sampling different traditional dishes in one place. Lunch tickets were sold at AED 15 and the proceeds were presented to Sharjah Charity International for Eid Al Adha sacrifices.

“I congratulate our students for this successful event. Their collective efforts made this event even more meaningful and special. I also acknowledge the staff for supporting our students’ initiatives,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

“We wanted to gather as many students in an event that is one of a kind. What could be better than gathering with your friends for lunch while performing a good deed at the same time?” said Mohammad Al Nabtiti, a junior student majoring in Computer Engineering who is also President of the Islamic Cultural Club.

The event was arranged through the Office of Student Affairs Student Activities Office and Community Services, as well as the Islamic Cultural Club in collaboration with ten other student clubs.
The Office of Student Affairs’ Community Services Office organized a bake sale on October 18 to support orphans under the care of Sharjah Social Empowerment Foundation. The bake sale was held in the university’s Student Center and offered various food items on sale. Community Services volunteers worked hard in setting up the bake sale and their sense of responsibility in giving back to the community was evident in their hard work.

“The bake sale is very helpful, it spreads awareness about social responsibility while involving students in fun activities at the same time,” said Yasmin Helal, a senior student majoring in Business Management and a bake sale volunteer. At the conclusion of the bake sale, Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs praised the student volunteers for their efforts. “We have received a very good response from the AUS community and the event was very successful in every aspect,” she said.

In the spirit of giving during Eid Al Adha, the Office of Student Affairs at AUS organized a week-long charity drive to provide gifts for orphans during Eid Al Adha. The event was launched in the university’s Student Center on October 25 and continued until October 31. Empty gift boxes were sold at AED 5 which the donator will fill with gifts and return to the Office of Student Affairs’ Community Services office. The gifts are to be presented to orphans aged 4-20.

“I thought we wouldn’t be able to sell many gift boxes, but we actually ran out. It’s wonderful to know that students do care about orphans and remember them in festive occasions,” said Maria Faraj, a junior majoring in Management Information Systems who was volunteering at the charity drive. Donation boxes were also available on site for those who would like to contribute cash.

“This event was reflective of the spirit of giving during Eid and I am very glad that our students’ kindness and generosity will bring joy to many orphans during this Eid,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. The event was held by the Office of Student Affairs’ Community Services in collaboration with the Sharjah Social Empowerment Foundation of the Government of Sharjah.
generated from the event will be used to support a joint charity project between AUS Community Services and the Sharjah Social Empowerment Foundation to help orphans’ education.

“Through events such as these, we learn how to value voluntary work and expand our understanding about social responsibility. Our commitment to academia should always be matched with our responsibility to give back to the community and to help those in need,” said Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS.

Ahmad Al Fardan, Secretary-General of Sharjah Sports Council, distributed awards to the winners, congratulating them for their efforts. “I appreciate the positive and active participation of all sectors of school and university students, the handicapped, and the rest of the community. The Sharjah Sports Council, within the framework of the MOU signed with AUS, put all its administration and technical effort into this event,” he said.

“This year’s charity mini-marathon is part of a series of events we have organized in celebration of the 40th UAE National Day. We have chosen volunteering as this year’s charity mini-marathon theme to emphasize the importance of voluntary work. Special thanks to the Office of Student Affairs staff for a well-organized event and to our partners and sponsors for supporting the event,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, who was also present at the event, as well as Salem Al Qaseer, Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs, and other senior university officials.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
On October 5, 2011, the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Leadership Program in cooperation with the Egyptian Cultural Club hosted acclaimed motivational speaker Omar Samra at AUS. Samra is the first Egyptian and youngest Arab to climb Mount Everest. He spent a number of years in investment banking before a series of travel experiences inspired him to leave his career behind and open up his own company. Samra began his adventurous career by traveling around Spain on a bicycle, then realizing that he wanted to see more of the world. Samra began his lecture by telling students about his will and determination for challenge and how he followed his dreams to make them into a reality.

Samra also spoke about his Everest summit and other expedition experiences as a tool to help motivate and inspire people, especially youth. He emphasized the importance of believing that nothing is impossible to achieve your dreams. AUS students were very pleased with the lecture and showed interest in knowing more about how an individual can get to one point to another without giving up.

“The words describing that thrilling experience actually extended way beyond the limits of inspirational. I was really impressed by way Samra kept motivating himself. Throughout such a nearly impossible mission and the guidelines he sincerely believed in, the most important guideline from all these he offered, was to divide your way to the target into many smaller steps, thus achieving your goal and fulfilling your ambition. I was really honored to present such a young Arab legend, adding to my pleasure he happens to be Egyptian,” said Mohamed Alaa, a senior student majoring in Civil Engineering who is also President of the Egyptian Cultural Club.

“The lecture served as an inspirational means for students, they learned the uniqueness of turning their dreams into reality and how to overcome any obstacles on the way. We encourage students to make their own opportunities and want them to realize that life has no limitations expect the ones they make. Chase after your dreams, inspire others, and leave behind a trail for others to follow by being sound examples in the community,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.
Four AUS students won first prize at Dubai Startup Weekend held October 20–22. This intense 54-hour event focuses on creating a web or mobile application that eventually forms the beginning of a credible business.

The winning AUS team included Muhammed Al Shamsi, a junior majoring in finance; Layla Al Hawaj, a senior majoring in finance; Manal Al Mahmood, a senior majoring in multimedia design; and Zainab Al Ebrahim, a senior majoring in finance. Their project was entitled Golazo. The winning idea earned a prize of AED 25,000, full legal support, rent-free office space for a year, set-up costs and USD $2,500 for training and mentoring with free advertising in a premium spot in Dubai for a month. In addition, the team that won third place included an AUS student, Thiago Mamede, a freshman majoring in economics, who worked with other members on a project called Hassle Free. In total, 30 AUS students took part.

“Providing students an opportunity to take part in Dubai Startup Weekend is aligned with the Office of Student Affairs’ mission to inspire and educate students. Competitions as such are an effective method for students to learn from their peers and realize the importance of teamwork and networking with student leaders, experts and entrepreneurs in the field. We are proud of the results witnessed by AUS students and encourage them to continue to seek opportunities as such,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

“Dubai Startup Weekend gave me a glimpse of what the real world holds,” said Banah Nassar, a senior majoring in marketing. “It was one of the most tiring 54 hours of my life yet the most exciting and fun at the same time. By the end of the weekend you start believing that you can make, not take a job,” he added.

AUS is the educational partner of Startup Weekends, where developers, designers and startup enthusiasts, among others, come together to share ideas, form teams, build products, and launch startups.
Peer leaders at AUS took an active role during the new student orientation week and recruited over 125 freshmen into the Emerging Leaders Program. The program helps new students connect with campus life and encourages them to get involved in student activities. Peer leaders ‘adopt’ new students and encourage them to begin thinking about the leadership opportunities at AUS by enrolling them in the Emerging Leaders Program.

“The effectiveness of peer led groups is unquestionable and we feel they are a very important component of university life,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. “Using a friendly approach, the peer leaders work hard to assist new students to create a positive, social and intellectual climate and, in return, develop their interpersonal skills and teach them the importance of working as a community by assisting one another. We encourage freshmen to take advantage of the Emerging Leaders Program and get involved from the beginning for an interactive and hands-on experience,” she added.

“I’ve learned that it takes true devotion and profound passion to reach out to new students,” said Nour Al Ali, a student peer leader majoring in Mass Communication. “They need to be reassured that there are others who have been through the freshman phase and can help them get through it smoothly,” she added.

Through the academic year, the Student Leadership Program plans to organize a series of events focusing on leadership development for the Emerging Leaders Program.

*Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department*
Emerging Leaders participate in Leaders Edutainment Day

The Student Leadership Program held its first Leaders Edutainment Day on October 15 as a new initiative under the Emerging Leaders Program. The event is designed for freshmen and focuses on developing leadership skills through meaningful teambuilding exercises with intense focus on leadership traits. The event began with an icebreaking session in which Team Leaders led and asked freshmen to introduce themselves and talk about their hobbies, favorite sports, books and lifestyle.

Then followed sessions of intense leadership games created to develop leadership skills with three strategies in mind, critical thinking, team building and communication. Students got an opportunity to interact with new students, work in a team and understand the importance of effective communication. The event also emphasized on character development through motivational leadership games. This allowed students to network with their peers and find ways to complete tasks in a timely manner.

Team Leaders played an active role in organizing this event. With regular meetings and brainstorming sessions they were able to work with SLP to put together a program that best suits freshmen.

“Leaders Edutainment Day is an opportunity for future leaders to learn from their senior counterparts important and essential leadership qualities. The event was very entertaining and full of challenges for us, said Mohamed Hegazi, a freshman, majoring in Civil Engineering.

“Group activities that include mental team building games were practiced during Leaders Edutainment Day in an aim to identify individuals with leadership potential. Leadership activities are a wonderful method for developing social and communication skills. We plan to repeat Leaders Edutainment Day again in Spring Semester 2012 and we encourage more freshmen to take part in it. Thank you for all the Team Leaders who took an active role in planning and organizing this event, you sure led by example“ said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.
AUS students take part in Global Village for Future Leaders

MemBERS of the Student Leadership Program at AUS recently completed an intensive six-week leadership and cross-cultural training program at the Global Village for Future Leaders of Business and Industry held at Leigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA. The program gave students the opportunity to meet with business leaders and learn from their leadership practices.

Students engaged with a diverse student population and were able to meet with over 1,250 professionals from more than 119 countries around the world. The program offered a diverse learning experience that encompassed interactive courses, networking, meetings and discussions with business leaders, participation in local business trips and consulting projects.

Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs said, “Our mission is to develop student leaders with an ability to inspire and positively influence individuals for the common good of our community, country and world. This experience has taught students to put all their differences aside and work together in realizing similarities in humanity.”

“We are happy with the feedback received from the students and plan to continue to provide them with enriching opportunities that enhance their leadership ability through meaningful participation,” she added.

This year’s program overlapped with a few days of the holy month of Ramadan and Muslim students from AUS were given the opportunity to present and educate the group about Ramadan practices and to create an awareness and understanding of Islam.

“Living with 101 students from 52 different countries and religions was an amazing experience. Everyone was keen to learn about each other’s religion and culture. This experience made me change the way I look at people from other parts of the world and it gave me an insight into how people in other parts of the world live,” said Faisal Al Shehhi, a junior student majoring in finance.

The six weeks were demanding, but provided a meeting point for students from all over the world and helped them gain an understanding of how to become a successful and respected leader.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
A group of 57 dynamic students at AUS attended a special orientation and training workshop held on September 14 as part of the Peer Leaders Program. The workshop, organized by the university’s Office of Student Affairs, was conducted by former student leaders who were promoted to team leaders this year.

“The training played an important role in guiding and informing students about their duties and responsibilities as peer leaders,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. “We are pleased with the growth we witnessed with the Peer Leaders Program. We have seen an increase of student involvement from last year that went from 26 students in the program in 2010-2011 to 57 students this year. It is great to see our students optimistic and demonstrate their will to serve, mentor and help new students. This program is intended to build confidence amongst students and we will continue to educate and equip students focusing on individual leadership development and demonstration,” she added.

The Peer Leaders Program is based on the underlying principle that peers strongly influence the development of attitude and behaviors of one another. The main role of the peer leaders is to ease the transition of new students from high school to university life by being their guides, mentors and friends. The program requires peer leaders to adopt two to five new students during orientation day and ensure that they transition comfortably into university life. In addition to benefitting freshmen, this program also provides the participating students with opportunities to develop and enhance their leadership and interpersonal skills.

Mohammad Hukan, team leader and a senior majoring in electrical engineering said, “We are on the right track in promoting the Peer leaders Program and helping new students in easing their transition into university life. We can see this just by the fact that we were only 26 students last year and the number has more than doubled this year. This makes me feel that we’ve achieved something, which was the main reason why I joined the Peer Leaders Program. I hope by next year, we will have more students join the program and hopefully the current peer leaders will continue our mission and will be future team leaders.”

“Peer leaders present a sense of responsibility and discipline for new students. The training session helps blend these characteristics in each one of us. As part of the Student Leadership Program we not only will help others but are a part of a very productive experience,” said Bilal Maarouf, peer leader and a junior in mechanical engineering.

Peer leaders are selected on the basis of their good conduct and sound academic standing in order to exert a positive influence on the incoming students. Their duties will be ongoing as they will serve as peer leaders for the entire academic year 2011-2012. An interactive presentation highlighting the characteristics of effective leadership and the goals and responsibilities of peer leaders was presented to the group during the training. The leaders were presented with a welcome kit consisting of small symbolic objects that aptly summarized their duties. The Peer Leaders also enjoyed an afternoon making friends within the program and sharing their ideas about executing their tasks.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
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 at AUS.

Mohammed Hukan
Electrical Engineering
Senior
Active Student Scholarship Recipient of Fall 2011

I am honored to receive this award from the university and I would like to thank the Office of Student Affairs and the Student Leadership Program for this opportunity. I have learned a lot of things throughout my participation in the leadership program and have gained and developed new skills. I advise my fellow students to take advantage of extracurricular opportunities and become part of the student leadership program to explore the leader within them and develop their personalities and skills. I have yet to learn a lot more from this program and hopefully my participation will continue until my graduation.

Julie M. Doughan
Marketing
Athletic Scholarship Recipient of Fall 2011

In order to make my time at the university as fulfilling as possible, I have set myself two main goals that I want to achieve: one is academic excellence in my major in Marketing and my minor in Finance; the other is a meaningful athletic contribution. The athletic scholarship that I have received for my participation in the women’s basketball team helps me achieve that second goal. It has not only motivated me to greater achievements throughout the years, but has also shown me that what I contribute to my university is appreciated and rewarded. Therefore, I would like to genuinely thank my university for supporting us student-athletes and helping us grow and prosper not only athletically, but also mentally through the interaction with our coaches and fellow team members, and the games and tournaments it allows us to participate in. Being awarded an athletic scholarship by the university is a great honor and has made me proud; thank you for making that possible.

Tarek Joudeh
Senior
Electrical Engineering
Athletic Scholarship Recipient of Fall 2011

When I was told that I received the athletic scholarship, I was overwhelmed and felt appreciated by the coach, the team, and the university itself. The scholarship has motivated me to be more focused during training and gave me the initiative to give my hundred percent to the team. I am really thankful for this scholarship and I hope I will be able to give what is expected from me and more.

Ahmed Mekki
Sophomore
Civil Engineering
Athletic Scholarship Recipient of Fall 2011

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Moza Al Shehhi and the athletics staff for their efforts in supporting student-athletes. The athletic scholarship is the best award a student can ever receive in return for his loyalty, hard work and commitment to their team. As one of the scholarship recipients, I am motivated to not only excel in basketball but also in my studies in order to inspire others to follow in my lead and show that with a little hard work and commitment, everything is possible. All in all, being part of a sports team in AUS is a wonderful experience and I am proud to be able to represent AUS in competitions, both locally and internationally. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

Marwan Thabet
Junior
Chemical Engineering
Active Student Scholarship Recipient of Fall 2011

I would like to express my gratitude for being granted an athletic scholarship. I felt appreciated that our efforts in the field and the practices were being taken into consideration. It also motivated me to work harder to prove to all people that our efforts will not be in vain. I felt valued by the Office of Student Affairs and I will hopefully continue to meet their expectations.
I received the scholarship after three years of volunteer work with Community Services. I have participated in many events and my experience has made me more aware of societal needs and the roles that volunteers play in fulfilling these needs.

Bedoor Khalil
Mass Communication
Senior
Active Student Scholarship Recipient of Fall 2011

It was such a great honor to be awarded with this scholarship from the Office of Student Affairs. Being active with the leadership program has been of great reward by itself, but to be recognized has motivated me to join more and more of what is being offered. I believe that some people are born to be leaders, and the leadership program has helped me to set foot on the right track, and I hope that it inspires the rest of the AUS community. I would like to congratulate my fellow awardees and the OSA staff for their support. I hope that we continue to strive for success.

Sherok Metwaly
Electrical Engineering
Sophomore
Active Student Scholarship Recipient of Fall 2011

I have been an active member of the AUS basketball team for the past year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Moza Al Shehhi and the athletics management for giving me the chance of acquiring an athletic scholarship. I respect and appreciate the university’s financial aid and desire to be a committed team player. I will try my best to represent AUS positively both nationally and internationally without compromising my academia.

Mohamad Zaydan Chohayber
Finance
Freshman
Athletic Scholarship Recipient of Fall 2011

This is my fourth year as a team member of the basketball team. Words cannot express my happiness upon being told that I have received the athletic scholarship. I felt happy for many reasons. It was not for the award itself, but for the meaning this award carries. It simply meant that my contribution to the team is beneficial and that I was able to manage my time between studies and sports. This motivates me to put in more effort for my team. As I look back in time, I would really like to thank the athletic department and the Office of Student Affairs not only for this award, but also for providing me with everything I need which leads to my progress in the sports that I love to play. Finally, I will take this award as an opportunity to prove my strength and work harder to achieve even greater results and continue to make my family, my team and my university proud.

Dana Abdul Khalek
Senior
Advertising
Athletic Scholarship Recipient of Fall 2011

I am really excited and overwhelmed to win the Active Student Scholarship for Fall 2011. I am grateful to OSA for recognizing and appreciating my hard work and dedication to take the AUS Debate Club to the next level. This achievement would not have been possible without the constant support and efforts of the activities staff and my fellow students in the Debate Club. This award will only motivate me further to take the AUS Debate Club to greater heights. Thank you once again for recognizing and motivating students for their efforts in making the AUS campus dynamic.

Deeppriya Kejriwal
Senior
Finance
Active Student Scholarship Recipient of Fall 2011

I have been active with student activities for the last two years and have participated in numerous events. No words can describe my happiness on this great achievement. I would like to thank the inspiring team of Student Affairs for awarding me with the Active Student Scholarship and for their efforts and continued support. I believe that from this moment on, I have the confidence to give more in the coming years.

Abdullah Al Alami
Senior
Civil Engineering
Active Student Scholarship Recipient of Fall 2011
Life at the beginning of the Fall semester is clearly different from the Spring. This is because we see a higher percentage of new residents in the AUS residential halls. For the freshmen who opt to stay on campus, life is more challenging than those who commute from home, as not only the academic requirements become more demanding but they also have to get used to living among total strangers.

The Student Residential Life Department realizes this and focuses on arranging orientation sessions for the men’s and women’s dorms. Soon after these sessions, staff of individual residential halls involve their residents in organizing events internally. This semester the men of the PQ residential hall had a session conducted by resident students on sustainability, while the men of IJ had a talent competition. The women of the EF residential hall had a cooking class and other halls also contributed in making the life for resident students involving and entertaining.

We were also fortunate to be able to organize and an Art and Craft display for the women’s residential halls between October 16-20. This first attempt in managing a joint event among the four women’s residential halls was a very heartening experience as an unexpected number of residents were willing to exhibit their work. The Women’s Welcome Center at the entrance to the women’s residential campus was used as the location for this display. Based on this experience the Student Residential Life Department intends to make this a regular event that provides a new opportunity for the residents to connect with others with similar interests.

Appropriately, this event was also the launch of the Similar Interest Group program for this semester.

Training was also organized on October 16 for the twelve newly appointed Resident Assistants on Leadership with the collaboration of the Student Leadership Program. The training is relevant to the role they play in the residential halls. The RAs act as a link between staff of the residential halls and the residents.

Is there a need to be mentally tough?

The answer to the above mentioned question is a big YES. The world is getting competitive, and the challenges and expectations are also getting tougher. How we find a balance in dealing this is what matters the most. The ability to deal with different challenges, and pressure is called Mental Toughness.

The factors that matter:

Control: How much control do you have over your life? Do you have a control over your emotions? It differ from person to person, but this control over your life and emotions matters a lot to determine your mental toughness. The more in control you are the more mentally tough you get.

Challenge: How good are you at challenges? Do you take challenges as an opportunity and try to excel or do you back off? If you are mentally tough, you can take challenges as opportunities, rather than treating them as threats.

Commitment: The ability to be committed towards achieving your goal regardless of the obstacles describes one as mentally tough. The mentally tough remain committed even when the going gets tougher.

Confidence: Confidence definitely matters a lot in being mentally tough. The more confident you are about your abilities and yourself, mentally tougher you turn out to be.

Visit Student Learning and Counseling Services
Student Center, 1st Floor
For appointments, call 06 515 2767
Students test strength at men’s bench press competition

Students from AUS tested their strength and competed in the second Men’s Bench Press Competition held October 30 at the university’s Sports Complex. Organized by the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Athletics and Recreation Department, the competition is in its second year and is continuously gaining popularity among male students. The competition is aimed at testing students’ fitness levels, identifying potentially talented athletes and to providing an opportunity for students to compete in a fun and enjoyable atmosphere.

Students were categorized by body weight. The winners of the competition were Mohamed Al-Naqbi, for the 61-68 kilograms category, Mohammed Deib for the 69-75 kilograms category, Mohammed Hadeit for the 76-83 kilograms category, Hazem Soudain for the 84-90 kilograms category and Yehai Allchalidi for the above the 101 kilograms category. “We are very thankful to the Office of Student Affairs for providing us with the platform to compete and test our fitness levels. We wish to receive more support and be able to compete with other universities,” said Mohammed Hadeit, a senior business student and one of the competition winners.

OSA conducts the second Women’s Fitness Competition

Female students from AUS tested their strength and fitness during the second Women’s Fitness Competition held on October 26 at the university’s Sports Complex. The competition, which is conducted by the Office of Student Affairs for the second year, is aimed at testing students’ fitness levels in an enjoyable atmosphere.

“Through this competition, we aim to promote health and wellness among our students. We organize this event to encourage more female students to participate in athletic activities by showing them that exercising can be fun and enjoyable. We would like to see more students benefitting from our programs, services and facilities,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

During the competition, the students went through different exercise challenges including push-ups, sit-ups, burpees, jumping jacks, and power squats. Three students were declared winners of the competition. The first place went to Bincy Mathew while the second place went to Nada Alassi and the third place to Heba Balkis. The winners were presented with medals.

“The competitions taught each one of us how important it is to be fit and how important it is to stay healthy,” said Bincy Mathew, a junior student majoring in Mechanical Engineering who won first place.

The competition was organized by the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Athletics and Recreation Department.
Sixteen outstanding student-athletes from AUS were awarded the AUS Athletic Scholarship for the Fall 2011 semester at a special ceremony held at the AUS Chancellor’s office, October 25.

Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS, congratulated the students on their achievements. Also present on the occasion was Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, as well as other AUS officials.

“The athletic scholarship is a gesture of the university’s support to financially deserving student-athletes and a manifestation of our university’s commitment toward promoting the role of athletics in higher education,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi. “I congratulate the winners of the scholarships, and I thank all our student-athletes for their efforts in representing AUS and for their achievements in the intercollegiate sporting arena,” she added.

The recipients are Tarek Joudeh, Marwan Thabet and Bassel Khanafer for men’s soccer; Ahmed Abdelwahab Mekki and Mohammed Zaydan Chohayber for men’s basketball; Fahad Tariq Raja and Shahzada Haris Attique for cricket; Hisham Amin Alayan and Ahmed Ismaeel Al Madani for men’s volleyball; Samer Hijazi for men’s badminton; Dana Adel Abdul Khalek and Julie Maha Doughan for women’s basketball; Joanne Youssef Mattar and Roseanne Aqel for women’s volleyball; Shaheen Salim Khoja for women’s table tennis; and Lilian Ghassan Neim for women’s swimming.

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 student-athletes who have limited financial resources and who demonstrate athletic excellence as well as outstanding sports qualities.