AUS ranks third in Greece Spring Sports Festival

A 76-member AUS sports delegation placed third in the Spring Sports Festival organized by the American College of Greece in Athens March 10-14. Around 360 student-athletes from nine universities and colleges participated in these sports competitions. Forty-seven games were organized in men’s and women’s basketball, volleyball and men’s soccer.

Participating in the competition were students from the following institutions:

- American College of Thessaloniki
- Harokopeion University
- Panteion University
- Polytechnio
- The American College of Greece, Dere College
- The American College of Greece, Junior College
- TEI Piraeus
- University of Piraeus

Through this trip, the Office of Student Affairs provided opportunities for students to

AUS holds Eighth Annual Charity Mini-Marathon

Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, AUS held its Eighth Annual Charity Mini-Marathon
Recently, I attended the 91st NASPA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington. NASPA is a professional association for student affairs administrators in higher education, faculty, and undergraduate and graduate students. The conference topic was “Nourish Partnerships for Lifelong Learning.” During the conference, the NASPA team shared their experience with student affairs administrators from diverse universities around the globe.

That student affairs are the heart of every university is what I felt during the conference. To support my statement, I look at the difference the Office of Student Affairs has made in our student’s lives. The Office of Student Affairs’ non-academic student support services and facilities are undoubtedly state-of-the-art, but in a span of two years we have created opportunities that focus on student leadership development on and off campus and beyond the UAE. Our leadership enhancement opportunities help students to unpack knowledge, empower them with skills and abilities, enable them to lead others, provide opportunities for them to network with other organizations and diverse universities, and enable them to provide self-governance.

We sent 10 students to Bahrain to participate in the Fourth Bahrain Universities Model United Nations conference, which welcomed 16 other universities from all over the Gulf for this two-day event. Our 8th Charity Mini Marathon, with the theme “Join Hands against Diabetes,” involved the AUS community and off-campus charitable organizations and schools for a worthy cause. This marathon raised student awareness on social issues and developed volunteers’ sense of social work.

Our student clubs expose student talents to the public. Six students from our Debate Club proved victors in the Fourth Annual Public Speaking Competition at the University of Wollongong. Personality develops through such exposure, and so do communication skills.

During Spring Break, 69 AUS student-athletes and seven staff went to Greece to participate in the Greece Sports Festival 2009. Students learned to collaborate with our student affairs professionals and with the 300 athletes comprising the eight other participating universities. On a point scale, we ranked third. In Greece, our students interacted with other cultures and students, led their teams and adopted the best practices to bring honor to AUS. This was the third consecutive year AUS participated in this international event. Student Affairs hopes to build partnerships with more universities that will offer international exposure to our student body and support student learning and success in leadership.

Al-Umrah: A spiritual journey for AUS students

Twenty-nine students and three staff members had the privilege of going on Al Umrah March 5-11. This trip was sponsored by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah. Student Affairs organized this trip with Student Activities staff and members of the Islamic Cultural Club.

The group heard lectures delivered by renowned Islamic scholars and visited several holy places and ancient mosques. Both students and staff who got the opportunity to complete this religious trip thanked His Highness for his generosity.
Spring Club Fair was held February 9-10 with 48 clubs and organizations under one roof to recruit new members. The Office of Student Affairs units also participated to familiarize students with their facilities and services. In its effort to encourage participation and establish new clubs, the Student Activities Office (SAO) saw success in introducing new clubs and re-activating several organizations, such as the Accounting and Finance Club, Math Club, Book Club and Turkish Cultural Club.

Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, inaugurated the event with Mr. Munketh Taha, Director of Student Activities, and Mr. Ezz Taha, Manager of Student Activities, along with other senior staff.

Club Fair was carefully planned so that students could register with various clubs in one location. Ten laptops were set up at the Student Center’s reception desk for online registration. This was in addition to the laptops made available at most stalls to further facilitate student registration. There has been a growing trend of students becoming members of multiple clubs, resulting in an overall unparalleled 15,000 registrations. Memberships for clubs are valid for one year. While many students had already signed up for clubs in the Fall 2008 Club Fair, around 6,000 new registrations were recorded for this semester.

Club Fair attracts various sectors of the AUS community including faculty, staff and their families enjoying the atmosphere and getting a glimpse of the various cultural and interest-oriented clubs available at AUS. Clubs offered souvenirs, traditional sweets and coffee. This colorful atmosphere was a space for fun and delight, and a cosmopolitan environment that all students enjoyed. The different stalls reflected AUS’ multicultural student body and the harmony between different cultural groups who worked together to make this year’s Club Fair a success. SAO hopes that this Club Fair provided a glimpse into the many clubs and organizations that are active at AUS, and hopes that students will take advantage of the opportunities for personal growth these clubs offer.

Spring 2009 Club Fair was a very rewarding experience for students who got involved in the preparation of the event with the help of the SAO, who provided them with the necessary materials and the adequate technical support.
Support Gaza campaign concludes with a lasting impression

The AUS Palestinian Cultural Club initiated a month-long campaign to help the Palestinians suffering in Gaza. Launched on January 26, the Support Gaza charity campaign had participation from 26 active AUS cultural and interest-oriented clubs/organizations and the Student Council. The campaign included a number of events and activities that helped collect funds. Student Activities strongly supported the Palestinian Cultural Club in realizing their initiative.

AUS generated around AED 42,000 in total in addition to in-kind donations.

The campaign aimed to collecting donations and items to be channeled through the UAE Red Crescent. Approximately AED 2,000 was received through donation boxes on campus. UAE Red Crescent coupons were available at the Student Center collection table, which collected almost AED 17,000 in donations during the month. In addition, the UAE Red Crescent collected three truckloads of donations from the AUS campus, including first-aid kits, emergency medical supplies, chronic illness medications, personal hygiene items, non-perishable foods, new clothes, tents, blankets and school supplies.

Activities organized under this campaign gained wide support from the AUS community, especially the students. A book sale was held in the Student Center during the first week of February. Various books donated by AUS students were sold at reasonable prices and their proceeds went to the UAE Red Crescent fundraising boxes. A bake sale was held every Wednesday during the first three weeks of February in the Student Center. Homemade delicacies and soft drinks were served by the student clubs participating in the campaign. The bake sales alone raised AED 11,665.

The Gaza Soccer Tournament kicked off on February 9 and lasted for three weeks. It was organized in collaboration with 26 AUS clubs, the Student Activities Office, the Residential Halls Department and Sports Complex. Twenty-two teams consisting of 156 students registered and generated AED 7,900.

The Students Activities Office and the Palestinian Cultural Club hosted a musical event in cooperation with Al-Bayader Band on February 20, in the Main Building. Charity coupons were sold at the main entrance. Approximately 250 people, including dignitaries, VIPs, students and staff attended this event. His Excellency Mr. Hussein Abdulkhaleq (the Palestinian councilor in UAE) and Mr. Mohammed Diab Al Musa (Cultural Advisor of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassmi, Ruler of Sharjah and Supreme Council Member) honored the event. His Excellency Mr. Abdulkhaleq delivered a speech presenting the hardships of Gaza residents and the role played by several countries during the war. Mohammed Afana, president of the Palestinian Cultural Club, also gave a moving speech and welcomed the attendees. Al-Bayader Band performed a brief sketch portraying the daily hardship of people in Gaza, as well as Dabkeh, the folkloric Palestinian dance and traditional songs. This even raised AED 3,530.

The Support Gaza campaign showed the humanitarian side of the AUS community. This campaign brought the entire campus community together in support of a worthy cause. Student Affairs appreciates all those who donated liberally in cash or in-kind in support of this initiative.
AUS wins at Wollongong Public Speaking Competition

The AUS Debate Club participated in the prestigious Fourth Annual Wollongong Public Speaking competition hosted by the University of Wollongong in Dubai on March 14, with AUS taking top honors and bringing home the crystal trophy.

Participants from 11 universities from across the UAE competed in the competitions.

AUS Debate Club members who made it to finals are listed below:

- Public address category: Hamzeh J. Al-Fuqha, first position
- Extemporaneous: Mohammad Asim Chaudary, first position
- Radio address: Sidra Tariq, first position
- Original Storytelling: Raisa Naqvi, first position
- Traditional Storytelling: Pashmina Jham, first runner-up
- Impromptu: Jashan Jot Singh, reached the Final Round

Our students out-performed due to their hard work, dedication and the support from the recently elected AUS Debate Club board members.

Residential Halls: Your home away from home

Each semester, the Residential Halls Department recruits undergraduates as Student Resident Assistants (RA). Each of the 12 residential halls employs one RA who serves the role of peer counselor and advisor, as well as acts as a role model. RAs are a valuable link between the staff and resident students. This experience improves their leadership and communication skills, as they are expected to assist in organizing dormitory events as well as to respond to residents’ questions. RAs are offered training sessions to further enhance their knowledge in dealing with other residents.

The Residential Halls Department held a RA training session on March 3 in collaboration with Learning and Counseling Services (LCS) and Judicial Affairs (JA). LCS gave a presentation on leadership, as this would help RAs in dealing with their peers. JA briefed the RAs on their services and obtained feedback on certain procedures. JAs other service, mediation, was also publicized and the RAs responded positively. Such training and dialogue is always useful. The Residential Halls Department management communicated information related to safety, rules, events and approaching room reservation deadlines. RAs provided feedback on various residential halls operation issues.

The Residential Halls Department also contributed toward the Gaza campaign by encouraging students to participate in the charity football tournament held this semester. Staff organized eight teams from the men’s dorms to sign-up for this worthy cause.
on Saturday, February 28, 2009 with the theme “Join Hands against Diabetes.”

The Office of Student Affairs’ Community Services Division, in collaboration with Sharjah Sports Council and the Athletics Division, organized this event. Approximately, 1,500 participants from high schools, universities and the AUS community, as well as individuals with special needs, participated in the race.

The 4-kilometer run started from the University City’s main entrance and finished at the AUS main gate. Participants were categorized according to their age groups. AUS student volunteers offered assistance during this marathon.

The first place winners in each category are: Abdula Aziz Marwan, boys under 12; Catherine Joseph, girls under 12; Mohammad Ali, boys 12 to 17; Aida Saaed, girls 12 to 17; Osman Al Shaydi, men 18 to 35; Samira Bint Zayed, women 18 to 35; Abou Daooud, men 36 to 45; Dina Sarmenii, women 36 to 45; Ehssan Honbaha, men over 45; and Anna-Liisa Haverila, women over 45.

Mr. Ahmad Al Fardan, Secretary-General of the Sharjah Sports Council, attended this event and distributed awards to the winners on behalf of His Excellency Sheikh Esam Bin Saqr Al Qassimi, Chairman of the Office of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah and Chair of the Sharjah Athletics Association. He was joined by Dr. Peter Heath, AUS Chancellor; Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Mr. Salem Al Qaseer, Vice Chancellor of Public Affairs; and Mr. Munketh Taha, Director of Student Activities.
Useful tips for students

Exams are nearing: Prepare yourself mentally

There is no substitute for academic preparation when it comes to getting ready for an upcoming exam. Students who experience test anxiety claim that in spite of studying hard, they freeze when the test is placed in front of them. Along with academic preparation, a little mental preparation can help to ease the tension.

Try to learn about the exam

Prepare yourself by knowing more about the exam. It will reduce test anxiety.

- Ask the instructor directly about the contents of the upcoming exam.
- Try to get an idea about the types of question that will be asked.
- Instructors usually follow the same pattern semester after semester, so referring to old exams will always be beneficial.
- Talk to classmates and instructors to know which topics require more attention.
- Make a time schedule for study to help you cover all topics included in the exam.

Think critically while you are studying

- Define what you want to learn: clarify or verify with your professor your subject.
- Think about what you already know about the subject: What do you already know that will help you in this study?
- Ask yourself questions.
- Organize what you have collected into patterns to understand it.
- Ask questions (again!).
- Think in terms of how you would demonstrate your studying for your exam.

Keep a positive attitude

- Students suffering from test anxiety kill their studying efforts by getting tense about the exam. It is always better to begin with a positive attitude. If a positive attitude is kept, every effort will bear fruit.
- Learn to relax. When asked to relax, it doesn’t mean that you are asked to take things easy. It means being calm to work efficiently.
- When you keep a positive attitude you will be relaxed and able to function properly. Thus, you will be able to exercise full effort in your studies and get the best results. Try to practice some deep breathing relaxation methods.

If you need any help from the AUS Learning and Counseling Services with regard to your academic performance or personal life, you can make an appointment with our counselors by calling 06 515 2767. You may visit us in our offices, which are located on the first floor of Student Center.
Echoes aims to reflect 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 activities. Echoes mirrors student life at AUS.

“On behalf of the AUS soccer team, I would like to express my gratitude to our university for providing the AUS teams with the opportunity to travel to a European country and experience the thrill of playing in an international tournament. Being a part of this international event for three consecutive years, I can say that this year’s was the best. AUS athletes experienced the joy and excitement of competing and meeting many elite players with professional backgrounds. Additionally, AUS athletes proved to be proud ambassadors for AUS.

As captain of the AUS soccer team, I thank the university for supporting the AUS teams and we hope that the AUS management will continue to consider AUS athletes as valuable messengers who can promote and portray a positive image of the university in the national and international sporting arenas.”

“Working with the Student Activities Department was an enjoyable learning opportunity. I got the hands-on experience of running a student organization and of being involved in activities that were more in sync with my interests. I also met people and made more friends. The department provided me with a platform to demonstrate my skills and get a look at how things work in the real world. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with the department and intend to be an active member until I graduate.”

“As captain of the AUS women’s volleyball team, I thank the university for giving us the opportunity once again to travel to Greece. We understand the amount of effort and resources that had to be pulled together to make this event possible. We greatly appreciate this effort and hope that the university will continue to do this for us.

This year’s trip to Greece was a great experience and was appreciated by all athletes involved. We also had a great time touring some Greek islands thanks to the Director of Student Activities, who headed our group.

During my years at AUS, I am extremely proud to see the growing support from the administration toward student athletes. I hope, as I am sure many others do as well, to see this support expand and that AUS athletes will be given more opportunities in the future.

Once again, thank you for providing us with this opportunity and supporting AUS athletes.”

“I would like to take this opportunity to say that I am very thankful for the athletic scholarship. It shows the appreciation the university has towards me, and in return, gives me the motivation to perform better at all times. Knowing that Student Affairs is rewarding a sports person with such a scholarship creates confidence, maturity and trust.”
Athletics Division hosts Fourth AUS Men’s Intercollegiate Racket Tournament

The Fourth AUS Men’s Intercollegiate Racket Tournament took place February 22–25 at AUS. Approximately 180 students from 13 universities and colleges from Sharjah, Dubai and Ajman participated in table tennis, tennis, badminton and squash competitions.

AUS secured first place in badminton and squash, and second and third place in tennis. The increase in participants and the level of their competence reflected significant improvements in the field of intercollegiate racket sports in this region.

The following institutions participated in the event:

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<th>Al Ghurair University</th>
<th>Higher Colleges of Technology Sharjah</th>
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<tr>
<td>American College of Dubai</td>
<td>Khalifa University</td>
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<td>American University in Dubai</td>
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<td>BITS Pilani</td>
<td>Preston University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emirates College for Management and IT</td>
<td>University of Sharjah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf Medical College</td>
<td>University of Wollongong in Dubai</td>
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compete at an international level, exchange information on cultures, develop leadership skills, establish partnerships and meet peers from other universities. AUS students experienced the fellow athletes’ honest efforts, sportsmanship and camaraderie.

In addition to the sports competitions, the group went on a day’s cruise touring around the famous Greek islands of Aegina, Poros and Hydra. Students visited historical sites, watched folk programs and tasted Greek food while on the cruise.

Three employees from the Office of Student Affairs were commended during the ‘Chancellor’s Award 2009’ on March 18.

Dr. Saad Abrahim was awarded Employee of the Year 2008-2009 in grade 7-9 category whereas Aissa Zahaf and Raja Subramanya received honorary mentions. Other staff nominated from OSA was overwhelmed on receiving a personal appreciation letter from Dr. Peter Heath for their outstanding contribution to the university.
AUS approves two more athletic scholarships

AUS recently approved two more athletic scholarships starting Spring 2009, bringing the total number of athletic scholarship recipients to eight every semester. This move aims to encourage more students to become high achievers and to increase support for outstanding student-athletes with limited financial resources.

At a special ceremony held on campus, Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor; Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; and Mr. Munketh Taha, Director of Student Activities, awarded the Spring 2009 scholarships to eight outstanding student-athletes. The scholarship entitles the recipients to a 50 percent tuition remission on a renewable semester basis.

The Spring 2009 scholarship recipients and the competitive sport in which they excel are listed below:

- Rola Awad, women’s volleyball
- Mariam Fahmy, women’s basketball
- Talal Hassan Al Marzooqi and Siamak Shayganfar, men’s soccer
- Ahmed Bassam Saymeh and Adey Abdelrahman El Amasy, men’s volleyball
- Mohamed Farouk Ismail, men’s basketball
- Bilal Saleem, cricket

“I am very grateful to the university for recognizing and appreciating my efforts. I believe I am the first person from the cricket team to get the athletic scholarship. I am also very glad that cricket is now recognized as much as football, volleyball and basketball. I hope that my fellow cricket players will also be awarded with this scholarship in the future,” said Bilal Saleem, AUS cricket team captain and first-time recipient of the scholarship.
AUS Cricket Team experiences victorious season

The AUS cricket team participated in three prestigious intercollegiate tournaments this year, the Skyline Cup, the Nissan Gulf Cup and the Honda Pride Cup, winning two of the tournaments and placing second in the third. They competed against prominent teams from UAE universities including American University in Dubai, Preston University, Skyline University College, University of Wollongong in Dubai, Middlesex University of Dubai, Al Ghurair University, Troy University in Sharjah, Gulf Medical College, Mahatma Gandhi University, Emirates Aviation College, IITM University and Mahe Manipal University.

At the Honda Cup, AUS won all its group matches and defeated UOWD in the semifinals. AUS faced archrival Preston University in the finals. Preston University won the tournament by 29 runs. Bilal Saleem, the AUS team captain, was named “Best Bowler of the Tournament.”

The Skyline Cup posed a greater challenge to AUS, as the team once again faced archrival Preston University. AUS defeated the host Skyline and again met with Preston University in the final match, which was held in the famous International Cricket Stadium of Sharjah. AUS regained its title and won the tournament by 28 runs. Fahad Tariq of AUS made 43 runs and took 4 wickets, and was named “Man of the Match” in the finals.

In its quest to dominate the regional intercollegiate cricket arena, the AUS cricket team travelled to Abu Dhabi to participate in the Nissan Gulf Cup, which was organized under the auspices of the Abu Dhabi Cricket Council. The matches were held at the famous Sheikh Zayed Stadium where AUS once again won accolades for its super performance.

Under the guidance of the Office of Student Affairs’ Athletics Division, the AUS cricket team plans to host for the first time its very own cricket tournament at the new AUS cricket ground sometime in Spring 2009.