Forty eight students join cultural trip to Italy

Forty-eight students completed an exciting cultural trip to Italy, January 21 to 26, 2012. Organized by the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Multicultural Learning Program, the students toured the Italian cities of Rome and Florence.

In Rome, the students visited the famous Colosseum, Trevi Fountain, Vatican Museums, St. Peter’s Basilica, Sistine Chapel in addition to numerous scenic public squares and structures of the past that surrounded the remarkable city. The students learned about emperors, popes, dictators and the highlights of Roman history which spans from three millennia. Travelling through the high speed train Eurostar Italia, the students reached the city of Florence and continued the second part of the tour to the Ufizi Gallery, Piazza Della Signoria and the San Lorenzo Market famous for its leather products. The highlight of the Florence tour was the visit to the Medici Villa Della Petraia, a royal residence dating back to the 13th century with its beautiful Italian style garden and a museum complex of interesting architecture and well-preserved interior and furniture.

During the five-day tour, students witnessed Italian lifestyle, observed their culture, sampled the local food and learned about how Italians value their heritage. Visits to museums and churches gave students the opportunity to view various types of architectural designs, paintings, tapestries and sculptures.

AUS delegation wins honors at BUMUN 2011

An eight-member delegation from the Student Leadership Program represented AUS at Bahrain Universities Model United Nations (BUMUN) 2011, held November 24-25, 2011. The event was held under the patronage of His Excellency Hisham Mohammed Al Jowder, President of the General Organization for Youth and Sports, Bahrain.

At the event, AUS students had the opportunity to gain experience in public
Uncertainties worldwide on the economic front, continuous technological advancements, the university’s budget restrictions and growing student and university expectations about the efficiency of Student Affairs’ services and programs made Fall 2011 highly challenging for the Office of Student Affairs. Every challenge informs strategies and helps develop initiatives for the Office of Student Affairs so we continue to offer support services without compromising on quality. Our dedicated team of Student Affairs practitioners ensures efficiency of student support services and student learning outcomes, thus promoting student learning and self-enrichment which contributes to all-round student development. Student Affairs’ team spirit focuses on serving students and continues to enhance student life and personal experience to a new level every semester.

I wish to share some facts and figures with you pertaining the last semester. Student Affairs initiated, facilitated and implemented the following events:

1. 182 student organizations and development events of which 157 were student cultural, non-cultural and recreational events through Student Activities; three Student Employment events, building student skills in decision making, photography and excel advanced; 19 Community Services events involving student volunteers in charity work, humanitarian causes, awareness campaigns and working with the underprivileged, and three Student Multicultural Learning Programs exposing students to experience different cultures through traditional musical concerts and international trips.

2. 51 sporting events engaging sports teams and individuals in intercollegiate, interuniversity, local, regional and international sporting events and friendly games through Student Athletics and Recreation.

3. 27 Student Residential Life events comprising orientations sessions, awareness, sports competitions, exhibitions, trainings, graduation farewells, recreational activities and similar group activities engaging resident students.

4. 14 Student Leadership Program events enriching student leadership experience and skills through trainings, inspirational lectures, edutainment events, participation in Model United Nations, local, regional and international leadership events and competitions.

5. Six Student Learning and Counseling Services training sessions on adjusting to university life for freshman, overcoming exam anxiety, time management, communication skills, relaxation techniques.

6. Five Judicial Affairs events orienting new students on code of conduct policy and processes and judiciary services; engaging students in peer coordinators training in mediation and in mediation forums, training for resident assistants, awareness of conduct policies and mediation services.

Thirty ethnic clubs and 29 interest-oriented clubs remained active and initiated activities throughout the semester. A new Student Council board was elected and assumed office. Student Affairs published two editions of Insight. New student week-long orientations integrated students into Student Affairs’ varied programs and activities in the beginning of Fall 2011 and at the beginning of this Spring semester.

Students were applauded for their success by being awarded certificates and active student scholarships. Co-curricular involvement and engagement of students increased during the fall semester and with the commencement of this new Spring semester, I am hopeful to see more students associated with Student Affairs so that they can experience, practice and learn new skills as well as develop self for specific interest that we at Student Affairs can help them attain.

Community Services volunteers participate in 22nd Al Amal Camp

Organized by Sharjah City of Humanitarian Services (SCHS), the 22nd Al Amal Camp witnessed the participation of 69 guests and 140 volunteers. Children with disabilities had fun racing, running and playing other sports with the help and support of AUS volunteers. SCHS selected 10 volunteers for this event that took place on December 29, 2011, all of whom expressed the selfless desire to bring a smile to the faces of children with disabilities.
The Environment Club hosted the Re-Design Build Competition on December 18, 2011 at the university’s Main Plaza.

Participants were grouped into teams of three and were given the themes of water, waste and electricity to choose from. Provided with a plethora of recyclable waste materials, the aim of the event was to use the materials to build a conceptual model within the confines of the theme. The teams were then required to present a solution to a problem facing the chosen category and help the environment overcome the obstacles of today’s world.

Sarah Luqman Sheikh, the president of the club, commenting on the purpose and success of the event said: “It is essential for students to break away from the hectic academic life and immerse themselves in an activity that is not only enjoyable and fun but is educational at the same time. We are too busy with our work and pay little attention to critical issues like environment and sustainability. The aim of competition is to educate students on the ways they can practice sustainability without having to spend a lot time, effort or money.”

Members of the winning group won an iPod each. Their creation is displayed in the office of Bee’ah, a Sharjah-based environmental organization. The winning group consisted of students who met for the first time at the Re-Design Build event, yet worked together in synergy to create a hydro-wheel ride. The judges were David Rees, Sustainability Manager; Tahseer Zahra, Program Coordinator from the Operations Department; Dr. Mohamed Yehia Abouleish, Chemistry, Biology and Environmental Sciences Professor in CAS; and Tonya Sweet, Design Professor in CAAD. The judging criteria were based on the feasibility of the model, aesthetics and teamwork.

Hafsa Hariga, a senior student majoring in international studies and a member of the winning team said: “The event was enjoyable and creative. The Re-design competition was educational and fun at the same time. It was a great feeling to participate in an event where I was able to contribute to the issues facing the environment today and do something about it, instead of just being a mere observer.”
MOU focusing on volunteer work signed by AUS and SCHS

American University of Sharjah (AUS) and Sharjah City of Humanitarian Services (SCHS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at a special ceremony held on January 30 at the university campus.

The MOU was signed by Sheikha Jameelah Bint Mohammad Al Qassimi, Director General of the SCHS and Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS. The signing ceremony was attended by Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Mona Abdel Karim Yaf’i, Director of Al Wafa School for Capacity Development; Heba AlHamrani, SCHS Human Resources Manager; Munketh Taha, Director of Student Development and Organization, AUS Office of Student Affairs; Aisha Ali, Community Services Manager, AUS Student Activities Department, Office of Student Affairs and a number of other AUS and SCHS officials.

Speaking on the occasion, Sheikha Jameelah said the MOU was an important step in strengthening bilateral cooperation especially in the field of regulating volunteer work to serve society in general and those of special needs in particular. She praised the pioneering role AUS plays as the main provider of high quality higher education in the region.

The agreement aims at encouraging university students to volunteer and participate in the activities of the SCHS such as Amal Camp, Used Book Fair and others, as well as SCHS’s participation in AUS events such as the Global Day, Charity Mini-marathon and other activities, she said. The MOU also outlined that SCHS will hold training courses for AUS students in means to deal with the handicapped. It will also provide opportunities for the AUS community to volunteer. The agreement will also allow SCHS to use the university’s facilities for hosting its programs and activities, Sheikha Jameelah added.

Dr. Heath said that this MOU was part of the university’s mission to engage fruitfully with organizations in the emirate. “We look forward to our cooperation with SCHS, as part of AUS’ social responsibility,” he said.

Dr. Al Shehhi said the signing of the agreement enhances the existing cooperation and utilizes potential volunteer students to help individuals with special needs. “The agreement came in the light of the vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, UAE Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah and President of AUS, and his emphasis on the importance of interacting with the humanitarian organizations,” she said.

Student employees get decision-making skills training

Forty-seven students attended a training session entitled Decision Making Skills on November 16. The session covered topics including the key steps and techniques in decision making and managing responsibilities and pressure while making decisions.

“As part of Student Employment Office’s Vocational Skills Training Program, this training session is aimed at enhancing students’ skills for their personal growth as well as to help them become more productive in the workplace and efficient in their roles as student workers,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

The training session was organized by the Student Employment Office of the Office of Student Affairs in collaboration with Dr. Jeffrey Baker, Assistant Professor in the Department of Management Information System (MIS), who conducted the session.
Leading the group to Italy, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Dr. Moza Al Shehhi said: “International cultural tours provide our students with a rich practice field where they gain practical knowledge, skills and experiences that augment their understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. With its increasing popularity and demand among the student body, the Student Multicultural Learning Program is creating more on- and off-campus multicultural learning opportunities to ensure that students have access to activities beyond their daily experiences on campus.”

“The trips organized by Office of Student Affairs’ Multicultural Learning Program are so much more than just traveling. Students get the opportunity to discover the way people live and interact in other parts of the world. It was amazing to see the ancient icons of the Roman Empire and the birthplace of the renaissance; a movement that started in Florence and spread all over Europe influencing not only art, but also politics, societies and philosophy,” said Luis Abd Al-Rahman Garcia, President of the AUS Student Council.

Fatma Wali a senior majoring in management shared her experience about the trip saying: “I went to the trip knowing only three girls. I came back to the UAE with a new family! It is an amazing experience that I would love to do all over again. Being away from my family helped me become independent and helped me cooperate better with my team members. It was an eventful and educational trip. A great experience indeed.”

The AUS delegation to Italy was accompanied by Munketh Taha, Director of Student Development and Organizations; and OSA supervisors Virgilio Mateo Jr. and Raja Subramanya.

Speaking, negotiation, research and debating and learned more about international affairs. Students prepared extensive research about their appointed countries in order to understand the political, social and economic status, which gave them a unique opportunity to learn about different perspectives, views, beliefs, values and cultures of various nations.

AUS students secured three diplomacy awards for outstanding performances. Aly El-Gayar, a sophomore in civil engineering, won the Diplomacy Award for the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) representing Mexico. Budour Al Fahim, a senior in finance, and Banah Nassar, a senior in marketing, represented New Zealand and Syria, respectively, and were granted the Diplomacy Awards for the General Assembly.

“I congratulate our students for their success; this is the second year in a row that AUS has secured three diplomacy awards, and we are proud of our achievements. BUMUN offers a wonderful learning experience that allows students to better understand world issues and the skill of negotiation and diplomacy. We look forward to future participation in the Model United Nations and encourage students to get more involved in our programs,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Mohammad Hukan, a peer leader and a senior in electrical engineering, won the Diplomacy Award of BUMUN 2010 and had the opportunity to chair this year’s sessions. “After participating in last year’s BUMUN, being a chair this year was a new experience on a whole different level. It gave me a new perspective on the Model United Nations, as I had to understand and be familiar with the rules and procedures. I would like to thank the Student Leadership Program for providing me with such an opportunity, and I advise students not to miss this opportunity next year,” said Hukan.

This trip was organized by the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Leadership Program.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
ASCE Club organizes trip to Turkey

The American Society of Civil Engineers Club (ASCE) at American University of Sharjah (AUS) organized an educational trip to Turkey, January 30, 2012 in cooperation with Istanbul Technical University (ITU). Twenty-eight students from the university's ASCE Club took part in the trip which was organized through the AUS Office of Student Affairs’ Student Multicultural Learning Program. The participants were selected based on a number of criteria including social and academic status. The event was an international educational trip aimed at providing students with opportunities to gain educational, social and cultural experiences.

During the five-day stay in Istanbul, the students had the opportunity to visit and learn the history of some of the most popular tourist and heritage sites in Istanbul including the Byzantine Hippodrome which was the heart of Constantinople's political and sporting life, and the scene of games and riots through 500 years of Ottoman history. The students visited the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, a popular historical and tourist attraction in Istanbul which is also known as the Blue Mosque for the blue tiles adorning the walls of its interior. The students next visited the Ayia Sophia which is a former Orthodox patriarchal basilica, later a mosque, and now a museum in Istanbul, famous in particular for its massive dome and said to have "changed the history of architecture." It was the largest cathedral in the world for nearly a thousand years and the principal mosque of Istanbul for almost 500 years.

The students continued their visit on Topkapi Palace which is a large palace in Istanbul that was the primary residence of the Ottoman Sultans for approximately 400 years. Apart from being a royal residence, the palace was a setting for state occasions and royal entertainments. It is now a major tourist attraction housing holy relics of the Muslim world that includes the Prophet Muhammad's cloak and sword.

With over 3,500 shops and products ranging from souvenirs to jewelry, and textiles to Turkish ethnographic items, Grand Bazaar of Istanbul was another interesting attraction for the students where they did some shopping. A ferryboat ride took the students to the Princes’ Islands in the Sea of Marmara with a stop in Buyukada Island. Here, the students explored the island by horse-drawn carriages and witnessed splendid Ottoman and Victorian summer villas with their colorful gardens.

On the educational part of the tour, the students visited the Department of Civil Engineering of ITU. The students were briefed about the university's history which dates back to the beginning of technical training in the Ottoman Empire in 1770. The students also had a brief lecture on geotechnical earthquake engineering by an ITU engineering faculty at the university's laboratory of engineering seismology. The students were very thankful for the lecture and presented a memento to the associate
Students enjoyed the sightseeing tours, weather, food, Islamic architecture, museums and many cultural and entertainment places in the city. Students greatly appreciated the travel opportunity and the success of the trip.

“The Student Multicultural Learning Program at AUS was launched last year with a grand tour to China and Hong Kong. Since then, the program has gained popularity among the student body and many students have shown interest in taking part in the cultural tours,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. “On campus, we have hosted representatives from Japan, Korea and USA as part of a cultural exchange program between AUS and foreign missions in the UAE. The popular Johnny Rodgers Band performed at AUS under this program. We are currently working on creating more multicultural learning opportunities for our students’ development and out of classroom learning experiences.”

“I found the ASCE trip to Turkey very successful in terms of the knowledge gained about Istanbul’s historical landmarks as well as getting to know great people and a lot of information about ITU. Students bonded really well throughout the trip. I wish if we could go back in time to do it all over again,” said Basma Mohammed Kamal Ghazi, a graduating civil engineering student and President of the ASCE Club.

“Firstly, I would like to thank the management for their continued support throughout the stages of the trip. Without their help, this trip would have never been successful. I am also thankful for the opportunity to represent AUS while visiting ITU. This is the best trip I have ever participated in and more importantly, we built new friendships and felt that we are one big family,” said Abanoub Nabeel Tadros, a senior civil engineering student. “This trip has been one of the best experiences I have ever had. Not only was Turkey magnificent with its rich history and generous people, but also, the members of the trip proved to be some of the greatest people I have ever met. In a matter of days, the ASCE members turned from strangers into family. I could not imagine this trip without the participation of every single member,” said Reem Mohammed Salih, a graduating civil engineering student. “I believe this trip paved a great ending as I graduate from AUS. Turkey and the members of the trip made this event a wonderful experience,” she added.

ASCE Club is one of the most active clubs in the College of Engineering that aims at educating its members and promoting the field of civil engineering. One of the club’s objectives on the trip was to provide an opportunity for its members to explore the civil engineering field through learning experiences beyond their daily experiences on campus.

The AUS delegation to Turkey was accompanied by OSA supervisors Haj Attou, Hussam Steitieh and Anna Antar.
Students complete training in event photography

Thirty-nine students completed training in event photography held by the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Employment Office from November 21 to 28, 2011. The training session covered important aspects and various techniques in taking photos during an event. The students also received hands on training during the AUS Charity-Mini Marathon Festival where they were given the opportunity to practice learned skills and take photographs of the event.

The training was conducted by Dr. Harris Breslow, Associate Professor in Mass Communication, who is known for using inspirational methods in teaching. The training is part of the Student Employment Office’s “Self Improvement Training Series.”

“The Self Improvement Training Series is intended for students who aspire to work as student employees at the university. It is our aim to equip students with the requisite skills to make them competitive and productive in the work place,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. “There is a big demand from students to conduct training sessions on various topics of interest and our employment office is working in collaboration with volunteer faculty members to fulfill this demand,” she added.

Office of Student Affairs honors Fall 2011 graduating students

In honor of graduating students residing in residential halls on campus, the Office of Student Affairs hosted farewell events in the women’s and men’s residential halls on December 6 and 13 respectively.

Over a hundred students attended the women’s farewell function whilst 150 students joined the function in the men’s dorm. The event included musical and dance performances and a dabka performance by student residents. The special occasion featured Power Hit Radio Club and the Music Club, making the gathering livelier and more memorable for the graduating students.

“This event has been a pleasure from beginning to end and a nice gesture of appreciation on the part of the university,” said graduating student Monzir Ali. “The other graduating students and I are honored to be part of this event and would like to convey our gratitude to everyone involved in arranging this special occasion in our honor.”

“Considering the residential halls as their home away from home, I am proud of how responsible these students are in managing both their personal and academic lives on campus. They have attained their goals at AUS and I congratulate them on this great achievement,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

The events were organized by Office of Student Affairs’ Student Residential Life Department in collaboration with the student-run Student Residential Life Association.
Students display talent on stage

Students displayed their talent at ‘AUS Got Talent’, a two-day event organized by the Power Hit Radio Club. The annual event, held December 27 and 28 last year at the university’s Main Plaza, attracted more than 500 students who gathered to watch their fellow students perform.

The talent contest consisted of two rounds. During the preliminary round held on the first day of the event, 20 contestants demonstrated a wide variety of talents including beatboxing, classical and modern singing and playing musical instruments. Ten winners of the preliminary round moved on to the final round.

The final round provided opportunities for the finalists to display their talent before a large audience that was captivated by their performances and cheered all through the event. As the judges prepared the result, the stage was opened for select audience members to show off their talents.

Singer Ahmed Al Hussain won first place, singer Tyma Bittard was placed second and Feras Kaftaro’s guitar band won third place. This much-awaited event provided musical enthusiasts with a platform to perform for their peers.

The event was organized through the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Activities Office.

AUS Debate Club wins honors at EEG Public Speaking Competition

The AUS Debate Club was declared the First Runner-up in its category at the 11th Emirates Environmental Group (EEG) Public Speaking Competition 2011 held late last semester at the Knowledge Village in Dubai. The topic in its category was: “Recycling does it really matter?”

The AUS team competed with 11 universities to secure second place in their category, trailing the winners by just a few points. Each team comprised five members: one speaker and four researchers. The AUS team included Saad Nasr Haque, Nada Darwish, Noor Zeinni, Nada Ali Obaid and Anna Yazujan. The team was required to prepare a 12-minute presentation on their topic which was judged on how the issue or problem was addressed and what solutions were provided in the presentation.

“This event proved to be quite insightful and a great learning experience for me. On behalf of the team, I would like to thank the AUS Debate Club and Office of Student Affairs for bestowing upon us the responsibility of representing our institution. I encourage other AUS students to participate in such events in the future,” said Saad Haque who was the team speaker for this year’s EEG public speaking competition.

The regional event saw the participation of several diverse teams and participants in three different topics and presented a variety of ideas and solutions. This was the third time that the AUS team performed well at the EEG competition after winning the first runner-up position in 2009 and first place in 2007. The students’ participation at the event was organized by Student Activities, Office of Student Affairs.
The Palestinian Cultural Club (PCC) on campus organized an art exhibition of the late artist Naji Al-Ali’s caricatures, including a display of more than 250 of his drawings. The exhibition was opened on November 15, 2011 at the university’s Student Center by the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Development and Organizations Department along with a delegation from the Consulate General of the State of Palestine in UAE.

In addition to the art gallery, the PCC also organized a caricature workshop wherein students expressed their admiration for the vision and work of the late artist. The club created a model of the caricature “Handala” and displayed it at the exhibition.

The event was organized by the PCC to promote Naji Al-Ali’s views on the Palestinian issue and to revive his work which has lives in the hearts of many people.

**Leadership Program conducts training and workshop series**

The Office of Student Affairs’ Student Leadership Program conducted the DISC analysis training on November 21, 2011, as part of the Student Training and Workshop Series. The purpose of the workshop is to provide students with training opportunities that sharpen and develop their skills as well as prepare them for successful leadership.

DISC is a behavioral model that examines the behavior of individuals in their environment or within a specific situation. By finding out specific behavioral variations in individuals, their general characteristics and unique value can be determined. DISC is used in an assortment of areas, including companies, human resources, consultants, coaches and trainers.

“This is the second year that we’ve had this workshop, as it is very popular among students. We realize the importance for students to gain the skills necessary to analyze and understand people’s personalities as well as their own. Our aim is for students to become better citizens and learn how to motivate and minimize misunderstanding through proper communication,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

“Attending the DISC Analysis workshop was a great opportunity. Learning how to analyze my personality in addition to others’ personalities was an interesting thing. I got to know the different kinds of personalities and where I fit among them,” said Mohammed Hukan, a senior student majoring in electrical engineering.

“It is a fruitful workshop that will help whoever takes it by teaching him how to deal with other people based on their personalities. I would like to thank the Student Leadership Program for organizing the workshop, and would like to encourage everyone not to miss such an opportunity,” he added.

The Student Leadership Program continues to provide students with training opportunities under the Student Training and Workshop Series. The series aims to guide students to make decisions with integrity, maintain high ethical standards and understand the interests of a diverse community.

*Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department*
The AUS Student Leadership Program launched a new initiative called the AUS Student Lecture Series with a joint lecture by two outstanding students on December 6, 2011 in the university’s Lecture Hall A.

With a passion for mountain climbing, AUS student Adi Al Fardan decided to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, the tallest freestanding mountain in the world, standing at 5,895 meters (19,340 feet) above sea level.

Despite facing serious obstacles on his way to the top, he managed to achieve his goal. “I said to myself, if I endure this climb with all the troubles, obstacles and hardships, then I can overcome anything else in my life,” Al Fardan said. “The climb was extremely difficult, but that thought motivated me every time I was tempted to give up. And I know that in the future, every time I face a challenge in my life, I would definitely look back to this experience and tell myself, you did that, you can also do this.”

That was followed by a moving lecture by Maram Dalab, the UAE’s Ambassador of Hope for people with diabetes.

Diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 8, Dalab, learned at that early age to befriend diabetes as a coping mechanism in order to live a good life in spite of her predicament.

“My advice to people going through challenges is to be optimistic, have a strong will, have faith and have a fair amount of knowledge about your situation. Approximately 366 million people around the world are diabetic. In the Middle East, 30 percent of the population has diabetes, but the sad part is that 19 percent of them don’t know that they have diabetes,” said Dalab.

“Thank you both for your engaging presentations. We have learned from Adi that you can do anything in life you set yourself to do. And from Maram we have learned to cope with challenges and to be helpful to others who may be facing life’s challenges,” said Sheikh Mohammed Al Thani, Director of the Office of the AUS President, who also went on the Kilimanjaro trip.

Commending the students for their engaging presentations, Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, thanked both Al Fardan and Dalab for speaking on that inaugural event. “These are the kind of leaders that we want to develop with our Student Leadership Program. We launched the AUS Student Lecture Series to encourage students to share their stories and achievements with their friends, peers and AUS community. It is another step toward preparing our students to be the future leaders who speak up, influence, build, share and motivate others,” she said.

Anton Chernyshov, a freshman student in business management, said, “It is a great opportunity to hear my fellow students talking about their personal leadership experience. This motivational lecture shows examples of inspirational leaders at AUS and encourages other students to be active as well.”

Sara Samir, a junior majoring in finance, said: “The lecture was very motivational and I really enjoyed it. When the first speaker shared his experience with us regarding the difficulties and challenges he and his friends faced to climb one of the highest mountains, it made me feel how important it is to keep looking forward in life and keep a strong faith in what we are capable of doing. Further, when the second speaker shared her experience I was amazed by the amount of challenges she faced and what made me even more amazed is how she dealt with the challenges in an optimistic manner. These two speakers represented real leaders. Sharing their experience with us was a gain.”

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
Volunteers assist during new year’s eve celebrations

Preparing to welcome 2012, AUS students got the chance to celebrate and work at Burj Khalifa on new year’s eve. Burj Khalifa – Emaar management invited Office of Community Services for the second time to serve with the organizers team. Previously, AUS students participated in the opening ceremony of Burj Khalifa in 2009.

Participants were divided into groups, distributing them in three different locations around Burj Khalifa (Down Town, The Island, Emaar Boulevard), and also briefed on their tasks three days prior to the date of the event. From 6:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. on new year’s eve, December 31, 2011, students organized entrances and exits, helping people to reach transportation spots, guiding visitors to specific locations they looked to celebrate at and collaborating with Dubai Police in regulating the traffic. Seventy nine Community Services volunteers participated and were distributed certificates and vouchers by Burj Khalifa – Emaar Management, appreciating their participation in this event.

Students participate in Young Entrepreneurship Congress in Istanbul

Hamad Al Ansari and Faisal Al Shehhi from the AUS Student Leadership Program, participated at The Third Young Entrepreneurship Congress in Istanbul, Turkey, held from December 8 to 11, 2011.

The congress aimed to build bridges between young people and the business world and highlighted the significance of entrepreneurship opportunities worldwide. The two-day congress program consisted of special sessions and workshops. Panels included “The Role of Social Media on Change” and “The Role of NGO’s on Change” on the first day and “The Role of Youth on Change” and “The Role of Sportive Activities on Change” on the second day.

Three thousand local and international participants, a number of specialists, local and overseas academicians and prominent businessmen attended the congress this year. Also among the attendees were guest ministers, political party leaders, deputies, bureaucrats, diplomats, the Governor of Istanbul, mayors and presidents of NGOs.

“Participating in the international youth entrepreneurship congress held in Istanbul was a great experience,” said Al Ansari, a sophomore majoring in finance. “Different panels of eminent personalities from around the world were present. They enlightened us with what it takes to be a successful entrepreneur and a true leader.”

“Participating at The Young Entrepreneurship Congress was a great opportunity for our students to better understand the importance of entrepreneurship for economic growth, productivity, innovation and employment,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

The event was organized by MUSIAD, the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association in Turkey.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
Students from the Student Leadership Program embarked on an expedition during the last Eid break to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, one of the world’s seven summits and tallest freestanding mountain. Adi Hassan Al Fardan and Khalifa Al Thani climbed the highest peak standing at 5,895 meters (19,340 feet) above sea level. Dubbed the rooftop of Africa, Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in the continent, located in northeastern Tanzania near the border of Kenya.

The students had to face uncomfortable weather conditions, mixed with rain, snow and hail at a temperature of below -20 degrees. The danger of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro is not the climb, but having to deal with the high altitude, which can cause difficulty in breathing and other complications.

“Adventure sport plays an important role in student development; this was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and the students learned to adapt quickly without having the luxuries in life that we take for granted. The trip was mentally challenging and focused on goals that the students successfully managed to reach due to their dedication and commitment. We are proud to see the AUS flag at the top of Mount Kilimanjaro,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

“I made the decision to climb Mount Kilimanjaro because I wanted to do something new and different, since my life currently revolves around work and studies. However, I did not realize how hard it was until I got there. The only focus I had was to reach the peak and survive. The scenery was amazing, the clouds, the experience, the cold weather and seeing a different ecosystem. I highly recommend students to be adventurous; it will change your life,” said Al Fardan, a junior in finance.

“Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro was a wonderful experience. Despite the rigorous training and preparation, the moment you embark on the trip you find it even more difficult and challenging. But life is too short to miss such adventures. Always put your goals high and you’ll accomplish them with some desire, determination and belief in yourself,” said Khalifa Al Thani, a junior in management.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
Students win fourth place in worldwide Red Bull Competition

Students from the Student Leadership Program won fourth place in the World Red Bull Can Car Racing Competition held from November 20 to 24, 2011. The competition involved designing and racing a remote-controlled car around a scaled-down track.

The AUS team advanced to the world finals in the UK to compete against teams from 16 other countries after winning first place in the UAE level of the competition, which was held between more than 18 universities in the UAE.

“The students spent a lot of time working on the car design to ensure that the framework was assembled with careful measurement and accuracy. It was a competition that required creativity and innovative minds, and we are pleased with their performance coming fourth in the world competition,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

“We were happy that we were awarded a trip to the UK to compete in the finals against tough teams. Although we hoped to take first place in the world to give this country a simple present on its 40th birthday, it was an unforgettable experience,” he added.

“As entertaining and exciting as it was to compete in the Red Bull Racing Can, the greatest aspect of this competition was being able to take the skills that we learned at university and apply them to the real world. It’s a huge motivation for students who love to use textbook knowledge on the race track,” said Maged Shoman, a freshman student majoring in mechanical engineering, who drove the car in the competition.

“The Red Bull Racing Can competition was a marvelous activity for using your engineering skills and talent in driving RC cars. I spent several days designing the car, and my brother spent several nights practicing driving it, which resulted in our success,” said Hossam Shoman, a senior student majoring in electrical engineering and mathematics, who designed the vehicle.

“Through this workshop, I learned new things such as how to deal with difficult people, how to listen to people’s conflicts and assist them in solving those conflicts harmoniously by bringing them together and facilitating communication between them.”

Twenty peer coordinators awarded certificates

The Office of Student Affairs (OSA), recently held a special ceremony to award certificates to 20 members of the third and fourth batches of peer coordinators trained in peer mediation. Students attended the peer mediation training for a period of three weeks in which they learned important mediation skills that will enable them understand and resolve conflicts. They also learned how to help their peers to resolve conflicts using mediation techniques.

“This training has equipped you with skills to mediate conflicts with your peers both on and off campus,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, before presenting the certificates.

Hossam Shoman, a member of the third batch and a student from the College of Engineering said: “Through this workshop, I learned new things such as how to deal with difficult people, how to listen to people’s conflicts and assist them in solving those conflicts harmoniously by bringing them together and facilitating communication between them.”

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To register, send an e-mail to: mediation@aus.edu or visit the Mediation Services Office in Judicial Affairs Department, Student Center, First Floor, Room A254-A256.
AUS students participate in the Big Start Competition

The Student Leadership Program of the Office of Student Affairs in collaboration with Al Tamimi Investment (ATI) held an introductory session for the Big Start Competition, a search platform for commercially viable start-up business ideas, on December 14, 2011.

The 2012 Big Start Competition is the third edition of this annual program, which aims to cultivate, inspire and reward young people's interest in entrepreneurship within the UAE. The competition hunts for ideas that could become commercially viable business plan(s). The successful student(s) are mentored throughout the business start-up phase by an experienced team from Al Tamimi Investments. When the business goes live, the successful student(s) hold the CEO position and an agreed structured shareholding in the company.

The competition goes through four phases. The first round starts with a simple questionnaire to be answered by the participants on the Big Start Competition's website. Successful applications then advance to the second level in which candidates are invited to a one-day workshop session where they learn how to write their business plan and meet with professionals to refine the business plan and the commercial idea. The third phase requires a further refinement of the commercial idea and preparing a professional presentation to the judges. The winner(s) will be announced in an award ceremony in Dubai on June 4, 2012.

“It is my last year at AUS and I have always waited for entrepreneurial opportunities in order to facilitate my dream of forming my own company. Now, with The Big Start Competition, I can see myself moving an extra step to make my dream come true. I hope to see more and more of such events that empower the youth at early stages,” said Youssef Chehade, a senior majoring in chemical engineering.

“The Big Start Competition is a great opportunity for our final-year students to present their creative ideas, which could eventually turn into a viable business in which they combine their AUS education with a real business experience. Participating in such a prestigious competition helps students broaden their experience and interact with professionals in different fields,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department

Student-athletes win honors in UOWD sports festival

Our student-athletes won honors in the Eighth Intercollegiate Sports Festival of the University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD) held November 27-December 1, 2011 at Al Manara Sports Hall in Dubai.

The AUS teams competed in the volleyball, basketball, soccer and table tennis events of the tournament and won first place in women's basketball. They placed second in women's table tennis and in men's volleyball and basketball.

With more than 500 athletes from universities and colleges from across UAE participating in the highly competitive event, most of the AUS teams played in the final games.

“I congratulate our student-athletes for their achievements; they have performed very well in this tournament. This event was a good opportunity for our students not only to compete in sports but also to socialize and network with their peers from other educational institutions,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

The students' participation was organized by the Office of Student Affairs' Student Athletics and Recreation Department.
The Office of Student Affairs’ Student Athletics and Recreation Department concluded its Fall 2011 Intramural Sports Tournament last month. Held in collaboration with the AUS Student Council, the competitions started on December 26, 2011 with the participation of more than 500 male and female students.

Competitions were conducted in men’s and women’s basketball, volleyball, badminton, table tennis, tennis, swimming, squash and in men’s cricket, soccer and chess.

The prize distribution ceremony 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 Luis Garcia, President of the Student Council.

In addition to awarding the winning teams and individuals, best players in team sports were selected and awarded for their outstanding performance in the tournament. The best players were Sumayya Taha for women’s volleyball, Suzanne Mahfouz for women’s basketball, Ahmed Madani for men’s volleyball, Ayman Bukhari for men’s basketball, Ahmed Aouda for men’s soccer and Fazal Rehman for cricket. All the winners were awarded gift vouchers.

“Sports activities play a big role in the physical and intellectual development of students. We focus on student development by offering varied sports programs and activities that provide students with a platform to gain exposure, overcome challenges and hone their skills,” said Dr. Al Shehhi on the occasion.
AUS team wins debate championship

The AUS Debate Club’s Team One emerged as the winner of the all-AUS final of the Eighth AUS Intercollegiate Debating Championship held at the university’s Main Auditorium on December 22, 2011. The AUS Debate Club had two teams competing for this year’s championship. Both teams prevailed against 16 other teams from 11 universities that were also vying to become this year’s champions. The teams that participated in the competition came from American University of Sharjah; Preston University, Ajman; University of Dubai; United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain; Middlesex University, Dubai; American University of Ras Al Khaimah; University of Sharjah; Skyline University, Sharjah; Gulf Medical University, Ajman; University of Bolton, Ras Al Khaimah; and BITS Pilani, Dubai Campus.

The winning team comprising Anam Merchant, Badar Ud Duja and Juhi Chanchalani clinched their final victory as they opposed the motion, “This house believes that global warming is nothing to be concerned about,” against AUS Team Two, which supported the motion.

“This year we witnessed 72 students from 18 talented teams representing 11 leading universities from all over UAE fighting for the top title of the most prestigious debating competition this country,” said Jashan Jot Singh, President of the AUS Debate Club. “The four-day event was judged by Toastmasters. Teams debated a wide variety of issues that ranged from technology matters to the economy and the environment.

“Today I feel extremely privileged and lucky because it is only the second time in the tournament’s history that both AUS teams qualified for the finals. As president of the AUS Debate Club, there is no better feeling than to see our teams succeed, guaranteeing victory for AUS,” he concluded.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department

The Man Inspiring Millions motivates AUS students

Kevin Abdulrahman, known as The Man Inspiring Millions, motivated students at American University of Sharjah (AUS) and shared tips on how to be successful, at a lecture held on November 23, 2011. The talk was organized by the AUS Student Leadership Program (SLP).

In what turned out to be a very interactive presentation, Abdulrahman questioned students about their ambitions and goals. He told them to always ask themselves a basic question before starting anything in life: “What do I want?” He said that the key to happiness and success was in the answer to that simple question.

“Find out what success means to you and then go and do it, based on your definition of success,” said Abdulrahman. “Do something you love. There’s no point doing a degree where you end up skipping classes. When you do something you love, you keep on doing it, you never stop and you automatically become successful at it,” he added.

Abdulrahman’s work revolves mainly around the subjects of self-improvement, motivation and leadership.

“The presentation had a blend of positive wisdom and engaging style, with a message of hope and inspiration shared with humor that made students think about the direction they are heading toward, the challenges they will face during life’s toughest moments and how to overcome them in a positive way. I encourage students to follow their dreams, inspire others and make a difference in their community,” said Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

“When I first saw the guest, he looked extremely young and so my expectations were low. However, his speech was very motivational and inspiring, and listening to him has given me the drive to be more focused about what I want to do in life,” said SLP team leader Sara Choobber, a junior finance major.

Story by AUS Strategic Communications and Media Department
Echoes

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.

**Yasmeen Dehbsahi**
Civil Engineering  
Junior  
ASCE Club’s Trip to Turkey participant

I can honestly say that this trip was the trip of a lifetime! Each and every member of our group added a special touch to this short but unforgettable journey. We felt like one family there, with our bonds strengthening more and more by the day. The best parts about this trip were walking down the streets of Turkey together in the freezing weather, the girls stopping every minute to shop, keeping our promises of meeting at the hotel’s lobby on time, the bus rides from one place to another which were filled with singing and laughter and last but not least, taking a million pictures so we don’t miss out on anything. All these special moments made me realize that it’s not the destination, it’s the journey and the people.

**Maha AlGhussain**  
Freshman  
International Studies  
OSA Student Trip to Italy participant

It was a pleasure to travel with the Office of Student Affairs’ staff and to meet all the students. A marvelous experience; it was my first but Inshallah not my last. Six days to be remembered.

**Yasmin Ali**  
Junior  
Chemical Engineering  
OSA Student Trip to Italy participant

Italy was a great experience for me; I met a lot of new people, got to see great places and learned a lot about Italian culture. I would have loved to extend my stay there for a couple of nights more. Overall, I loved it and I am looking forward to the next cultural trip.

**Azza Sayed**  
Junior  
Marketing  
OSA Student Trip to Italy participant

The trip was beyond amazing! The OSA staff was very kind and helpful; Dr. Moza was like a mother to us and the rest of the staff were always there whenever we needed any help. The places we visited were interesting and I learned a lot about Italy and its history. I am grateful because this trip introduced me to kind, funny and amazing individuals whom I would have never met otherwise. This trip gave me memories to cherish and friends for life. I browse through my camera everyday just to remember how happy my friends and I were. Thank you so much for this experience.

**Iman Al Midfa**  
Sophomore  
Management  
OSA Student Trip to Italy participant

It was a great experience and I learned a lot about the history and culture of Italy. But mostly, I loved the fact that I got to meet a lot of new friends and interact with people who I wouldn’t normally meet at university. It was truly an amazing experience and I wish that we could have stayed for longer than just five days.

**Hana Kazim**  
Senior  
Marketing  
OSA Student Trip to Italy participant

The trip excelled on many levels both as a learning experience and a way to make new friends. Overall, I would like to thank AUS for providing me with the opportunity to learn from a new culture. I wish to be a part of the next cultural tour wherever it may be.
The trip was extremely enjoyable and informative, it exceeded my expectations. Thank you for a wonderful week.

Deema Abu Dalo
Sophomore
Architecture
OSA Student Trip to Italy participant

Thank you very much for this great and unforgettable trip. I hope that the Student Multicultural Learning Program will organize more great trips like this in the future.

Rashid Almulla
Sophomore
Mechanical Engineering
OSA Student Trip to Italy participant
Men’s basketball team wins first place in street basketball festival

American University of Sharjah (AUS) men’s basketball team won first place in the Street Basketball Festival organized by Dubai Sports Council on December 25, 2011 at Al Ahli Club, Dubai. Students Khaled Ismail, Mohammed Issam, Ahmed Makki and Mohammed Ismail represented the AUS team in the event.

Eighteen teams from local and international universities participated in the festival. The street basketball festival was a great opportunity for the participants to compete with each other, showcase their talent and to develop their potential.

Winning all the rounds without a single loss, the AUS team performed very well in the festival and achieved its well-deserved victory. “The tournament was really amazing; it gave us the chance to meet different teams from various universities. Although the competition was not easy, and none of the teams would give up easily, we still won first place,” said Khaled Ismail, AUS basketball team member.

The student-athletes’ participation was arranged by the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Athletics and Recreation Department.

Cricket team wins Maxtalent Pride Cup Interuniversity Cricket Tournament

Our cricket team won the Maxtalent Intercollegiate Cup for the second consecutive year. AUS beat London American City College (LACC) to win the Maxtalent Pride Cup Interuniversity Cricket Tournament held at Sharjah Cricket Stadium on November 23, 2011. Earlier, AUS defeated Herriot Watt University, Canadian University of Dubai and Manipal University on its way to the finals.

Winning the toss, AUS captain Fahad Tariq invited LACC to bat first on a pitch where spinners were expected to get some assistance. LACC openers started briskly but a diving catch by Musaab of AUS saw LACC batsman Omar Ahmed’s departure. LACC managed to score 144 runs for the loss of four wickets in 20 overs. For AUS, Shahzada Harris grabbed two wickets for 26 runs while Fahad Tariq and Ankur Gopal picked up one each.

Shahruk Khan, with his medium pace; and Sohaib Ali, with his spin, restricted the LACC batsmen from scoring.

While batting, AUS lost its consistent scorer Arqam Aftab early on in a run out. On losing Arqam, Abdul Basit played a match winning innings smashing 69 off 53 while Shahzada Harris slammed 50 off 44. AUS completed the run chase in 18.2 overs while losing only three wickets.

Along with Mazhar Khan from Emirates Cricket Board, officials from AUS joined the prize distribution ceremony. Abdul Basit of AUS received the Player of the Final award. The students’ participation in the tournament was arranged by the Office of Student Affairs’ Student Athletics and Recreation Department.