

# AUSconnect

## Sharjah Ruler Inaugurates Fourth Annual AUS Alumni Reunion Dinner



His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah and President of American University of Sharjah, inaugurates the Fourth Annual AUS Alumni Reunion Dinner that was held at the University's main plaza, on January 15.



His Highness welcomed over 2,000 alumni who attended and shared with them his recollection of the past 15 years of the University's history. He expressed his pride in the alumni and how they have maintained a relationship with their alma mater. "I would like to assure you that your university is moving in the right direction. With each day that passes, the university is preparing either for a scientific achievement or a step towards further accreditation or improvement in its facilities," he said. He expressed pride in the University's academic reputation, appreciating in this regard the efforts for development and advancement exerted by members of the AUS Board of Trustees, whom he described as distinguished and dedicated scholars with an international academic reputation.

Sheikh Sultan described the early stages of establishing the College of Engineering, "When we were discussing the establishment of the school of engineering, I was told that only 15 students had registered to study engineering and after the foundation stage there might be only 11 students. Given the cost of establishing a fully fledged college, which was AED 25 million, the indication was that it was not feasible to go ahead with the plan. However, I insisted on establishing the full school. And now the AUS College of Engineering is one of the best in the Middle East. All its bachelor degree programs are accredited by ABET Inc.," he said.



Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS, welcomed the alumni, expressing delight in hearing about their achievements in all walks of life. He said AUS continually looked for ways to improve itself to attract the best students, and offered the best education with the best facilities possible, pointing to the new building for the School of Business and Management, which is almost complete, and the AUS Research and Technology Park, which is expected to have extensive facilities for practical research and development. He also noted that AUS is increasing its activities in music and the performing arts as well.



Dr. Heath said alumni achievements are increasing the stature of AUS. "When I first joined the university two and a half years ago, AUS had a very good reputation. But what I have noticed recently is that AUS's reputation for academic excellence shines even brighter today," he said. Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, also addressed the gathering and welcomed the alumni. "This is such a powerful gathering of the AUS clan! This says that AUS remains so profoundly significant to your lives and that we can grow and prosper together. Your presence is a bold statement of historical dimensions," she said. She also indicated that so much that is accomplished at AUS is done for the first time in the entire Gulf region.



"We were the first university to earn full-fledged American accreditation. We were the first to teach students how to think critically and innovate for private industry, and the first to partner with business and industry as a way to take the UAE and its neighbors toward a better future. We were the first to create an independent alumni association with chapters in so many countries," she said.

Eisa Al Ali, President of the AUS Alumni Association (AUSAA), spoke on the occasion. "A decade of alumni achievements is a decade of AUS success," he said. Out of the 5,515 AUS



alumni, 342 have obtained master's degrees and 335 are currently working on their master's degree, he said. He also reported that seven alumni have obtained their doctorate degrees and 23 are now pursuing doctoral studies. Among the alumni are 178 directors, vice presidents, CEOs and general managers, and 394 alumni are at the managerial level, he added. In gratitude to His Highness the AUS President, the alumni created a composite photo of His Highness Sheikh Sultan the size of the AUS Main Building comprised of alumni photos, which was displayed at the dinner. They also presented him with a work by Missak Terzian, an Armenian-American painter.

**Alumni winners of the AUSAA scholarships were also announced at the event. These were:**

Mohammad Abu Fool, Class of '10  
 Sami Salahat, Class of '07  
 Omar Al Samman, Class of '07  
 Hichem Zakaria Aichour, Class of '10  
 Amani Al Nasser, Class of '09  
 Fadi Makarem, Class of '08  
 Mohammad Saleh, Class of '08  
 Walid Mazyan, Class of '09  
 Elena Szymanska, Class of '09  
 Mohamad Hazem Al Mously, Class of '08  
 Fakhruddin Hasnan, Class of '08  
 Rami El Haj, Class of '08  
 Ibrahim Masoud, Class of '09

Fleur Francis Bittard, Class of '10, was the lucky winner of the Mitsubishi car sponsored by Construction Machinery Company.

**Some alumni were also recognized for their outstanding achievements in their professional careers. These were:**

Saood Al Kaabi, Class of '10  
 Amr Kaa'ka'ah, Class of '06







Ahmad Hamadeh, Class of '05 and his wife Alumna Noor Shamma, Class of '06  
 Abdullah El Shamsi, Class of '04  
 Fareed Mohammad, Class of '08  
 Bader Al Madani, Class of '10

**Alumni representatives of the AUSAA Events Chapter were also praised for their commitment and efforts in organizing events such as the Reunion Dinner. These were:**

Rami Jaber, Class of '05  
 Fawwaz Akhtar, Class of '06  
 Yazan Jamous, Class of '09  
 Reem Lootah, Class of '10  
 Hala Awadallah, Class of '06  
 Jihad Mnasriya, Class of '08  
 Ahmed Reyami, Class of '08



The dinner was also attended by Sheikh Khalid Bin Saqr Al Qassimi, Chairman of the Public Works Department, Sharjah; Sheikh Salem Bin Abdulrahman Bin Salem Al Qassimi, Director of the Office of His Highness the Ruler; Sheikh Mohamad Bin Abdullah Al Thani, Director of the Office of His Highness the AUS President; AUS Trustees Hamid Jafar, Riad Sadik and Maroun Semaan; Dr. Amr Abdul Hamid, Advisor to His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah for Higher Education; Noora Al Nouman, Director of the Executive Office of Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher Bint Mohammad Bin Sultan Al Qassimi, wife of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah; and senior university officials, graduates, staff and faculty members.



# Chancellor's Alumni Reunion Address

**Your Highness, Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, our President, AUS Trustees Jafar, Sadik and Semaan, dear guests and most especially, our dear alumni**

Wow! What a wonderful sight it is. I believe there must be at least 2,500 alumni and their families and friends of AUS attending tonight's Fourth Reunion Gala Dinner. For the fourth consecutive year, this plaza has been welcoming our young graduates back home. On behalf of the American University of Sharjah, I welcome you all! We are very grateful that you could take time from your busy lives to visit us again. We are always delighted to reunite our children from our extended family and to hear of your achievements as our ambassadors to all walks of life.

AUS has many important dates on its calendar, but this occasion, the Reunion Gala Dinner, has a special quality to us all. You graduates have the chance to see former classmates again and meet former professors - who can no longer give you homework but who care profoundly about what you have become. And this dinner gives me and all of us here at AUS the opportunity to see you again. I have talked to some of you already this evening. I hope to talk to many more of you before the night is finished.

Wow, if we have 2,500 or so tonight, how many will attend this dinner five years from now, ten years from now? I am just wondering. I look forward to those Reunion Dinners in the future. All of you will be as warmly welcomed back then to AUS, your second home, as you are tonight.

Since you left AUS, your lives have changed. You've started work, possibly even changed jobs, gotten married, maybe had children too. Your lives have not stood still. AUS has not stood still either. It continually looks for ways to improve itself to attract the best students, give the best education with the best facilities possible. Not far from us now, for example, near the Main Building The new building for the School of Business and Management is almost completed. And in this direction (gestures toward the military camp), in this direction, is the military camp, which will eventually be replaced by a technology park--extensive facilities for practical research and development for engineering and industry.

But I hasten to add that business and the sciences are not the only areas to benefit. AUS has added theater and music to its curriculum too. AUS now offers plays, produced by the students for AUS and the community. Indeed, I invite you to come and see a play here someday or perhaps offer a lecture sharing your work experience with our students when your schedule allows. You see, AUS is not standing still. This Reunion Dinner is a marvelous example. The AUS Alumni Association organized this wonderful evening for us together. A lot of people have worked behind the scenes to bring this event to you. They have devoted their time and resources to bring it to a successful completion.

In this regard, I wish to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to AUS Trustee Riad Sadik, who for the fourth consecutive year has contributed a brand new car to the alumni association raffle. Somebody this evening is going to win this car! This is yet another sign of Trustee Sadik's continued support for the AUS Alumni Association. Our sincere thanks also go to the Samurraei Foundation which

has generously offered to provide the light show for this evening. The light show is really spectacular and I do



hope you enjoy it. Last but certainly not least, I wish to recognize AUS alumnus Rami Jaber, who is well known to you all, with his thousands of alumni friends. As the Events Chapter Representative of the AUS Alumni Association, Rami Jaber and his event committee of alumni volunteers have overseen all the extensive arrangements that an event of this magnitude necessitates. Thank you for bringing us this magnificent evening. The AUSAA helps to maintain the link between you and AUS. There are many benefits from this link. The Reunion Dinner is not the only benefit.

One major benefit of a strong connection between you, the alumni, and AUS is that as you are successful, your success comes back to AUS. AUS can point to you with pride, and say that man or woman is a graduate of AUS. This statement carries a strong impact of its own! As I visit the community, CEOs, industry leaders, and prominent figures often comment on how well prepared and professional our alumni are. There is a benefit for you, too. As AUS is successful, you share in its success. When you tell someone, "I am a graduate of the American University of Sharjah," you can be confident as our youngest ambassadors that you have earned the best academic degrees in the entire region and beyond. As a matter of fact, as AUS matures and develops, the value of your degree actually increases. This is a continuous mutual benefit.

You alumni are the spirit of AUS. Your integrity and accomplishments will reflect upon AUS. And the integrity and achievements of AUS will reflect upon you. Please keep in touch with us. Continue to visit your extended family at your alma mater.

Enjoy this lovely evening, ladies and gentlemen! Thank you.

**Dr. Peter Heath**  
**AUS Chancellor**

# Success Story: AUS Alumnus H.E. Sheikh Khalid bin Sultan Al Nahyan

**Alumnus H.E. Sheikh Khalid bin Sultan Al Nahyan took a few moments out of his busy schedule to speak with *AUS Connect* about his experience as a PhD student at King's College, his future plans and how his studies at AUS were a supporting factor.**

I am a UAE citizen who graduated in International Studies and Economics from the American University of Sharjah. I am currently engaged in postgraduate work in War Studies and International Relations. I was raised in a political environment and I have benefited from being able to travel widely in Europe and beyond. It is difficult to be objective about oneself, but I believe I have a well rounded mildly extroverted personality, and the ability to relate easily to people from different walks of life. My university career has encouraged academic ambitions and I hope to construct a reputation in the field of International Relations.

I am registered as a full time PhD student in the Department of War Studies at Kings College in the UK and have almost completed four chapters of my dissertation, which is entitled "The Foreign Policy of the UAE."

My interest in this subject was stimulated by several undergraduate courses, particularly those dealing with aspects of international relations. Contacts in the War Studies Department have greatly increased my knowledge base, particularly in the area of small state behavior, and this has fuelled my determination to make an original contribution to our understanding of the foreign policy problems faced by the UAE, both now and in the future.

My PhD topic is a logical development of my undergraduate political science education. It combines a historical document based analysis of the evolution of UAE foreign policy, with contemporary "political science" explanations of policy choices and decisions and the constraints under which the UAE operates.

The challenges in completing this comprehensive analysis of UAE foreign policy are as follows: a) integrating "political science" and 'historical' methodologies to provide a unified coherent analysis, b) achieving an objective perspective on UAE politics, c) sourcing primary documentation material – particularly for the early years after the UAE was created and government bureaucracies hardly existed, d) arranging interviews with officials (current and retired) and being sufficiently well informed to identify the right questions to put to



them, and finally e) producing a definitive piece of work on UAE foreign policy which will be useful for both academics and practitioners.

Without any doubt the education I received at AUS is the benefactor in widening my ambitions in pursuing higher education and prepared me for my next step after my undergraduate degree.

It is almost certain that I will make my career within the government of the UAE where I hope my academic interest in foreign policy analysis will be useful background for the practical world of decision making and policy. My interest in foreign policy has always been directed towards dealing with real world problems facing the UAE.

As a result of my PhD work I have acquired considerable knowledge about UAE politics in general and foreign policy expertise in particular. The analytical skills I have had to acquire—handling large bodies of information, sorting out the relevant from the irrelevant, explaining complex and diverse issues, structuring papers and becoming fluent with sophisticated ideas—are useful skills for any practitioner in government. I hope to serve my country and family as best I could.

I would consider the 'knowledge and experience' I acquired through my years of studying and researching to be my greatest achievement as they are the pillars of my success.

# AUS Connect Interviews

## Trustee L.S. “Skip” Fletcher

### 1. What is your role as a University Trustee?

A trustee’s role is to ensure that AUS will continue to provide quality education for all students consistent with the vision of His Highness Sheikh Sultan Dr. Al-Qassimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah Founder and President of the University and Chairman of the Board of Trustees, we also oversee the academic programs of the University and work to ensure the financial and administrative stability of AUS.

### 2. What is your profession (and professional affiliations) when you are not serving as a Trustee?

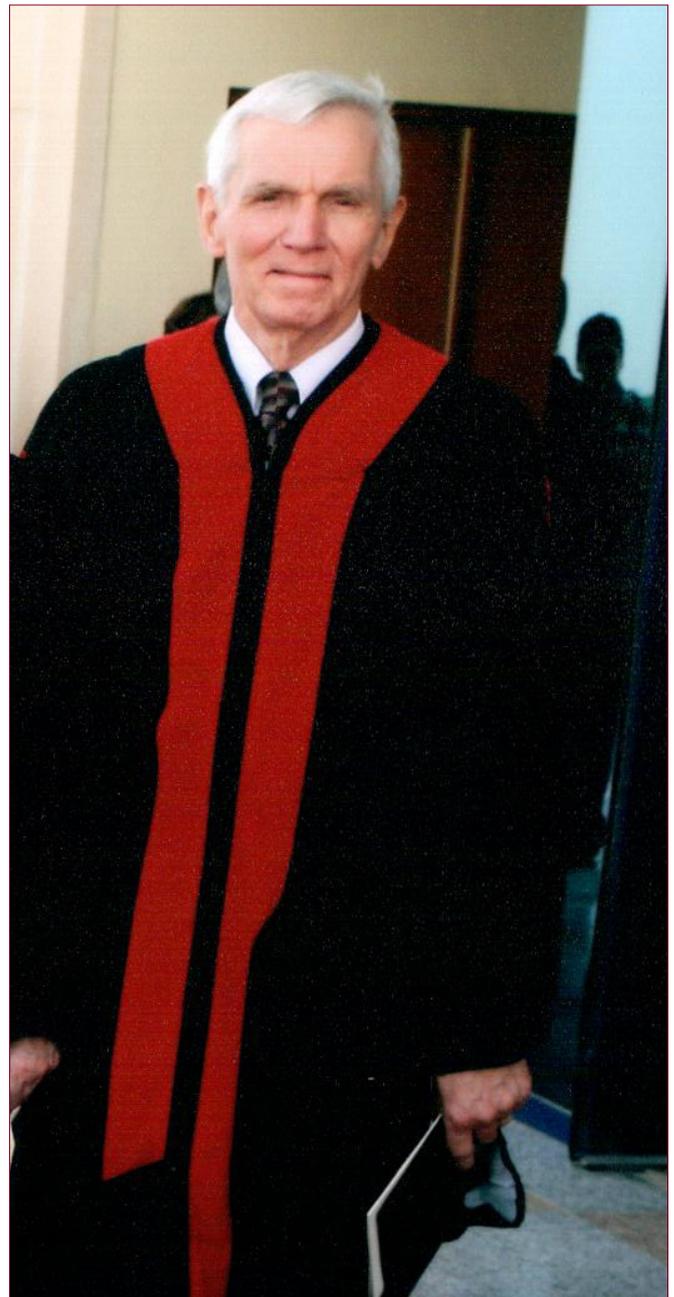
I currently serve as a Distinguished Research Professor in the Texas A&M University System, Regents Professor Emeritus, and Thomas A. Dietz Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University.

### 3. You were involved in establishing the College of Engineering at AUS and securing its accreditation. Would you explain what this entailed?

In 1998 Dr. Roderick French, the first Chancellor of AUS, asked me if Texas A&M University could be persuaded to take responsibility for guiding the development of the school of engineering. A contract was written and signed by His Highness. As the project director for Texas A&M, I had access to all the resources of the University related to this commitment. This involved establishing the curricula for all of the degrees to be offered in engineering, specifying the instrumentation for all of the engineering laboratories so generously funded by His Highness, and nominating the first Dean of Engineering (as well as his two successors). Our primary objective was to develop degree programs that would satisfy the accreditation standard of ABET, the accrediting organization for engineering programs in the US and around the world. Our success can be judged by the fact that the AUS College of Engineering was the first engineering school to be accredited in the UAE and the entire Gulf region.

### 4. In your opinion, what distinguishes AUS from other institutions of higher learning in the UAE?

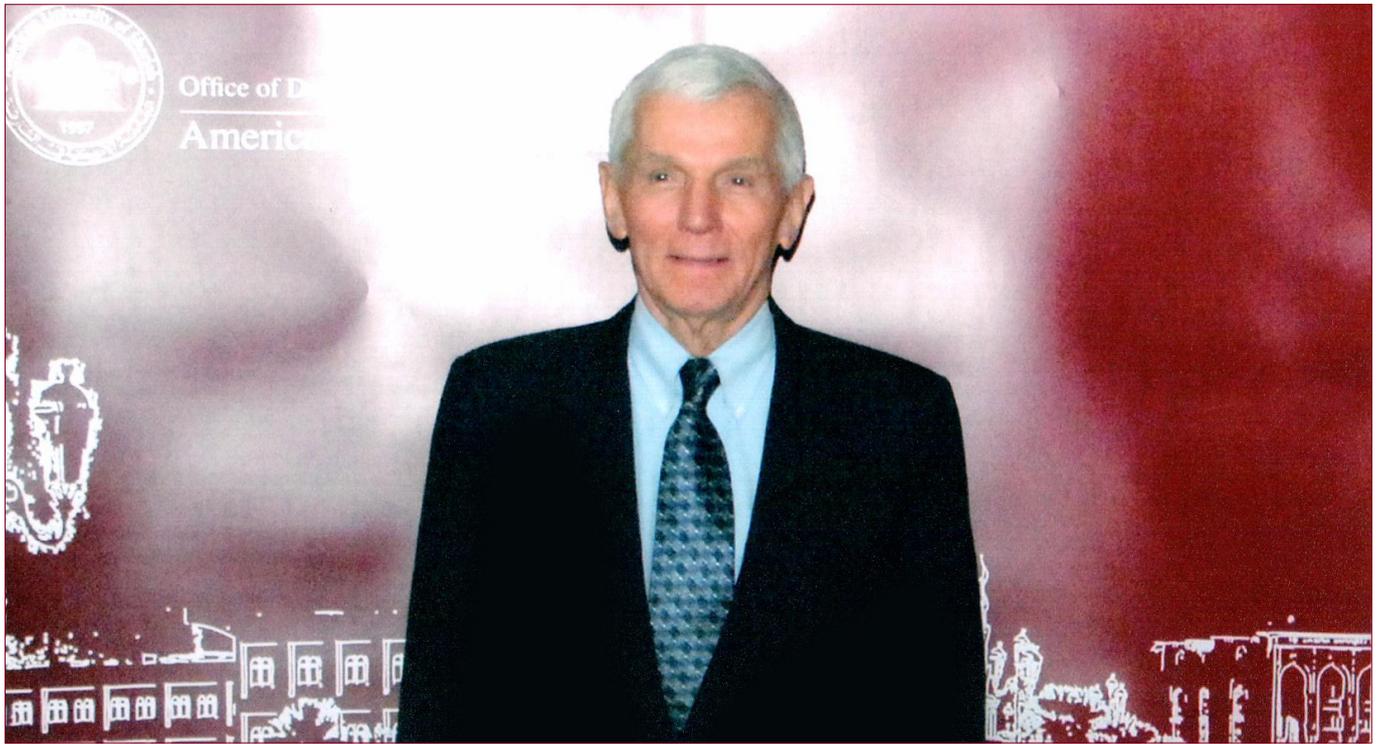
In comparison to other institutions in the UAE and in the Gulf region, AUS is a unique, high quality,



comprehensive, fully accredited institution which blends the type of higher education in the United States with the culture of Sharjah. As a consequence, AUS graduates are well educated and will be the leaders for the next generation.

### 5. What are several major projects looming on the horizon that you would like to see accomplished at AUS and why?

The two major projects include the construction of the International K-12 School, which will be built



adjacent to the AUS campus, and development of the Research, Technology and Innovation Park on land also adjacent to the University. The International School will be an Arabic and English elementary and secondary school for the children of faculty and staff, as well as for the children of local Emiratis and expatriates. The RTI Park will lead to many opportunities for faculty, students, and graduates to interact with industry, to develop start-up companies, and to contribute new products and services that will strengthen the economic future of Sharjah.

**6. In your opinion, what are several of the most important accomplishments made at AUS during the past four years?**

The most important accomplishments during the past four years include the appointment of Dr. Peter Heath as Chancellor, the establishment of a Strategic Plan for the University, the addition of a new Library building and facilities, the new building and AACSB accreditation of the School of Business, and AIA accreditation of the School of Architecture.

**7. If you were in charge of exchange or study abroad programs at a major university in the United States, would you counsel your undergraduate students to spend a semester or year at AUS, and if so, why?**

Yes! I believe that AUS provides a high quality education and would be an ideal location for exchange students to learn in a multicultural, multilingual environment for a semester or a year. The friendliness of the students, the academic environment, the breadth of opportunities for learning, all suggest that AUS is an ideal location for an exchange opportunity.

**8. What advice would you care to give to the alumni about how to prepare for some of the more dramatic changes that will take place during their careers?**

The alumni should recognize that education does not stop with graduation, that learning will continue for the rest of their lives, and that each day will bring new challenges. Alumni will be asked to use their education for jobs that have not yet been defined, using technologies that have not yet been developed, for services and products that have not yet been imagined, and to solve problems that do not currently exist.

**9. What advice would you give AUS to achieve continued success in placing its graduates in industry or graduate school?**

The faculty and administration should continue to be selective in admissions to the University, maintain high quality educational programs that satisfy international standards, and ensure that appropriate educational programs continue to be accredited by accrediting organizations in the United States since we are the American University of Sharjah.

**10. Are there any additional comments that you may care to share with us?**

AUS graduates should be proud of the education that they have received from AUS! I hope that they will continue this remarkable involvement through the University's Alumni Association.

# AUS Honors H.E. Khalaf Al Habtoor



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**A delegation of high ranking officials from the American University of Sharjah recently presented H.E. Khalaf Al Habtoor, Chairman of Al Habtoor Group of Companies, with an honorary plaque in recognition of his contribution of AED 15 million to the AUS Endowment Fund, establishing the “Khalaf Ahmed Al Habtoor Chair in International Relations”.**

The AUS delegation was comprised of members of the AUS Board of Trustees including Hamid Jafar, Chairman and CEO of Crescent Petroleum Company; and Riad Sadik, Chairman of Al Habtoor Leighton Group, Chancellor Peter Heath, and Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah. Also present were H.E. Mohammed Al Habtoor, Vice Chairman and CEO of Al Habtoor Group, Maan Halabi, Managing Director of Al Habtoor Group, and Saif Al Mazroui, Director of Community Relations and Communications at Al Habtoor Group.

This endowed chair in international relations demonstrates Mr. Al Habtoor’s strong commitment to academic excellence in higher education in the UAE and throughout the Gulf. Generations of students will benefit from this gift. This endowed chair will be a cornerstone for AUS’s efforts to develop world-class research and teaching at AUS.

The delegation also invited H.E. Khalaf Al Habtoor to convey the inaugural remarks at the AUS Alumni Business Forum, on March 15, 2011. The Forum brings together industry leaders from the Gulf with students, AUS alumni, VIPs, and honorary guests. Panels of prominent speakers discuss various topics in the areas of business, engineering and innovation, energy, and media and technology, producing an informative, dynamic exchange of views.

# Vice Chancellor Mourtada's Alumni Reunion Address

**Your Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah, and Founder and President of the American University of Sharjah, Trustee Hamid Jafar, Trustee Riad Sadik, Trustee Maroun Semaan, Chancellor and Mrs. Heath, Alumnus Eisa Al Ali, President of the AUS Alumni Association, dearest alumni, and honored guests**

*Assalamu aleikum wa rahmatu Allah wa barakatuh*

Happy New Year to you all! It is wonderful to see our alumni assembled in such large numbers for our fourth reunion. I offer a warm welcome to those who have traveled half way around the globe and to those who have come from closer distances. This is such a powerful gathering of the AUS clan! Few universities in the world can assemble so many of their alumni in one place. What does this loyalty to the American University of Sharjah say about the ties between our alumni and their university? It says that AUS remains profoundly significant to your lives and that we can grow and prosper together.

Ours are ties that bind forever. Your presence is a bold statement of historical dimensions. But AUS is a place that makes history. So much that is done here at the American University of Sharjah is done for the first time in the entire Gulf region. We were the first university to earn American accreditation. We were the first to teach students how to think critically and innovate for private industry. The first to partner with business and industry as a way to take the UAE and its neighbors toward a better future. We were the first to create an independent alumni association with chapters in so many countries. You, our alumni, are the "educational sons and daughters" of a far-reaching vision of His Highness, who is with us tonight, a vision to prepare the "movers and shakers" for a successful tomorrow, wherever you, our alumni, call home. You embody the "can-make-it-happen spirit" of AUS. This means that you accept and overcome challenges to achieve your dreams, just as AUS has met and overcome challenges. Together we can meet the future and make history. Tonight is a celebration of this spirit, the "CAN DO" spirit of AUS and a decade of achievement. Tonight's festivities allow us to recognize our common purposes.

Tonight did not happen by accident, not by chance. ODAA and *most especially* your Alumni Association are here to help put our common vision into reality. Under the leadership of alumnus Eisa Al Ali, AUSAA President; Alumna Sheikha Azza Al Nuaimi, AUSAA Vice President; Alumnus Karim Abu Ajram, AUSAA Executive of the Council; Alumnus Musbah Abo Jarad, AUSAA Treasurer; Alumna Khadija Al Madhoun, AUSAA Executive of the Administration; Alumnus Abdullah Al Shazly, Director of Institutional Advancement; and the founding contributions of Alumnus Sheikh Mohammed Faisal Al Qassimi, AUSAA Founding Board President, the Alumni Association name flies high and far. Please keep in mind that the AUSAA was established to help you make your "alumni dreams" come true. Ideas come to the Alumni Association through the Chapters of the Alumni Association and our larger alumni body. To illustrate, the Alumni Association undertook funded trips to Italy, France, Spain and two intensive leadership training trips to Scotland this year, which were great learn-



through-experience projects. Last year seven scholarships were awarded to deserving graduates of AUS, drawn from your own Career Fair and Alumni Business Forum. Thirteen such scholarships are being granted tonight.

A lot of your alumni friends help make these projects and events come true, including this Reunion Dinner. Under the able stewardship of alumnus Rami Jaber, AUSAA Event Chapter Representative, the organizing committee for this event worked tirelessly. I recognize the efforts of each and every staff member in the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs. I couldn't do without them. Their contributions are without comparison. Ms. Jinane Al Katib of the Office of VC Salem Al Qaseer did not spare any effort to help manage the organization of this event.

Ladies and gentlemen, this evening, this Reunion Dinner is important to us all. I was so pleased to see so many of my former students with us this evening. You are an inspiration to us all. Since our first graduating class in 2001, almost 5,700 students of more than 80 nationalities have earned degrees at AUS and now live round the world. So this Reunion Dinner is one of the rare occasions when we can come together to have fun and recall our common goal of building a better society under the aegis of His Highness. In fact, I am confident you are not quite finished with AUS yourselves. Perhaps you will pursue an advanced degree and decide AUS is still the best choice for you. We hope your children will someday choose to attend AUS. AUS wants to continue to be the best choice, not only for you, but also for your children. Indeed, your contributions are an important reason why AUS is today the "best choice" in the Gulf. Your class pictures are hanging on a wall in this magnificent building. Fifty years from now your class picture will still be here along with all other graduated classes because ... because AUS is so proud of you. Thank you all for coming and please enjoy yourselves this evening.

**Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah**  
**Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs**  
**& Professor of International Studies**

# A Message from AUSAA President, Alumnus Eisa Al Ali

Dear AUS Alumni,

I would like to begin by welcoming the Class of Spring 2011 to our alumni community. As we are set on expanding our alumni population to over 6,600 members, it gives me great honor to address my fellow alumni on the progress and grand achievements the Association has managed to accomplish in such a short term.

Post the first elections held in May 2010, our Board has engaged the various alumni chapters to facilitate organizing more social and professional events aimed at connecting and re-connecting alumni to one another as well as with their alma mater.

Of the many achievements, I am happy to report to you that both the Syria and Kuwait Chapters have recently organized their launch events in Damascus and Kuwait City respectively. An alumnae delegation has also been invited to travel to London along with members of the AUSAA Board to attend the tenth Arab International Women Forum as well as to meet with fellow alumni who currently reside in the United Kingdom. This marks the Association's determination in reaching out as far as possible to all our alumni who are scattered around the world.

The Board's vision is to achieve sustainable interaction between the AUS community and its' alumni across the globe and it is embarking on doing so through building a strong platform that nurtures networking and collaboration within the alumni community by leveraging their resources and talents. What drives us, as an association, is loyalty, team spirit, development and professionalism and our strategic goals aimed at developing communication, establishing support, creating awareness, partaking, and achieving maturity. These have all been well-developed and presented in the Council meeting held on April 30, 2011 at AUS.



Having the right work mechanism set forth by the Board and the Council is not sufficient to achieve prosperity for our beloved association, but it is definitely a facilitator and a necessary start. As such, I call on all alumni from all classes to showcase their support of what their fellow alumni have been diligently engaged in despite their heavy work responsibilities and busy schedules. I highly encourage all alumni to ensure that their contacts and details are always updated as well as to participate and provide feedback on all the various events, programs and initiatives the association is currently undertaking. We take great pride in you and there is no prosperity without you.

Once again, congratulations to the Class of Spring 2011 and I look forward to welcoming each one of our alumni and interacting with you all through our various endeavors.

Eisa Al Ali  
President,  
AUS Alumni Association

# AUS Establishes “The Said T. Khoury Chair in Leadership Studies”

The American University of Sharjah announced the establishment of “The Said T. Khoury Chair in Leadership Studies” following a visit by AUS Trustees Riad T. Sadik and Hamid D. Jafar, AUS Chancellor Dr. Peter Heath and AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah to H.E Said T. Khoury’s offices in Beirut.

“The American University of Sharjah is proud to be associated with one of the leading international figures and a world business leader,” said Chancellor Heath. “The establishment of this Chair will add further credit to the university’s internationally recognized faculty,” he added. An international search will be announced to identify the inaugural holder of the chair.



Mr. Khoury is the President and Chairman of Consolidated Contractors International Company, which is recognized as one of the largest construction firms in the world, with its headquarters in Athens. He is also a recipient of several honorary doctorates, including one from the American University of Beirut and one from Bir Zeit University in Palestine. He is also a well-known philanthropist in many areas, both in Palestine and across the Arab world. He is the recipient of distinguished medals and awards from different countries around the world.

“The Said T. Khoury Chair in Leadership Studies”, which will be held by a distinguished full professor who is a leader in a relevant field and has a distinguished record in teaching and research, has been established with a generous gift of AED 15 million by H.E. Said T. Khoury.

“The American University of Sharjah has established itself as a leading institution of higher learning in the Arab world, providing high-quality American-style education in the region, and its graduates continually strengthen local industries in their need to remain on the cutting edge of their business,” said Mr. Khoury.

Dr. Mourtada-Sabbah expressed her gratitude to Mr. Khoury for his generous support. “Mr. Khoury has been a supporter of research and education across the Arab world, especially programs that link industry and university in mutually beneficial collaborations. “The Said T. Khoury Chair in Leadership Studies” will provide a cornerstone for an innovative research program without peers in the Middle East,” she added.

# AUS Holds Special Luncheon for Graduating Class of Fall 2010

**Members of American University of Sharjah's Fall 2010 graduating class attended a special luncheon held in their honor at the University's Main Building on January 26, 2011.**

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS, expressed his thoughts on the graduates' achievements during their time at AUS and wished them success in their future careers. He stated that their degree is an achievement of perseverance and ability, and a gift to themselves, their families and society. He also advised them to supplement their existing knowledge and skills

learned at AUS with wisdom, fairness, kindness and compassion.

"You know that the will to win and the will to succeed mean little without the will to prepare, so you and we at American University of Sharjah formed a partnership several years ago to prepare you for a satisfying career and to prepare you to take an active role in society," said Dr. Heath. "We here at AUS have also prepared you to take the next step in your education in the university of life, sometimes called the school of experience," he added.





Chancellor Heath also listed some of the achievements of previous graduates, noting that there are more than 5,000 AUS alumni who are already making their mark in the world. Some former alumni mentioned were Her Excellency Sheikha Lubna Al Qassimi, now UAE Minister for Foreign Trade; Salah Al Shamsi, who chaired the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Reem Al Ghaith, whose artwork is being exhibited in top art salons in Paris, London and New York; and Saud Al Nuwais, now the UAE Commercial Attache in Washington, DC. Highlighting the accomplishments of some of the other alumni, Dr. Heath added, "You will join the six AUS alumni who've earned PhDs and the 23 who are earning PhDs. You will join the many other AUS alumni successfully pursuing their lives in many countries around the world."

Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, also addressed the graduating class and congratulated them on their achievements, highlighting the significance of their education and its impact on the future. "Your diploma signifies that the AUS graduate that you are has mastered free inquiry, originality, responsibility and personal integrity."

You now have the flexibility and autonomy of mind and spirit to formulate the new solutions sought by your employers throughout your career," she said. "Remember, life is an adventure. You have new worlds to explore but AUS will remain your intellectual foundation and home," she said.

Al Rajwani, Vice President and General Manager of Procter & Gamble, addressed the graduating students as the keynote speaker and sponsor of the event. He delivered an engaging presentation entitled "Rising to the Top—Tips, Tricks and Traps," which inspired and motivated the graduates.

The following 10 students were recognized for their academic excellence: Masoumeh Mohammad Hossein Rajabi, Mohammed Y.S. Shurrab, Mohammed O.M. Zourob, Mohammad Feyzollah Zamani, Mohammed Salem Rashed Alzaabi, Pegah Kazem Oghabi, Suhail Marwan Ibrahim Aburahma, Mohammed A.S. Abu Fool, Husam Abdulkarim Lutfi, Sana Tanwir Ahmed and Mohammad Diab Al Khatib.

The luncheon was also attended by the AUS provost, vice chancellors, deans, faculty members, and students.

# Success Stories -- Alumnus Abdulla Al Gurg

## 1. Please tell us briefly about Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group and what it is like working in a family-business environment.

The Group was founded by my grandfather, H.E. Easa Saleh Al Gurg, in 1960 and now has 23 divisions. Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group represents international brands such as British American Tobacco, Siemens, Osram, Grundig, Dulux, Dunlop, Benetton, Electrolux, Smeg, Armitage Shanks, Yorkshire Pipes, Interfaceflor, Broyhil and others

It is a big responsibility on my shoulders to be the Chief Executive of a big enterprise of over 3,500 members of the team, but 10 years of my past experience with the likes of Young Arab Leaders, *Tatweer*, and Tiger Woods has given me the confidence to take over the helm of the Group. The Group's focus is on four sectors: manufacturing, retail, projects, and finally, trading

A family business is much more delicate in its nature. Working in a government or corporate structure your own cash is not at risk nor your family relations. You end up going home and forgetting all about your managers and bosses. But in a family structure, the managers are your family that you can't just forget about. You have to learn how to draw a line of professionalism.

## 2. Describe your typical business day in your position?

About 40 people report to me directly. I start my day looking at the correspondence to be dealt with and meet my people one after the other, and my Directors, MD, and Chairman. There will always be a meeting with at least one principal whose products we sell. We have 350 agencies and over 3,500 products; hence, each business structure and product line needs attention of its own.

## 3. What do you consider to be the most challenging aspect about being a General Manager in a family business today?

Managing sustainable growth is the most difficult aspect of today's operations. Business is rising and growing but a new era has begun, an era of solid business dealings in credit, market demand sustainability, and socio-economical and political influences.

The problem with today's business practice is that everyone is clinging to the reason for the crisis. People need to wake up and understand that the crisis was over six months ago.

## 4. How has your management philosophy evolved as you have gained more management experience?

It has moved from being rushed and judgmental to articulate and more attentive to details. I have learned to listen more than I talk and to leave my opinion to the end. Management obviously changes depending on the audience and business environment. I have learned to be harsh when I need to, but as my



grandfather always says "with velvet gloves". I have learned a lot from my grandfather and mother in the business and feel I am blessed to have them guide me through.

## 5. How would you describe the future of partnering Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group with AUS in the various initiatives currently being explored?

Well, it depends on the type of partnership. I plan to see many forms of them such as:

- Emiratisation
- Internship programs
- Induction of capable students who can help contribute to the business growth and become the future leadership of the Group
- And lastly, contribute to AUS's curriculum where we can ensure current market employment demands are met.

I look forward to both working together.

## 6. What advice would you give your fellow AUS alumni and new graduates?

Take your studies seriously, and trust me, what you learn today from your discussions in your classes will come back one day in one form or the other. Never be embarrassed to admit that you still have a lot to learn. I wish you all the best.

# Chalhoub Group Establishes Professorship at AUS



**The American University of Sharjah announced the establishment of the Chalhoub Group Professorship in Luxury Brand Management as a result of a generous contribution of AED 5 million from the Chalhoub Group.**

The Chalhoub Group is recognized as one of the leading forces in the luxury business in the Middle East. Maintaining its family owned heritage, today the group specializes in the retail and distribution of renowned brands within the sectors of beauty, fashion and gifts. For over 55 years the Chalhoub Group has had an impact on building brands in the region and believes that it has a responsibility to positively impact the communities in which it lives and operates, a responsibility to its employees, to its community and to its society.

The Chalhoub Group undertakes to reconcile economic performance, social responsibility and preservation of the environment. In this regard, it develops socially and environmentally responsible projects in synergy with its values and sphere of influence. The group joins hands with partners to make a positive difference by developing and supporting projects, strategic sponsorships, partnerships and the promotion of volunteerism and community participation amongst its employees. "The Chalhoub Group endowment will significantly enhance the understanding of luxury

brand management and support capacity-building contributions in this important field," said Dr. Peter Heath, AUS Chancellor. Dr. Mourtada-Sabbah, AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, expressed her gratitude to Mr. Patrick Chalhoub and Mr. Anthony Chalhoub for their generous support of the educational mission of the University.

Also, the Chalhoub Group selected, as part of its commitment to education, four AUS students for the "One Young World Summit" that is scheduled to take place in Switzerland this September.

"I am really excited about attending the One Young World Summit and I am very thankful to both the Chalhoub Group and AUS for giving me this life changing opportunity," said Mai Shoeib who was one of the lucky few students who were selected by Chalhoub Group from AUS.

In addition to Shoeib, the following students were selected by the Chalhoub Group:

- Fatema Al Khateeb,
- Naimah Al Dafa'a,
- Zaid Al Rayes

# Alumni in the Arts -- Reem Al Ghaith



**1. How does it feel to be back at AUS this time as a famous artist exhibiting your work on campus? Do you still feel a connection to AUS and its students?**

Being back at AUS feels like I am still that student that never left campus. It feels different this time with my art showcased on the campus and in the school that nurtured the beginnings of my work as a student. Yes I still feel a connection with AUS and especially the college of art and design. I always like to see students' work and push them to create more.

**2. Since you graduated in 2008 from the AUS College of Architecture, Arts and Design with a major in Visual Communication, how did your career develop?**

My career developed while I was still a student in the visual communication program. We were encouraged by our faculty to think and engage

and showcase our course work in exhibitions and competitions. My first set of work that was exhibited internationally was when I was still a junior. I sent my printmaking prints to a worldwide exhibition of mini prints that takes place in Sofia, Bulgaria annually. A series of four prints were showcased two years prior to my graduation day. In 2008 and a few months before my graduation my work was showcased in Tashkeel's first exhibition in Dubai and from there the curators of "The Dubai Next Show" that took place in the Vitra Design Museum saw the work and it was exhibited a day before my spring graduation ceremony. Since the Vitra design show I got engaged with the art world, curators, exhibitions and creating work for many institutions around the world.

**3. In 2006, you had your first international exhibition in Sofia, Bulgaria, when you were still an AUS student. Since then you have exhibited widely in Munich, Paris, New York, and even**

**as far afield as Brisbane, Australia. How has worldwide recognition affected you personally and professionally?**

The recognition worldwide was overwhelming, especially in the majority that saw my work and engaged within the vision and messages I was trying to convey. They were drawn to the subjects I communicate about Dubai and the United Arab Emirates. They were interested and fond of the themes I undertook and the different techniques I use for my end products. With that impact and mixed emotions I received from a wide audience it pushed me to create more professionally. As for the affects personally, my work's impact and having it associated to the contemporary art in this part of the world, has put me in a state mentally to not only to take the role of the artist Reem Al Ghaith but the artist that can represent a city and a nation.

**4. Among the themes expressed in your work is the tension between rapid, dramatic urban development and a subsequent erosion of Emirati culture and loss of connection with nature. Is this theme still evident in your most recent work? What themes are you developing?**

Not in all the work but in some that are created to date. I explore many themes each in a different way but they all relate back to my culture, surroundings and the documentation of them. At the moment I am exploring the idea of the skyline and building up that relates to the urban scape of my city.

**5. What artistic aspirations do you have now?**

My aspirations are to create a merger between my art experience internationally to our upcoming design and art studio. I am hoping that the studio continues my path in presenting another aspect of the work I do, where art pushes the design and design pushes the art.

**6. What can you tell us about the art scene in the United Arab Emirates?**

It's a challenge to be around the art scene in the UAE as there is a lot happening in the emirates and the privileges of having two art fairs per year. Not to forget the growing number of galleries and design initiatives that push the creative minds to create and learn from the other artists

here. It is great and inspiring for emerging artists to start here and continue onwards as the art scene here doesn't cater to UAE nationals only but to a wider international community.

**7. Our understanding is that you plan to open an art and design studio with two AUS alumni. Can you tell us more about it?**

In 2010, along with two other AUS visual communication alumnae, Abeer Tahlak and Kholoud Sharafi, I launched a design studio called Tinkah in Dubai. The studio combines the talents of three multidisciplinary designers, thinkers and visual artists. It is a collaboration of strengths and design expertise all incubated in a tin-kah.

**8. In what ways did AUS help you to become a successful artist? And can you give some helpful suggestions to other Emirati artists who would like to exhibit their work?**

The faculty at the college of art and design helped very much in the successful path I am on right now. It didn't start after I graduated but during the time I was still that freshman student. From the moment I enrolled in the foundation year I had pushed myself to learn and continue learning and never look at the end result or grade system. I wanted to observe, read, learn, explore and create an outcome/product that could stand on its own as a design item in the real world and I wouldn't have done it without the set of projects that were given throughout the weeks and years to get me to where I am at the moment. I believe that process, determination and passion are very important when choosing to become that successful artist. I encourage all other Emirati emerging artists to consider art as a career and never stop creating or the creative process as its very important.

**9. You have recently agreed to serve on the Advisory Council for your college. How do you feel about your role serving in this capacity?**

I always believed that one day I should give back to AUS what it taught me and being on the College of Art and Design advisory council is an amazing opportunity to help in the progress of such an important school in the region.

# Alumna Dana Al Fardan Lectures in CAS



20 | The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) welcomed a lecture by alumna Dana Al Fardan, entitled “The Challenges of Leadership - The Art of Reinvention” on May 22nd.

Dana Al Fardan is the Vice President of Al Fardan Jewelry Group and an active philanthropist in Reach Out To Asia (ROTA), a Qatari-based non-profit organization. She talked about the challenges she faced after graduation in veering away from her international studies major at AUS to the jewelry business.

“Challenges and changes in circumstances cause adaptability. I have come across many success stories of people falling apart in the recession but getting ahead by reinventing themselves and their methods and moving ahead by identifying new opportunities,” said Al Fardan.

The lecture was attended by Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, Dr. Mark Rush, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, AUS faculty, staff and students.

## Where Are You Now ?

**Zeina Al Addam, SBM, '08**

I graduated from AUS with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting and Finance. I am currently employed in the Operations Department at AUS as an Operations Coordinator. My main responsibilities include managing all tasks associated with all university contracts; this includes preparing Requests for Proposals for various projects as well as performing commercial and financial analysis. Studying at AUS has had a direct impact on my success in my career and has helped me to be a part of the world's top firms.



# Alumni Participate in Young Arab Leaders Fifth Annual Forum

A delegation of AUS alumni leaders along with Sheikh Mohammed Al Thani, Director-General of the Office of the AUS President; Dr. Peter Heath, AUS Chancellor and Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, attended the Young Arab Leaders (YAL) Fifth Annual Forum held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, held November 5–6 in Dubai.



His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who is also a member of the YAL Board of Trustees, was present among the audience. The theme of this year's event was "Bridging the Divide: Entrepreneurship for the Arab Future," and it focused on the importance of fostering creative linkages and partnerships, which is at the core of YAL's role as a platform of interaction—both among YAL members themselves and between YAL members and the wider community of individuals

It provided opportunities for members to learn from the successes and challenges of their colleagues from throughout the region. The event also gave YAL members the opportunity to meet fascinating individuals and learn about organizations and institutions outside the YAL network that may offer possibilities of synergy. AUS alumni participating included Eisa Al Ali, President of the AUS Alumni Association (AUSAA), Sheikha Azza Al Noeimi, Vice President, AUSAA, Musbah Abu-Jarad, Dana Al Fardan, Abdulla Al Gurg, Mohammed Al Huraimel, Ahmed Ali Al Naqbi, Ahmed Ali Al Naqbi, Hassan Al Sayegh, Amal Al Sayegh, Abdullah Al Shamsi, Rashed Al Tenaiji, Turki Al Yahya, Mohammad Bastaki, Reem Bin Karam, Fatma Fawwaz, Ibrahim Fikri, Rami Jaber, Farid Mohammad, Jawaher Qayed, Khulood Qayed, and Raghda Shihab.

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and organizations who share YAL's commitment to stimulating entrepreneurship and unlocking innovation.

The event gathered over 300 participants, which included AUS alumni, educators, entrepreneurs, policy makers, business leaders, non-profit leaders, government officials and social innovators who participated in a range of activities to generate new entrepreneurial ideas and business opportunities for the region, connecting over 15 Arab nationalities and over 20 industries and sectors celebrating and showcasing innovation and entrepreneurship in the Arab world.

The forum was also addressed by Her Excellency Najla Al Awadhi, Member of Parliament, Federal National Council (FNC), CEO of Dubai Media Incorporated Channels (DMI), Director of Dubai One, and member of the Board of Directors, YAL, UAE; His Excellency Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair, CEO of Mashreq Bank, UAE; His Excellency Sheikh Khaled Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chairman and Founder of the Bin Zayed Group, UAE; among many others.

# Alumnus Mohamed Al Sayed Shares His Experience

## 1. Tell us briefly about yourself – your education and work experience.

In 2006, I graduated from the American University of Sharjah with a Bachelor of Science in Finance. Having found satisfaction and enjoyment in my studies, I chose to continue at this institution, achieving a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in 2008. Most recently, I have undertaken a Master of Science in Investment Banking and Islamic Finance at the University of Reading in the United Kingdom. Part of the latter was taking three courses at INCEIF University in Malaysia, which I finished and received Chartered Islamic Finance Professional (CIFP) certificate. Currently, along with the family work, I'm pursuing my PhD in Islamic Finance at the University of Wollongong-Dubai. Outside of academia, I have also demonstrated a commitment to improving my performance in the world of business. Since 2006, alongside my studies, I have been working as a finance manager in one of our family businesses based in Dubai. In this position, I have gained first-hand knowledge of most aspects of business finance, including long and short-term strategy, accounting, monitoring and reporting systems, cash flow, investment and debt management.

## 2. Describe your typical business day in your position?

Most of the regular business day is dedicated to managing the company's financial accounting and the reporting system, also, controlling the flow of cash receipts and disbursements to meet the business and investment needs of the firm.

## 3. What part of working in your family business do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?

I think the most satisfying part of my work comes when we sit with the management team to formulate the strategic and long-term plans according to the firm's specific criteria. On the other hand, the challenging part comes from getting ideas for improvement from team members, moving away from getting involved in transactions yourself, and seeing the future direction of our business.

## 4. What do you consider to be the most challenging aspect about being a manager in business today?

I think the most difficult thing about being a manager in today's society is the challenge of the ongoing motivation of staff. Today's economic challenges have directly impacted many people, which has caused some (not all) to have decreased motivation to accomplish assigned tasks. To be effective leaders/managers, it is important to know your staff and ensure open lines of communication.



## 5. How has your management philosophy evolved as you have gained more management experience?

When you work as an individual member on a team, you just focus on your own tasks. However, a manager has to motivate others and I think nothing can be more challenging than making others work. Also I think a manager is the one who has the most pressure both from his subordinates and from the senior management. However, I believe that it will help me to groom my management skills, excel under pressure, and meet deadlines, revenue targets etc. Overall, I really enjoy it!

## 6. How did your AUS education help you in your career path?

My education has focused on not only learning the fundamentals, but also on the practical application of the information learned within those classes. For example, I took almost 41 courses as an undergraduate and most of those courses involved projects and presentations. It enhanced and strengthened my communication skills as well as applying the theory to practical cases.

## 7. Where do you see yourself and your family business in 10 years?

My father taught me that "It's impossible to find something impossible," so keeping that in mind along with hard work and good team players, we can make a significant advance in the organization.

## 8. If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for

**yourself? Why? What would you change?**

I always believe in Allah's destiny, and what I have achieved to this stage, I think, is satisfying my ambitions. I was in love with finance as an undergraduate major and without any hesitation the credit goes to Zouheir El-Jarkass, who was my professor in finance and taught me seven courses at AUS. He educated me to study for understanding not just to pass the course.

**9. What are your recommendations for graduates who would like to get involved with their family business?**

There will be a lot of ideas and dreams to improve

your family business but don't forget that your family worked hard before you joined them and of course you will face a lot of obstacles because people resist change. Therefore, do not be aggressive and be patient and listen.

**10. If you were to recommend an AUS education to other members of your community that would be because...?**

I think AUS would be my choice for my kids since it will prepare them for work, minimize their knowledge-gap, help them adopt and handle the pressure and finally strengthen their communication skills.

## Alumna Lamya Gargash Lectures in CAAD



American University of Sharjah (AUS) hosted a lecture featuring one of the country's prominent young artists and AUS alumna Lamya Gargash and her career in creative photography. The lecture was held recently at the university's College of Art, Architecture and Design's (CAAD).

Gargash explained that the title of the lecture referred to her journey over the past seven years since her graduation from AUS. Her lecture covered her shift in styles from experimental photography to disciplined conceptual focus on spatial interiors to portraiture. She also discussed her progress and what influenced her work.

During the lecture, Gargash displayed a number of her artworks, which included works in photography and illustration. She also discussed her work with the audience, telling them "I have faced challenges in my journey as an artist, looking for inspiration and identity," she said. "After a period of time, I tried self-portraits. It sounds quite cliché, but I really believe

that every piece of work we do branches out from ourselves," said Gargash.

Gargash spoke of the fond memories she kept of her time at AUS, and how enriching her learning experience had been, and discussed her experience studying at Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design in the UK and several projects that she worked on at the time.

Gargash graduated from AUS in 2004 and continued her studies at Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, graduating in 2007. She is a success story that serves as a continuous inspiration to students at AUS. In 2009, she published a book entitled *Presence*. She is currently working on an exhibition with Third Line Gallery that will tackle the concepts of identity and self portraits.

The event was attended by senior University officials, as well as members of the AUS faculty, staff, alumni and students.

# His Highness Inaugurates Second



**His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah, and President of American University of Sharjah (AUS) opened the second annual AUS Business Forum.**

Offering the inaugural address for the Forum, H.E. Khalaf Al Habtoor, Chairman of Al Habtoor Group praised the calibre of AUS graduates many of whom have achieved national and international success. He also praised the academic quality and excellent reputation of the American University of Sharjah. "Since its foundation in 1997 by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, the American University of Sharjah has become a prestigious educational institution with an impressive international reputation not only in the UAE, but throughout the Arab world and beyond. I have come to admire the calibre of graduates who emerge from AUS, many of whom have achieved success internationally," he added.

"I am living proof that you can be whatever you want to be. I come from modest beginnings," said Al Habtoor. Addressing the students and alumni present, he reminded them of the importance of education in today's complex and competitive world: "For you a degree is a passport to your future, giving you freedom of choice and opening up endless possibilities." He urged the students to look beyond the aims they have set for themselves. "I challenge you to look beyond the goals you have set for yourself. Achieving one goal is not the end... one must continue to go further," he said. "Do not simply be another graduate. We need leaders. Make your decision as early as today whether you want to lead or follow. I am confident that this forum will be an excellent platform for business discussion," he concluded.

The opening ceremony was attended by Sheikh Salem Bin

# Annual AUS Business Forum



Abdulrahman Al Qassimi, Director of the Office of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah; Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdullah Al Thani, Director of the Office of the AUS President; Obaid Al Hajiri, Chairman of the Consultative Council; Ahmed Al Midfa, Chairman of the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Dr. Amr Abdulhamid, Advisor to His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah for Higher Education. Present at the opening ceremony were also members of the AUS Board of Trustees Mr. Hamid D. Jafar, Chairman and CEO, Crescent Petroleum Company, Sharjah; Mr. Riad T. Sadik, Chairman of Al Habtoor Leighton Group, Dubai; and Mr. Maroun Semaan, President and CEO, Petrofac International Ltd., Sharjah.

The ceremony was also attended by Dr. Peter Heath, AUS Chancellor; Dr. Thomas Hochstetler, AUS Provost, Salem Yousef Al Qaseer, Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs; Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs; senior government and AUS officials, AUS students, graduates, faculty and staff and the public at large. Dr. Heath welcomed the Sharjah Ruler and other distinguished guests present at the opening ceremony and briefly explained the rationale behind holding the event. "It is customary for many universities to hold career days on which they invite prospective employers onto campus to meet with graduating students or alumni seeking jobs. This activity is indeed one important component of today's activities... the AUS Alumni Business Forum thus includes this traditional component of university activities, career services. But it aspires to do more — much more — for AUS and for the community."

Chancellor Heath said that in order to explain why the University wants to do more, it was important to re-visit the mandate given to the University by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan at its





inception. He added that part of His Highness's mandate which was very relevant for today was for the University to become 'organically linked in "productive cooperation" with the economic, cultural, scientific and industrial sectors of society.' "Enhancing such links of 'productive cooperation' is, therefore, the overriding purpose of today's Forum," said Dr. Heath. "With this Alumni Business Forum we certainly seek to serve the needs of graduating students and companies which are prospective employers. More than this, however, we aspire to include other important members of the AUS community and of the greater external community".

"These highly talented and accomplished individuals are now providing the vision and the impetus for developing our economy. It is their endeavors that lie at the heart of our region's current and future prosperity. So it was important for us to include and to learn from prominent representatives and to listen closely to eloquent voices from members of this business leadership", said Dr. Heath.

Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, said: "We convene this morning to continue a bold, collaborative strategy of networking the AUS community with private industry to fulfill the needs of the UAE. We open the door to the flow of ideas and talent between private industry and private education, so that the enhanced synergy benefits the peoples in the region."

"We gather under His Highness's aegis," added Dr. Mourtada-Sabbah, "to demonstrate how business and university can partner to better sustain a diversified and vibrant national economy. This 'formula for the future' must bring together the best development and marketing of the private sector, with farsighted governmental leadership, along with leading university scientists, who innovate." She also thanked the Sharjah Ruler for his unwavering support as well as the distinguished 'friends' of the University gathered today who had contributed their valuable time and wealth of expertise to AUS over the years.

Abdulla Kalban, CEO of Dubal delivered one of the two event's keynote addresses. He called upon the young generation to keep their objectives in focus and to develop a strategy to achieve their aims. "You need to have a vision when you start any business, company or even school. When you achieve your goal, you have to keep going," Kalban said. "My advice to you, ladies and gentlemen, is to hire people that are better than you. When people are better than you, they can help you succeed," he said. Another Keynote Address was delivered by Osman Sultan, Chief Executive Officer of du. "The world is innovating around us, and in this part of the world unfortunately, we feel that we are a little behind innovation in the digital world," said Sultan. "We believe there could be a journey for digital innovation in this





part of the world. Some would say this is utopia but I see this as a promise for prosperity for the young generation who I call the '21st century digital Arabia generation,'" he said.

"The digital world today has led to a social and economic ecosystem that stimulates creativity and innovation. Inspired by this recent trend, we have come up with 'Anayou', a powerful digital platform specifically envisioned to meet the diverse digital needs of the Arab world in the 21st century in areas such as social networking," he added.

After a concluding remark by Alumnus Rashed Al Tunaiji, initiator of the AUS Business Forum, the event was divided into two parts: the Alumni Business Forum and the Career Fair. The Forum hosted prominent industry leaders who took part in four discussion panels covering diverse topics such as "Gulf and Global Prospects," and "The UAE as Art and Tourism Epicenter," among others. The Forum was followed by the AUS Career Fair, which hosted almost 60 companies from the fields of construction, oil and gas, banking, finance and economy, manufacturing and industry, and telecommunications and technology. The event was sponsored by some of the leading corporate names in the region, including Mubadala; Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank; Faisal Holding; Du; Procter and Gamble; Unilever; Petrofac; General Electric; HP; KEF Holding; Sharjah Islamic Bank (SIB); Dar Al Rokham; Emirates Institution for Advanced Science and Technology (EIAST); Al Sayegh Media; Kharafi National; Nestle; Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) and Crescent Petroleum.

The Career Fair provided students with the opportunity to meet with scores of different local, regional and international private, semi-government and government agencies interested in recruiting AUS students as either fulltime employees and/or as interns. The Career Fair is considered by the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs as one of its main responsibilities towards its students and graduates to help them get appropriate jobs and prepare them to be integrated in the labor market.

The events were attended by His Excellency Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani, Chairman and CEO of Al Faisal Holding, and Rajaa Eisa Al Gurg, CEO of Easa Al Gurg Group. The Business Forum also featured prominent speakers such as Salah Al Shamsi, Liwa Investments and Former Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Khalifa Bin Breik, Vice President of Sharjah Holding; Sultan Al Hajji, General Manager of Total; Yousef Bastaki, Vice President of Emirates Aluminum (EMAL); Muna Al Gurg, Chairperson of the Al Gurg Foundation, Easa Al Gurg Group; Ziad Makhzoumi, Chief Financial Officer of Arabtec Construction; and Hassan Dandashli, General Manager for Middle East, General Electric. The Forum also provided the opportunity for students and graduates to meet and interact with many other prominent business leaders and distinguished guests.



# AUS Career Fair Generates a One Million



H.E. Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani, Chairman of Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Chairman of Al Faisal Holding opened the AUS Career Fair on March 15. Sheikh Faisal was accompanied by H.E. Tarik El Sayed, Chief Financial Officer and Board Member, Al Faisal Holding; Dr. Peter Heath, AUS Chancellor; Salem Yousef Al Qaseer, Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs; Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, senior officials, deans, faculty, staff and students.

"The AUS Career Fair this year, created a one million dirham Scholarship Fund for AUS alumni to pursue graduate studies at AUS," said Dr. Heath. "The fund will give bright students with demonstrated financial need a chance to avail themselves of an AUS education," he said.

"Rendering a tremendous response, the Career Fair gave AUS students the opportunity to meet with 57 different local, regional and international, private, semi-government and government agencies, interested in recruiting AUS students as either fulltime employees or as interns", the AUS Chancellor said. "Along with highlighting job opportunities the Fair also clarifies the needs of the labor

# Dirham Alumni Scholarship Fund



market”, he added. Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs said that “the Fair has long embraced a large number of companies from both public and private sectors, which give students and graduates an idea of the needs of various sectors in the market and also provided vocational training opportunities and jobs for students. The Office of Development and Alumni Affairs considers the Career Fair as one of its main responsibilities towards its students and graduates to help them get appropriate jobs and prepare them to be integrated in the labor market.”

She noted that the AUS Annual Career Fair is characterized by the presence of a large and diverse group of companies which value AUS graduates “as very well equipped young candidates for their job opportunities. We are very proud of our continued association with such leading companies and business partners,” she added.

Providing a platform for prominent businessmen to incorporate the theoretical side of students and graduates with practical experience of business experts, the Fair helps bridge academia and business.



## Alumnus Mohammad Al Suwaidi: Genuinely Accomplish All Your Duties to God, Family and Work

My name is Mohamed Rashid Al Makhawi Al Suwaidi, I am 24 years old and have been working in Abu Dhabi since July 2008. My major hobbies include reading, writing, watching documentaries and movies, and travelling.

I started my career at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research where I was working as an Assistant Researcher in the strategic studies department. Two years later, I joined the Crown Prince Court (CPC) in Abu Dhabi. I am currently a Research Specialist in the Research Unit of the CPC's Agenda Department. Fortunately, I don't have a routine job although I do have to spend a lot of hours in the office. We respond to special requests from management and we research the field requested dependent on the researchers' specialties. In my case, I focus on issues relating to politics, regional and international affairs as well as regional and international security.

AUS has played a pivotal role in my life. My time spent there, gave me a totally new perspective particularly due to the amazing caliber of the faculty members such as Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Dr. Bassel Salloukh, Dr. Stephen Keck, and many others. The two major life changing effects that resulted from my experience at AUS, were that it made me love reading and it encouraged me to have an open and critical mind, to question what I see and not take any information for granted. What disappoints me however, is that the University has not yet started a Masters or Doctorate degree for International Affairs/ Politics/Diplomacy.

My motto is to "genuinely accomplish all your duties to God, family and work; and all aspects of your life will be rewarding".



My advice to fellow alumni who are working is to be ambitious but modest, slowly work yourself up the ladder and don't expect that you will use everything you have learned from university, have an open mind and work hard.

My advice to current undergraduates is to utilize every class and university activity to the fullest. Enjoy your time academically and socially because you will never find the same atmosphere on any campus in the UAE. You will miss it, so make the most of it.

I always recommend AUS as a venue for education to family members, local and foreign friends. The advantages and benefits outweigh everything. The cosmopolitan culture of education is priceless.

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## Where Are You Now ?

**Khaled Ramadan, CAS, '07**

After graduating from International Studies in 2007, I worked in Dubai with the Institute of Near East and Gulf Military Analysis (INEGMA) as an Account Executive until 2009. After that, I moved to Doha, Qatar to join Brown Lloyd James, a leading communication consultant, as a Deputy Managing Director. In this position, I am responsible for the Qatar 2022 bidding phase and the current local organizing committee which specializes in country branding. In my personal capacity, I have had the honor to work with the office of Egypt's current Prime Minister's Office to discuss key initiatives to help Egypt recover from the economic downturn.



# Alumni Marriages & Engagements



Sheikh Mohammad Al Qassimi



Mahmoud Ghaith & Sarra Samara



Abdullah El Shazly & Reem Lootah



Malik Shahin & Jafra Allan



Jihad Ghaith & Yousra Nasr

# Alumni Baby Booms

Baby Ahmad



Alumnus Salam Abdullah, CEN, '02

Baby Hamad



Alumna Kholoud AlHouly, CAS, '04

Baby Sara



Alumna Sarah Jbouri, CAS, '09

Baby Khaled



Alumnus Samer ElGamal, CEN, '03

# AUS Alumni Explored Spain's Rich Andalusian Heritage...



Forty members of the American University of Sharjah Alumni Association (AUSAA) recently undertook an exciting winter trip to observe first-hand the influence of Arab culture and Muslim heritage in Spain. The trip was organized as part of the University's alumni association's activities and strategic vision to enhance and renew bonds of friendship and to create powerful shared experiences among fellow alumni. Two groups of alumni and their friends undertook the trip at separate intervals. The trip included visits to the cities of Barcelona, Granada, Cordoba, and Madrid. Local guides accompanied the alumni as they toured various historical monuments around the country including the Sagrada Familia Temple, Parque Guell, the Royal Palace of Alcazar, which was a Moorish fort, the Alhambra Palace, Basilica San Francisco el Grande and the Reina Sofia Museum. The AUS alumni teams also attended a flamenco show in Madrid. Responding to the needs of their members, the AUSAA has pledged to organize more such local and international activities.

# Rode the UAE Desert Dunes...

In December 2010, the AUSAA Dubai Chapter organized a desert safari for around thirty of its members in which they enjoyed barbeque and riding the dunes.



# Engaged in a Paintball Tournament...

Around twenty five alumni participated in the paintball tournament that was co-organized by the AUSAA Dubai Chapter and Events Chapter. The event took place in February 2011 at the Sharjah Golf and Shooting Club.



# Raced in Go-Karting...

Both the AUSAA Abu Dhabi Chapter and the Events Chapter organized a go-karting tournament in Abu Dhabi and Dubai respectively. Fifty one alumni participated in the Abu Dhabi Chapter's tournament which was held in Yas Island's race track; whereas, thirty five alumni took part in the Events Chapter tournament which was held in the Dubai Autodrome.



# Stopped by France...

The AUSAA Dubai Chapter organized for fifteen of its members a trip to France during the Spring Break in which Paris, Nice and other French cities were visited.



# Received Career Guidance...

Thirty five alumni also got together at the Sheraton Abu Dhabi on April 2011 for the Career Guidance Day which was organized by the Abu Dhabi Chapter. Some of the participating companies include Deloitte, Logica and Abami International



# Went Bowling...

The AUSAA Abu Dhabi Chapter also organized a bowling tournament at the Marina Mall Bowling City through which the alumni competed.



# Cruised the Arabian Gulf...

The AUSAA Abu Dhabi Chapter also recently organized a yacht cruise for around forty five alumni. The cruise sailed off and returned to the Royal Meridien, Abu Dhabi. The alumni enjoyed catching up with each other and engaging socially with one another.



# ... and Laughed with Wonho

The AUSAA Events Chapter also organized a Gala Dinner in the Palace Hotel, Downtown Burj Khalifa for around one hundred and fifty alumni. As a special treat, Wonho Chung who is infamous for his career launch with the Axis of Evil, was invited as a special guest to the event and entertained the alumni with a forty-five minute stand-up comedy set.



# Know Your



**Eisa Al Ali**  
**President**

Alumnus Eisa Al Ali graduated from AUS with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering in 2005 and is currently working as Contracts Manager at Etihad Rail. Prior to this, he was a development manager at Al Dar in Abu Dhabi. He managed Al Bandar Development (worth AED 1.3 billion) in Al Raha Beach. In addition to that, he is pursuing his Masters degree in Urban Planning at Paris Sorbonne University, Abu Dhabi. Being part of the AUSA Board, Al Ali would like to ensure a strong base and a solid supportive environment among all alumni.



**Sheikha Azza Al Nuaimi**  
**Vice President**

Alumna Sheikha Azza bint Sultan Al Nuaimi holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and is currently the Director of Cultural Affairs and Heritage at the Department of Culture and Media for the Government of Ajman. Because she feels a strong bond connecting her to AUS, she decided to be a member of AUSA. This allows her to remain part of the AUS community and to contribute to its continuous development while further empowering the AUSA and serving her alma mater.



**Karim Abou Ajram**  
**Executive of the Council**

Since graduating in 2005 with a Bachelor of Science in Design Management, Alumnus Karim Abou Ajram has spent the last five years working in the fields of advertising and branding. He is now pursuing his Executive Masters in Business Administration at AUS and managing his own business in branding with a fellow alumnus. Abou Ajram is no stranger to the Alumni Association as he has served as an active volunteer for the past three years, including being the Dubai Chapter Representative. Building a strong, effective, and active Alumni Association with the help of alumni volunteers is essential to Abou Ajram and his fellow Board members in order to strengthen the entire AUS community both regionally and internationally.



**Melissa Bayik**  
**Executive Administrator**

Alumna Melissa Bayik graduated in 2004 with a Bachelor of Science in Multimedia and has recently established her own boutique design and branding business in Dubai. Having previously worked across leading global brand consultancies, she was responsible for bringing in ideas and innovative thinking into projects. Bayik joins the Board as the Executive Administrator after having served on several key AUSA committees. She hopes to help the Board in their endeavour to reconnect the global network of alumni, build the University's reach within local and regional employers and cultivate the University and its graduates reputation. Her interests lay in integrating design and innovation with strategic growth to leverage community relationships.

# AUSAA Board



**Sheikh Mohammad bin Faisal Al Qassimi**  
**AUSA Founding President**

Alumnus Sheikh Mohammad bin Faisal Al Qassimi graduated from AUS in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies. During the initial stages of its establishment, Sheikh Al Qassimi played a significant role in the founding and development process of AUSA. In the past three years, he has served as an active member on the Constitution and By-Laws Review Committee (CBRC), as a co-chairman of the Committee to Implement the Founding Process (CIFP), and was selected by his fellow alumni as the Founding President of AUSA. Sheikh Mohammad Al Qassimi was present at the signing of the AUSA Constitution and By-Laws by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah and President of AUS and oversaw the Association's first elections under the ratified Constitution and By-Laws.



**Musbah Abu Jarad**  
**Treasurer**

Alumnus Musbah Abu Jarad earned a Bachelor degree in Mechanical Engineering in 2004 and a Masters degree from Wollongong University in Quality Management. He is currently working as a pre-qualification engineer at Al Dar Properties. Abu Jarad previously worked as a field engineer at Schlumberger. He nominated himself for the position of Treasurer, as he has a strong passion for alumni development. He was also one of the founding members of AUSA and has consistently participated and assisted in many alumni activities.

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**Abdullah El Shazly**  
**Director for Institutional Advancement**

Alumnus Abdullah El Shazly graduated from AUS in 2003 with a Bachelor of Science Cum Laude in Computer Engineering. He also holds a Masters degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering from McGill University (2006) and six professional certifications. El Shazly joined the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs as the former Director of IT Infrastructure and Networks at the internationally acclaimed Atlantis Hotel, the Palm Jumeirah, Dubai. Prior to ODA, El Shazly was also involved with AUSA as a volunteer alumnus in establishing the Constitution and By-Laws of the Alumni Association as well as serving on the CBRC and CIFP committees. El Shazly serves on the AUSA Board as the Chief Operating Officer.

# AUSAA Milestones: First Council Meeting Under the Newly Elected Board Held at AUS



The AUS Alumni Association Council held its first bi-annual meeting on campus. The Council of the AUS Alumni Association (AUSAA) is made up of representatives of all the chapters of the Association as well as class representatives from the colleges for each year of graduation.

Thirty five alumni leaders got together at the meeting, from the GCC and across the globe, to review an agenda pertaining to the achievements and accomplishments of the AUSAA over the past academic year, as well as the assessment of the activities undertaken by its various chapters. At the meeting, the Council discussed the key strategic document that sets the vision and mission of the Association for years to come. The duty of the Council is to implement the purposes of the AUSAA defined in the Constitution and By-Laws as approved by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah, and Founder and President of American University of Sharjah.

Commenting on the occasion, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah extended her gratitude on behalf of AUS to the young alumni leaders for devoting

their time, talent, and energy in raising the AUS flag high throughout the world. She lauded the Council members for their insightful feedback, deliberations and their continued notable achievements in their respective career paths. "The American University of Sharjah Alumni Association is privileged to have such distinguished alumni leaders to serve as torch bearers for this dynamic, young, forward-looking association," said Dr. Mourtada-Sabbah.

AUS Alumnus Eisa Al Ali, President of the AUSAA, thanked his fellow alumni for travelling to the UAE to fulfill their roles as active representatives of their respective constituencies. He reiterated his commitment to enhancing the reputation of the AUSAA as the leading network of alumni in the Arab world, vouching to continue to take this association to new heights of achievement and fulfillment. Alumnus Al Ali elaborated further by reporting on the significant Alumni Association Board achievements during this academic year under the active leadership of the Board that engaged in the launching of alumni regional chapters in Syria and Kuwait and their active participation in conferences and forums in the UAE and abroad.





# AUS Alumni Participate in the Tenth Arab



A delegation of the American University of Sharjah (AUS) alumnae leaders, led by AUS Chancellor Peter Heath and Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, along with Eisa Al Ali, President of the AUS Alumni Association (AUSAA) and Sheikha Azza Al Noeimi, AUSAA Vice President, participated in the Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF) Special Programme 2011 recently in London. This event marked the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Arab International Women's Forum in 2001.

Entitled "Emerging Arab Women Leaders – the

Voice of the Future," this year's AIWF Special Programme took place with the main objective of identifying and building a network for young professionals interested in the region. The event helped the 15 AUS alumni understand more about personal accountability, leadership, and confidence building. Furthermore, through the sharing of their own personal experiences, they had the opportunity to interact with their peers and network with distinguished individuals such as H.R.H. Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall and wife of Prince Charles, Prince of Wales and H.E. Mariam Al Roumi, UAE Minister of Social Affairs.



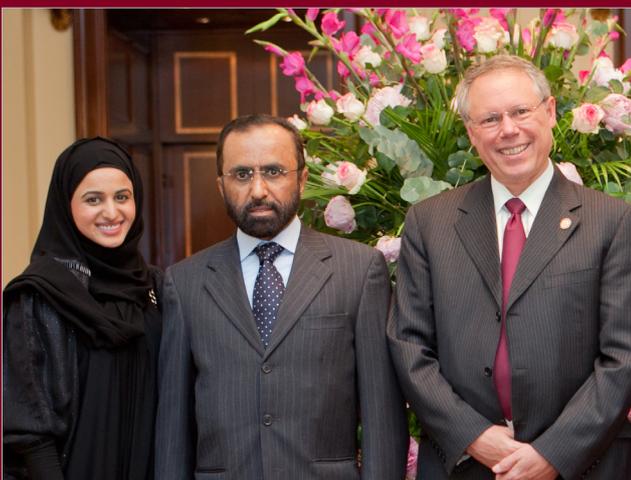
# International Women's Forum in London



As relayed by H.E. Haifa Al Kaylani, Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum, the 2011 Special Programme, presented the AIWF's far reaching proposals for the advocacy and encouragement of enhanced objectives and action to be vigorously followed within the next decade. "The focus of these propositions is on meeting the current challenges which AIWF has clearly delineated as important, including working for improved opportunities for young people and women in education, business, job creation, and for women's social and economic empowerment," stated Al Kaylani. The AIWF is unique in its position as the first and only non-profit organization set up in London to link Arab business and professional women, from 22 Arab countries, with each other and with their counterparts in the international community. It serves as a forum for Arab women, showcasing their development, promoting cross cultural diversity, and creating greater public awareness of women's success

and prospects in the Arab world. It provides an important networking opportunity where women can build their knowledge, develop their business and career potential, and promote their respective organizations.

The AUS alumni took part in a gala dinner hosted by the AUS leadership, which brought together H.E. Abdulrahman Ghanem Al Mutawaei, UAE Ambassador to the UK, AUS alumnus H.E. Sheikh Mohammed Al Maktoum, First Secretary at the UAE Embassy in the UK, and AUS alumnus H.E. Sheikh Khalid bin Sultan Al Nahyan, PhD candidate at King's College in London. Also, present as guests of honor on the occasion were H.E. Saeed Al Raqbani, Special Adviser to the Ruler of Fujairah and H.E. Fahad Saeed Al Raqbani, Director General of the Abu Dhabi Council for Economic Development.





## AUS Alumni Gala Dinner in UK

### Unilever Arabia Launches the UAE “Idea Trophy” Competition at AUS

The School of Business and Management (SBM) and the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs hosted the launch of the UAE’s third edition of Unilever’s “Idea Trophy” Competition. Human resource and marketing representatives from Unilever challenged AUS students to produce a business and management strategic plan that would best enable the company (Rexona/Unilever) to grow and lead the deodorant market in the Gulf. This applied-academic competition allows students to use their classroom knowledge to prepare business strategies in marketing.

The winning team will visit with the Unilever Global Team of Rexona in London for a business orientation and a follow-up professional critique of their strategic plan. During the five-month competition, each team will produce a business and management plan that they believe will best enable Rexona/Unilever to successfully expand the deodorant market in the region.

# Sharjah Holding Awards a Retail Unit in *Matajer Al Juraina* to AUS Graduating Seniors and Young Alumni Entrepreneurs

AUS Connect interviews Mr. Khalifa bin Braik, Sharjah Holding Vice President for Asset Management and Business Development, about entrepreneurship opportunities for AUS graduating seniors and young alumni.

## 1. Who is Sharjah Holding?

Sharjah Holding (SH) is a strategic joint venture between the Government of Sharjah and Majid Al Futtaim Holding (MAF).

## 2. What kind of relationship does Sharjah Holding have with the American University of Sharjah (AUS)?

SH already enjoys a close relationship with the leadership of AUS, and Khalifa Bin Braik, Vice President Asset Management and Business Development was recently invited to join the Advisory Committee for the AUS technology park.

## 3. Sharjah Holding is a corporate partner to AUS. What is one of your significant joint initiatives?

SH aims to assist AUS in a multifaceted relationship, one recently proposed factor is the allocation of one of the retail units in the *Matajer Al Juraina* (scheduled for opening in Q2 2012) to the marketing, business, interior design and art and design faculties at the American University of Sharjah. The graduating seniors and young alumni will be challenged with developing a viable retail concept for their allocated space and delivering on its implementation through to a formal opening.

## 4. What is the new concept “*Matajer*”?

The concept is a ‘first’ for Sharjah and runs against the general trend in the UAE towards large scale (super regional and regional) malls. It will bring the quality that consumers have come to expect from MAF’s large mall format, in terms of brands, design and quality, to the local community.

## 5. When are you planning to open these stores in Shajah?

The first centre, *Matajer Al Quoz*, will open in August 2011. Three more *Matajer* malls are under construction and are expected to open in Q2 2012, while further centres are in the planning phase.

## 6. Who will be eligible to join this challenging project?

AUS alumni who recently graduated and are still



looking for a job can propose to join the team or graduating seniors who have a vision and determination to implement it.

## 7. What is the scope of this project?

The faculty and their students will be asked to appoint a multi-disciplinary team representing each of the faculties. The team will be expected to develop and then implement a business plan and associated design, sales and marketing plans for their outlet.

## 8. What is the time frame allocated for this project?

Given the scheduled opening of the *Matajer* centre in Q2 2012, it is suggested that the process would need to begin in Q3 2011 at the latest.

## 9. What will be the role of SH throughout the project?

SH will support the process through the provision of industry experts, who will lecture the team at appropriate moments in the life of the project on key aspects of the project such as branding, interior design, sales, marketing, public relations, and customer service.

# AUSAA Syria Chapter Organizes its Launch Event



The AUSAA Syria Chapter recently organized its launching event at the Art House in Damascus, Syria. Around sixty alumni and VIP guests attended, manifesting their support and attachment to the American University of Sharjah. Among the guests were H.E. Robert Stephen Ford, US Ambassador to Syria; H.E. Salim Issa Alqattam Al Zaabi, UAE Ambassador to Syria; Dr. Peter Heath, AUS Chancellor; Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, along with AUSAA representatives, heads of large local companies, and alumni from various graduating who currently reside in Syria.



# Interview with Alumnus Ibrahim Fikri

## 1. Tell us briefly about yourself– your education and work experience.

I graduated from AUS in 2005 with a degree in Public Administration (concentration in Human Resources Management). Since graduation, I have been working with EmiratesNBD in the Human Resources department. I joined EmiratesNBD since it's the largest bank in the Middle East in terms of assets. Also, it has almost 120 branches across the UAE and abroad. During my time in EmiratesNBD, I have taken on different roles and responsibilities in HR. I started my career path as a trainee officer in the HR department. Then I got confirmed in six months. After that I got promoted to HR manager for the retail section. In January 2010, I was appointed as Head of Emiratization at the bank.

## 2. How do you determine or evaluate success?

I think success is moving towards your goal within stipulated time frames. As long as we are moving towards our goal and we are within time, we are successful at any moment.

## 3. What has been your most rewarding accomplishment?

The most rewarding accomplishment that I've had was when I got promoted as Head of Emiratization in EmiratesNBD because, after all the challenges that I've experienced and all the hard work that I've exerted, the company noticed that I stood out among the rest, so I consider it as the greatest accomplishment for me.

## 4. What has been your biggest challenge to date?

Taking the responsibility of Emiratization was the biggest challenge I have ever faced. I handled Emiratization at a very critical time when the turnover ratio was relatively high and the percentage of UAE nationals was lower than previous years. In addition, I was asked to focus on some fields that don't attract Emiratis like sales and operation jobs. I had to put in a clear action plan of what and how to achieve our target.

## 5. Do you have any plans for an advanced degree?

Yes, of course, I am planning to do my Executive MBA at AUS.

## 6. How did your education at AUS influence your career?

My studies at AUS gave me a solid background



in my career. As my concentration was Human Resources Management, I didn't face any difficulties in understanding HR terms and practices. When I was a trainee, I used to link between whatever I read or studied at AUS and my job. For instance, terms like manpower plan, succession plan, rewards and compensation were not strange at all and I really enjoyed practicing what I gained in university in real life!

## 7. If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why? What would you change?

Yes I would! As Muslims, we always should believe in destiny, whether it is good or bad. However, you should choose your way of living and define your goal and how to achieve it. And from the beginning I have chosen HR as a major in my study, although it was a new term in the UAE back then. Thank Allah, I have a good position at work and my managers and colleagues are very helpful.

## 8. If you were to recommend an AUS education to other members of your community that would be because...?

The "quality" of learning that AUS offers! It provides a mix of high standards of education along with well selected faculty members who deliver unique academic standards.

# AUS and Bee'ah to Develop and Commercialize Bio-Filter to Remove Air Pollutants

The American University of Sharjah (AUS) and Bee'ah, the Sharjah environmental company, reiterated their commitment towards collaborative projects and mutual support in order to raise awareness of environmental issues and eventually help promote a cleaner environment. This was announced at a press conference held recently on the University's campus.



Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS, said that the relationship between AUS and Bee'ah was not new, as earlier this year, the University signed an MOU that detailed cooperation between the two institutions in a number of areas that was not only mutually beneficial but also served the emirate of Sharjah. "This MOU fosters collaboration between our two institutions in a wide variety of areas including recruitment and internships, sponsorships and lectures, recycling programs, events and functions, research and development as well as mutual cooperation on the State of the Environment Report (SOTER)," he said.

"We are also proud of our collaboration in the development and commercialization of an innovative project envisaged to play an important part in providing a cleaner environment. Towards

that end, we signed an agreement last month that involves the development and commercialization of a project called 'Bio-Filter Development and Testing for Removal of Air Pollutants from Waste Treatment and Industrial Facilities.' This project takes advantage of the skills of our faculty from the College of Engineering as Bee'ah helps them translate their ideas into reality. It aims to utilize an AUS-built bio-filter to remove pollutants, including odors and toxins such as hydrogen sulphide, ammonia, volatile organic compounds and more, from waste treatment and industrial facilities in an effort to provide a cleaner environment," said Dr. Heath.

He added that AUS appreciated the great role Bee'ah has played in supporting the activities of its students. "Earlier this year, our IEEE student trip to Italy was generously sponsored by Bee'ah. It has also hosted AUS students and faculty at



their facilities here in Sharjah. I am confident that our relationship, which has proved extremely successful thus far, will only grow in the days to come," said Dr. Heath. Addressing the media, Khaled Al Huraimel, General Manager of Bee'ah, said that as a leading integrated environment company, Bee'ah was committed to improving the general state of the environment in the emirate and was pleased to be working with AUS on a number of projects to achieve this goal. "We are very pleased to be supporting AUS students and faculty and hope to see this relationship becoming even stronger in the future," he said.

Speaking to the University's graduating senior students at a special gala dinner held in their honor following the press conference, Al Huraimel said that Bee'ah continuously strives to work as a partner of the community to improve the standard of living in Sharjah. "We fully acknowledge that to reach our goal of helping to ensure a greener future for all in Sharjah, we cannot do it alone. So, therefore, we place great emphasis on the importance of cultivating relationships with key institutions ranging from businesses across the emirate through to academic establishments such as the AUS," he said. "When it comes

to environmental sustainability, the emirate of Sharjah is a leading player in the region. Research has shown that the environment is one of the five most important issues to the people of Sharjah. There is a huge drive by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, to ensure that new trends and environmental solutions are adopted across the emirate. But it is only with the continued efforts of the entire community and with the support of today's students, who will be our leaders tomorrow, that we can ensure the long-term health and well-being of our community and the environment," he added.

The event was organized by the AUS Office of Development and Alumni Affairs and involved the most recent cohort of graduating senior students (around 350 students attended the event) to provide them opportunities to interface with the corporate world and future employers. Also present at the occasion were Dr. Thomas Hochstetler, AUS Provost, as well as senior officials from AUS and Bee'ah, faculty members, students, and members of the media.

# AUSAA Delegation Visits Alumni Associations at Leading Universities in Washington, DC



A delegation of the American University of Sharjah led by Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, along with Alumnus Eisa Al Ali, President of AUSAA, recently visited leading institutions of higher learning in Washington, DC for the purpose of enhancing the young alumni leaders' understanding of the modus operandi of alumni associations in the US and sharing best practices in alumni relations.

The delegation, which also included Karim Abu Ajram, Executive of the Council, Musbah Abo Jarad, Treasurer, Melissa Bayek, Executive of Administration, Tariq Mandou, Head of AUSAA Marketing and Communication Committee, and Fawaz Akhtar, Head of AUSAA Program Committee, as well as Abdullah El Shazly, Director of Institutional Advancement, visited alumni associations at Georgetown University, George Washington University,

and the American University in Washington, DC. Following "best practice" in US institutions of higher learning, the AUSAA Board members discussed a variety of topics ranging from how to sustain alumni organizations to how alumni associations can successfully support and engage their alumni in multifaceted activities.

The AUSAA Board members also visited with AUS Alumnus Saud Al Nowais, UAE Commercial Attache at the UAE Embassy in Washington, DC. Alumnus Al Nowais hosted a luncheon in honor of the AUS delegation and expressed his happiness in receiving fellow alumni and officials from his alma mater. He thanked the AUSAA for their continuous support of AUS alumni and expressed his pride in being part of the AUS alumni body and his positive sense of the strong relationship they have with their alma mater.



## WE WANT YOU TO STAY IN TOUCH!

The AUS Office of Development and Alumni Affairs is keen to stay in touch with all of our alumni. We hope that you will take the opportunity to tell us about what is happening in your lives. Had a promotion at work? The joy of a new addition to your family? A major move across the globe, or a minor move around the corner? We want to know and share your news with your AUS friends and colleagues.

*AUS Connect* is a wonderful way to stay in touch with your fellow alums, teachers and mentors. It is also a great way to show our friends in the community how proud our wonderful alumni are making us.

Send us an email to [ODAA@aus.edu](mailto:ODAA@aus.edu). We look forward to hearing from each and every one of you.

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