2,740 Alumni Join His Highness in Celebrating the Fifth Alumni Reunion Dinner

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah and President of the American University of Sharjah, urged AUS alumni to become an inspiration to society through their good deeds as well as shining examples of the positive values of AUS. His Highness Sheikh Sultan also thanked the alumni for finding the time to travel back to their alma mater to attend the fifth Annual Alumni Reunion Dinner held at the University’s Main Plaza on February 23, 2012.

Organized by the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs, the annual reunion dinner is a major event for alumni who convene at AUS from all around the world; this year’s dinner was attended by over 2,700 alumni.

At the dinner, His Highness welcomed back graduates from the last 15 years and said, “I am grateful to each of you for finding time to travel back to Sharjah. I know that it takes considerable time from your busy work and family schedules, along with effort to make the local and international travel arrangements. But I am sure that the rich experiences of this evening will revive the excitement that you felt as a student in constantly pushing new intellectual frontiers.”

“Fifteen years ago in 1997, AUS was still getting started as the initiation of a vision with only a dozen pioneer faculty members and some 250 students. Today, our alumni cover the globe in their quest to build and innovate in whatever career they chose. Most of you have come to hold key positions of influence. Please remember that you should provide in your careers a shining example of the positive values of AUS and be an inspiration to society through good deeds,” added His Highness.

The ceremony started upon the arrival of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah, with an address by Dr. Peter Heath, AUS Chancellor who greeted the Ruler of Sharjah and the alumni. “The alumni among us tonight, who keep up with the University through their very active Alumni Association, are well aware of the great developments at AUS. In the intervening year since we last came together, we have proceeded with the task of forever strengthening the academic programs under the continuous guidance of His Highness,” said Dr. Heath.

“The AUS community, our alumni, students, faculty, and staff have created a proud tradition for 15 years to take on the odds, to work harder than the competition, and to turn...
dreams into solid reality. The “can do” ethic is the hallmark of AUS. As AUS moves closer towards its goal of becoming a premier university among elite peers, we too will continue to do everything within our power to ensure success for our most important product - you, the AUS alumni,” concluded Dr. Heath.

Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, also celebrated, on behalf of all AUS alumni, the return of His Highness to his alma mater. She reminded the audience that, “Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi has recently been called the ‘conscience of the nation’ for his unique input into many of the critical issues faced during the past four decades of the UAE’s history and for contributing in leading in the development of higher education and invigorating cultural heritage to perform new tasks of the globalized world.”

“His Highness not only conceptualized what AUS could become when there was little more than sand where we now convene, but guided the University through every step along the way to AUS’s rapid rise to excellence,” Dr. Mourtada-Sabbah added.

Alumnus Musbah Abu Jarad, Vice President of AUS Alumni Association (AUSAA), also addressed the gathering, speaking on behalf of the AUSAA President and the alumni. His Highness also inaugurated an exhibition organized by the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs with the support of Sharjah Museums, for renowned artists Dr. Najat Meky and Ismaeil Al Refai entitled Art through University and Community Dialogue. The acclaimed Emirati artist, Dr. Meky, dedicated three monumental paintings (3 m x 5 m each) to His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan in appreciation of his pioneering efforts in preserving the fine arts in Sharjah’s museums and in celebration of the Sharjah Ruler’s return in good health.

On the occasion, AUS alumni presented His Highness with a special book entitled The Arabian Antiquities of Spain, which depicts the architecture, sculpture, and paintings of al-Andalus.

The evening also saw 14 alumni win scholarships to attend graduate school at AUS in the fields of their choice. Winners of the scholarships were: Waleed Anwar, Rawad El Haj Ali, Nader Aly, Rashed Kabbara, Youssef El Haji, Rida Al Salamin, Samah Haji, Rida Aref, Osama Darraj, Eman Al Raeei, Taha Dahabba, Tamer Al-Deek, Abdulrahman Abbas, and Kamal Saadeddin.

AUS alumni celebrating the Fifth Alumni Reunion Dinner

Alumna Ahlam Kaddoura won a 2012 model Mitsubishi Lancer offered by The Construction Machinery Center, as the winner of a contest to determine the most active alumnus or alumna involving her fellow alumni in activities of the AUS Alumni Association. The following sponsored the other raffle prizes: RAK Airways, Xclusive Yachts and Rotana Centro.

The dinner was also attended by alumni leaders who have attained distinction in their young careers, including Salah Al Shamsi, former Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of Liwa Investment Holding; Sheikh Khalid Bin Saqr Al Qassimi, Chairman of the Sharjah Public Works Department; Yousuf Al Bastaki, Vice President of EMAL; Sheikh Mohammad Faisal Al-Qassimi, AUSAA Founding Board President; and Sheikha Azza Al Nuaimi, AUS Alumni Association President. Also present were AUS trustees Hamid D. Jafar, Chairman of the Board and CEO of Crescent Petroleum; Riad T. Sadek, Chairman of Al Habtoor Leighton Group; and Maroun Semaan, President and CEO Petrofac International Ltd. Other invitees included Dr. Amr Abdul Hamid, Advisor to His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah for Higher Education; Ahmed Ismail, Chairman MAF Dalkia; Walid Al Hashimi, CEO of Sharjah Holding; Faizal Kottikolon Chairman, the KEF Company FZC; and Shabana Faizal, Managing Director, the KEF Company FZC; senior university officials, graduates, staff, and faculty members.
His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi with Trustee Hamid D. Jafar and Chancellor Peter Heath along with UAE-based artist Ismail Al Rifai inaugurating the exhibition.

His Highness addressing the audience in the presence of Chancellor Heath, Vice Chancellors Mourtada and Al Qaseer.


The three monumental paintings (3 m x 5 m each) dedicated to His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi by UAE artist Dr. Najat Meky.

Vice Chancellor Mourtada with alumnas Ahlam Kaddoura, winner of the 2012 model Mitsubishi Lancer offered by the Construction Machinery Center.

A winner receiving an air ticket sponsored by RAK Airways in the presence of Chancellor Heath.

An entertainment band playing at the Fifth Alumni Reunion Dinner.

AUS alumni at the Alumni Reunion Dinner.

AUS alumni at the Fifth Alumni Reunion Dinner.

Abdullah El Shazly and Rami Gaber awarding winners of the Alumni Sports Tournament.
Sharjah Ruler Inaugurates AIWF Annual Conference at AUS

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah and President of American University of Sharjah (AUS), expressed satisfaction at the University hosting the Arab International Women’s Forum (AIWF) Annual Conference this year. His Highness made this statement after the opening ceremony of the AIWF conference held at the University’s Main Auditorium on May 16.

“I am very happy that this conference is taking place in the emirate of Sharjah; an emirate that is distinguished by its constant efforts in the betterment of institutions pertaining to the family,” said the Sharjah Ruler. His Highness said that over the last 25 years, Sharjah has constantly worked at enhancing and developing institutions dedicated to future generations. He also thanked Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Chairman of the AIWF and the conference organizers, for their efforts and wished them success.

Themed “Emerging Economies, Emerging Leadership: Arab Women and Youth as Drivers of Change,” the two-day conference brought together Arab and international global leaders to AUS, which is renowned as one of the leading centers of academic excellence in the Arab world.

During the conference, eminent guest speakers and high profile participants examined the role of women and youth as drivers of change in emerging economies. In addition to exploring strategies to implement policy recommendations already identified at AIWF’s 10th anniversary conference held in London in May last year, the conference identified enablers for job creation in the region and other emerging economies around the world, taking the unique opportunities presented within the region to help shape future Arab policy, reinforcing the message that gender equality is absolutely vital to sustainable development in the future Arab world.

AUS Chancellor Dr. Peter Heath said in his opening remarks: “I wish to thank the AIWF for the opportunity to work together to find ways to include women and young workers more fully into the private sector as the way forward. AIWF’s networking of women entrepreneurs for our national development is more than timely. Many deem it a necessary step.” He said that promoting women’s entrepreneurship seeds broader and deeper economic progress. “There isn’t any way we can increase prosperity and stability throughout the region unless women are full partners in the community, the country, the region, and in the world economy,” he added.

In her presentation, Al Noman spoke of the different initiatives and organizations led by Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher Al Qassimi, the wife of the Ruler of Sharjah. “The common denominator between all of these organizations which employ more than 2,000 staff to serve the emirate of Sharjah and beyond isn’t only the great role they play in developing society; but also the fact that they are all led by women leaders from Sharjah,” said Al Noman. “His Highness’ conviction that the education of women should be reinforced by entrusting them with the running and operation of leading organizations is most visible in Sharjah and in Her Highness’ organizations,” she said.

In her opening remarks, Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, said: “It is my firm belief that our deliberations during the Forum’s next two days will conclusively demonstrate just how solid the pioneering foundations
of Sheikh Dr. Sultan, empowering women and the youthful professionals have proven in building a new Arab Renaissance and this is only normal for such an enlightened Ruler and a well-read scholar and author in his own right.”

The conference sought to identify and promote factors that have the potential to create real opportunities for women and youth in the Arab world to better their futures. Plenary sessions included “Women's Contribution to Public Life,” “Empowering SMEs: Economic Development and the New Arab World,” “Linking Education & Stable, Sustainable Socio-Economic Development,” “Innovators and Entrepreneurs in Emerging Economies: Reaching a New Level of Entrepreneurial Excellence,” “Developing Youth: The Role of Governments and the Private Sector,” “Hidden Potential: New Perspectives on the Role of Women and Youth,” and “How Are Students and Young Entrepreneurs Leveraging Technology and Social Media to Promote a Sustainable Future?”

The conference, organized by the AUS Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA) and the Arab International Women’s Forum (AIWF) in collaboration with the World Bank and MENA OECD Business Council, continued until May 17. The opening was attended by AUS trustees and numerous government officials, international delegates, senior AUS officials, prominent alumni, faculty and staff members, as well as members of the public and the national media.

Since its inception, AUS has played a formidable role in providing a forum to highlight and discuss important issues pertaining to gender studies. This significant event crowns the University as a regional hub for women's studies. The University regularly hosts national and international symposia that focus on issues related to academic studies on women's empowerment and growth. It also played a pioneering role in the creation of the UAE Gender and Women's Studies Consortium, the last meeting of which drew renowned scholars from 70 universities across the world to AUS.

Known for its academic excellence and multicultural campus life, one of the core aims of AUS has been the active promotion of women’s rights. More than just offering its students a minor in women's studies, AUS faculty members manifest the values of women's empowerment that the University encourages among its students. Well known for their active organization of forums on feminism and women’s leadership and their robust academic research, AUS faculty continue to author and edit books, monograms, and research papers, and have carved a distinct niche for themselves in the field.

Such encouragement has resulted in many of the University’s female students and alumnae setting standards of excellence in numerous fields, both at home and abroad. From winning laurels for their innovative industrial designs to being lauded at international film festivals for their poignant and sensitive portrayal of local women’s issues, AUS students have been celebrated for their work. The University’s faculty, students, and alumnae are committed to becoming the harbingers of positive change for the empowerment of women, not just within the UAE but in the region and beyond.
The Gulf countries have instigated impressive programs to create skills and place young workers in the private sector. The preamble of our AIWF conference today calls for building stronger, more economically resilient societies with greater inclusion of all social sectors, though especially women. Talent is universal, but opportunity is not. Women are still saddled with unfair and untrue assumptions that they are less capable of starting and running businesses. We are prying open the doors of opportunity for more people to walk through. Making women a focus of national policy is not only the right thing to do—it is also the smart thing as well. It is crucial that women and youth are given the essential tools; training and hands-on experience that will ensure that they are workforce-ready. Plenary sessions today will explore the importance of education, leadership training, capacity building, and self-development for our young globally minded citizens, who will be the ones to transition our respective economies from ‘emerging’ to ‘fully emerged.’

I wish to emphasize the transformative leadership role that women will play over the next few decades—as entrepreneurs, innovators, and leaders in politics, culture, and academia. The AIWF has long recognized the need to cultivate national and co-resident business leaders and at all managerial levels. I note that AUS is especially equipped to achieve this goal as a global institution that was founded as the first co-educational and co-residential university in the Gulf. AUS is committed to developing the careers of women at all levels—from senior administrators, to middle managers, to those just breaking into the University. There are a growing number of women in all tiers of the AUS administration, and on our board of Trustees. The Office of Development and Alumni Affairs has a successful program in placing young women and men with suitable companies. The UAE and the region are certainly on a journey—and we are getting better as we are getting stronger. Thus, creating a climate that promotes women’s success demonstrates business acumen.

The AIWF conference will explore how women can turn their entrepreneurial dreams and innovations into successful businesses that generate income for themselves and their families, create jobs, expand markets, and fuel progress in their communities. Public-private partnerships can make use of a reservoir of untapped potential. By creating networks of support, we can build locally driven and locally supported organizations that do bring about lasting change.

Our aim is to unleash the potential of Arab women entrepreneurs and business leaders. When you leave here today, I want you to feel that you can carry with you expanded networks to use along your skill and energy, to contribute to the growth and progress of your communities!

Dr. Peter Heath
AUS Chancellor

The Emirate of Sharjah and His Highness himself through personal daily attention and of his very busy governmental schedule are widely recognized for recognizing the day-to-day living of all social sectors and for initiating change that will render greater social and economic equanimity in its long-term strategic goal.

Let us all bear in mind that the advancing of all social sectors, and especially women, pays great dividends for Gulf society and the Arab world. It almost goes without saying to all those present today that self-realized personalities of all backgrounds and social categories, in their own turn, repay the investment in their skills many times over in their contributions to the economy and to the country. This enlightened capacity-building renders the likes of Sharjah, the UAE, and its neighboring Gulf countries far better places to live.

This past January commemorated the 40th anniversary of accession of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi to the sheikhdom of Sharjah. These four decades have seen breathtaking developments at home and abroad in culture, heritage, the arts, and science, on many fronts, as well as the great participation of citizens of both genders in the rapidly expanding private sector and capacity-building initiatives of all sorts in the Emirates. Sharjah has received awards as the cultural capital of the Arab world for its many museums and universities and is widely recognized for blazing the way for women in leadership in business, science, engineering, and the arts. In short, Sharjah through the vision of His Highness has established itself as a tolerant society steeped in its values and mindful of its culture where talents in many forms are nourished for the benefit of businesswomen, artists, and scientists alike.

Her Highness Sheikha Jawahir bint Mohammed Al Qasimi, the wife of the Ruler of Sharjah, and the Chairperson of the Sharjah Supreme Council for Family Affairs, who as our mentor constantly reminded us of how supportive our beloved Ruler is of all her initiatives and undertakings, has also stood at the forefront with the continuous encouragement and guidance of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, to support and encourage women through the Sharjah Women’s Council, the Sharjah Women’s Union, the Sharjah Family Affairs, and the Sharjah Ladies Club, to name just a few of the proactive venues channeling constructive and effective change.

We are delighted and honored, Your Highness, that you have taken time in your many-fold governmental duties to see the quintessence of your ongoing long-term trajectory of opening the floodgates of talent “of all species” to develop.

It is my firm belief that our deliberations during the Forum’s next two days will conclusively demonstrate just how solid His Highness’s pioneering foundations of empowering women and the youthful generation of today will prove in building the new Arab Renaissance—and this is only normal for such an enlightened Ruler and a well-read scholar and author in his own right.

It is now my privilege and honor to introduce you to Chancellor Heath and to present her to you. Peter Heath has served at the helm of AUS for four years, after coming to us as Provost at the American University in 2015. This is a period in which Peter has been very active. I often read in the Financial Times report, which Mark Carwardine of the Daily Mail and David Applefield were kind enough to share with us today. He has been especially supportive of my efforts to develop and build partnerships with the community and private sector and those of my dear colleague, Vice Chancellor Mizaa Al Shehhi, who is a mentor and role model for AUS students.

Dr. Nada Mourad-Sabbah
Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs
& Professor of International Studies
More can and should be done in the region to enhance women's opportunities. If we are to achieve gender equality in the MENA region, we must address the cases limiting opportunities for education, employment, or other roles in public life. Like their counterparts in Europe, Asia and the Americas, women in the MENA region are excluded from top leadership roles in the sciences, sport, media, education, religion, and economic growth. Businesswomen, journalists, judges, lawyers, ministers, media personalities, bankers, doctors, and financiers are marginalized in the region and globally.

The MENA region has the disadvantage of having one of the highest unemployment rates of all regions globally and job creation is, now more than ever, a top regional priority. The MENA region has the disadvantage of having one of the highest unemployment rates of all regions globally. In the last decade and a half, Arab women have taken on prominent roles as decision-makers, participating in shaping Arab politics and economies beyond oil and other traditional exports, renewing partnerships and funding concrete initiatives to diversify Arab economies and accelerate job creation. We are calling on GCC governments, regional development organizations, and the private sector to support women's leadership in the region and globally. Arab businesswomen, journalists, judges, lawyers, ministers, media personalities, bankers, doctors, and financiers are marginalized in the region and globally.

Youth unemployment rates are especially and extremely high in countries such as Yemen at 50%, Algeria at nearly 46%, and Iraq at 43.5%. Of Libya's 6.5 million people, approximately 75% live below the poverty line. Women's leadership in the region is a key opportunity to ensure economic growth in the region.

Substantive issues such as endemic youth unemployment cannot be solved overnight, but AIFW has seen first-hand that the support of global corporations in training, recruiting, and business development can have a profound impact on the integration of Arab graduates and entrepreneurs into the regional and global markets.

Women represent 50% of the SME enterprise sector, and the MENA region still has many more abilities left to be called upon. Women in business in all Arab countries still struggle with access to finance and networking opportunities, skill building, specialized training, and integration of advanced technology and management. Arab women, because of their conservative cultures, still exert pressure on women in the Arab region, yet Arab women also participate in public life in many cases. Women in the Arab region, in many cases, are limited by their opportunities for education, employment, or other roles in public life.

The MENA region has the disadvantage of having one of the highest unemployment rates of all regions globally. In the last decade and a half, Arab women have taken on prominent roles as decision-makers, participating in shaping Arab politics and economies beyond oil and other traditional exports, renewable partnerships and funding concrete initiatives to diversify Arab economies and accelerate job creation. We are calling on GCC governments, regional development organizations, and the private sector to support women's leadership in the region and globally.

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Arab corporations, governments, and development organizations must commit to promoting public-private partnerships and funding concrete initiatives to diversify Arab economies beyond oil and other traditional exports, renewing partnerships and funding concrete initiatives to diversify Arab economies beyond oil and other traditional exports, reversing and foreign investment to steer young graduates away from unremunerative jobs in the informal sector. By actively promoting women's successes in the MENA, highlighting their accomplishments in the media, honoring their achievements, and encouraging valuable experience exchange between successful Arab businesswomen and young entrepreneurs, we can actively break stereotypes and challenge the barriers that are denying Arab women a prominent voice as engines of economic growth.

Our Highness, Sheikh Dr Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah, and President of this conference, is doing all that he can to yield our results today for the success of AIWF annual conference. AUS Chancellor Peter C. Marobin, keynote speaker, Chairperson of the Arab International Women's Forum, Distinguished guests, my fellow AUS alumni,

It is especially auspicious that this 11th session of the AIWF annual conference is hosted in the beautiful emirate of Sharjah, an institution which is itself very young and yet has achieved so much in such record time as to position itself as the herald of leadership, of successful entrepreneurship, and of all efforts that are channeled to build the capacity of our youth, as well as develop their full potential. The very title and theme of today's forum "Emerging Economies, Emerging Leaderships: Arab Women & Youth as Drivers of Change" is reminiscent of the past and trajectory of the University we are in, a University that has four women on its senior staff, notably the President and Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor of the Graduate School, Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah the Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, Dr. Cindy Dutshke the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and Mr. Francesco Bartolino, who is in charge of special projects. All this has occurred with the personal support of His Highness the President of Sharjah.

Indeed, His Highness and Her Highness Sheikhha Jawaheer Bint Mohammad Al Qassimi, have always espoused the empowerment of women and the youth hand in hand and considered this to be a natural process. I wish to quote her highness as having so often reiterated that as she approached some of her initiatives with deliberate speed and care, it was His Highness who would urge her and encourage her to steadily move forward on those various fronts that I shall outline and share with you a bit later during the course of my presentation.

I wish to mention here that the same process of natural support and empowerment of women is in being learned in this academic institution is manifest in the Sharjah Businesswomen Council, which is being led by my dear colleague and friend Ameera Al Mansoori, and in her dynamic leadership, the businesswomen council is known to all across the UAE and beyond by virtue of her unwavering support of the cause of the Pink Caravan under the Friends of Cancer Patients umbrella. Ameera is herself a keynote speaker in this forum. With eyes and ears, she speaks for herself.

It is now overdue for me to share with you the thorough initiatives and social development strategic planning of the person who I consider a role model, a mentor, and a friend. The common denominator between all of these organizations is most visible in Sharjah and in Her Highness' organizations. The Sharjah Businesswomen Council, which is being led by my dear colleague and friend Ameera Al Mansoori, and in her dynamic leadership, the businesswomen council is known to all across the UAE and beyond by virtue of her unwavering support of the cause of the Pink Caravan under the Friends of Cancer Patients umbrella. Ameera is herself a keynote speaker in this forum. With eyes and ears, she speaks for herself. Indeed, His Highness and Her Highness Sheikhha Jawaheer Bint Mohammad Al Qassimi, have always espoused the empowerment of women and the youth hand in hand and considered this to be a natural process. I wish to quote her highness as having so often reiterated that as she approached some of her initiatives with deliberate speed and care, it was His Highness who would urge her and encourage her to steadily move forward on those various fronts that I shall outline and share with you a bit later during the course of my presentation.

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Under the patronage of His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, Supreme Council member, Ruler of Sharjah and President of the American University of Sharjah (AUS), a collaboration agreement has been signed to establish the “Gulf Ecosystem Research Center” with an endowment of AED 30 million, which will bring to the region the very best environmental research, resources, and faculty to help position Sharjah as the center for environmental change, thought, and leadership.

The agreement highlights the partnerships between AUS and Bee’ah to apply the frameworks and foundations for the Gulf Ecosystem Research Center, and serves as an affirmation of the vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan to support the education and culture of future leaders about the importance of a sustainable environment in the UAE and the Middle East.

Present at the signing ceremony was H.E. Salim Al Owais, Chairman of Bee’ah, along with Dr. Thomas J. Hochstettler, AUS Provost; Dr. Peter Heath, AUS Chancellor; Mr. Khaled Al Huraimel, Chief Executive Officer of Bee’ah, as well as other senior officials of the University and the US embassy.

AUS MBA Program Ranked Best in Gulf by Forbes Middle East

The MBA program offered by AUS was ranked as the best among those offered by private universities in the Gulf region, according to a study published recently by Forbes Middle East. The program ranks second best among private universities, offering MBA degrees in the entire Middle East and North African (MENA) region, according to the same study.

“The high ranking of our MBA program by Forbes is not a surprise to us, but comes as a logical crowning of the series of achievements by AUS in general and its School of Business and Management in particular,” said Dr. Peter Heath, AUS Chancellor.

The six criteria used by the study to assess the top 37 private MBA programs in the MENA region included accreditation, number of majors, length of the program, cost, minimum GPA requirements and availability of academic advisors.

Meanwhile, in an interview published on the occasion, Dr. Heath told Forbes Middle East that AUS maintained an educational standard equal to that of renowned US universities. He attributed the University’s success to the support of its president, its Board of Trustees, and the dedication of its faculty and staff.

Forbes also quoted AUS MBA graduate Mishal Kanoo, Vice President of the Kanoo Group, as saying that AUS had given him “the ability to consider different investment viewpoints and distinguished business policies.” Another MBA graduate, Nadia Kamali, Head of the IT Department at Dubai World, described the AUS faculty as “excellent and always there to take care of me.”
Many years. But as soon as emotions get involved, the family business collapses. It has been proven in many family organizations, the business collapses as the third generation brings personal matters into the business. As long as the company is strictly professional and has competent members working in it, it can survive any business cycle.

How have you expanded the market share for luxury watch brands for Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons?

By positioning Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons as the leading watch retailer in the region.

In many cultures, a watch is a treasured heirloom to pass on from father to son or from mother to daughter. Does Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons retail a high prestige watch with distinctive Emirati symbols that could become an heirloom kept in families for generations? If so, what do you recommend?

Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons works very closely with the watch manufacturers to produce special UAE editions of watches, which are exclusively sold at our stores and only for the UAE market. Some pay tribute to Sheikh Zayed, to local events, and some to certain Emirati. Our clients relate to these themes and cherish the limited edition watches and consider them as heirlooms.

Fortunately enough, our clients have a very good knowledge about watches and they have very specific tastes when it comes to choosing watches, which are considered as investment pieces that will always retain value and most of the time increase in worth.

Why is Italy one of your favorite travel destinations? It may be worth recalling that the southern half of Italy and most of Spain were settled by Arabs during the Middle Ages. Have you felt any subtle cultural affinity with the Italians or the Spaniards that may suggest a shared heritage, centuries ago? If so, in what ways?

Yes, there are so many things in Italy and Spain that show a shared heritage. Many words they use are of Arabic origin; their concept of family is also very similar to Arabs. I personally enjoy Italy because it is very rich with history. I am fond of visiting historical areas that are also very closely related to arts. The great buildings and art that you see in old historical venues overwhelm me with an appreciation for the hard work and determination they had to achieve it.

You seem to represent the “new” Emirati woman by seeking advancement in the business world. From your experience, what are the top qualities of success that you would advise the alumnae and female students of AUS to cultivate?

I am doing what I believe is the normal thing any working individual must achieve, and that is to be completely responsible, professional and, strive to be the best. The advice I would give the alumnae is to work in a field they believe in and are passionate about. Do not try to be something you are not, because you will never excel. Be passionate about your career and that is when you will be successful. Do not venture into anything because you heard about someone's success in it. Finally, dare to do something only if you feel you can bring positive change and advancement.
Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah, and President of American University of Sharjah, His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Bin Salim Sultan Al Qassimi, Deputy Ruler of Sharjah, opened the third annual AUS Business Forum at the AUS Main Building on March 12. Themed “Turning Challenges into Opportunities,” the event was attended by leading executives from the GCC. The Forum, which engages business leaders, academics and industry leaders, is designed to initiate a platform for business and investment opportunities in response to the ever-changing business environment in the GCC.

The opening ceremony was attended by Sheikh Salem Bin Abdullah Al Qasimi, Director of the Office of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah; Salem al Owais, Advisor at the Office of the Ruler of Sharjah; AUS Trustee Hamid D. Jafar, Chairman of the Board and CEO of Crescent Petroleum; Mohammad Diabi Al Mosa, Advisor at the Office of the Ruler of Sharjah; Salem Yousef Al Qaseer, AUS Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs; Ali Shuhalmy, AUS Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management; Cleve McDaniel, AUS Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration; and AUS deans and senior officials.

"His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah envisioned that science and education must regain their rightful place in the advancement of our society, and it is for this reason that the University continues a bold, collaborative strategy of networking the AUS community with the private sector to fulfill the needs of the UAE," said Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs. "The Forum, in its third year now, is one of the University’s key channels utilized to identify and address contemporary topics in a manner to provide a ‘formula for the future’ that brings together leading industry experts from various sectors, with farsighted governmental leadership, along with leading academic scholars. With the global economy’s current challenges, we feel that the Forum achieves a much-needed triangulation between academia, governmental agencies and the private sector," she added. The AUS Business Forum 2012 featured keynote addresses by AUS Trustee Hamid Jafar, Chairman of the Board and CEO of Crescent Petroleum, and Homaid Al Shemmari, Executive Director of Mubadala Aerospace.

"Today’s sessions will be a great learning experience for all of you students, recent graduates, and alumni. I hope that it will spark a set of ideas and enthusiasm in you that will grow into successful careers that will benefit you, your families, and society at large," said Mr. Al Shemmari. "As you embark on this pursuit of suitable career paths for your future, I implore you to also take a leadership role in educating your communities on better uses of available resources. Abuse of resources is challenging our environment and jeopardizing our future—that is why I am asking you to be ambassadors for a sustainable future as you pursue your future."

“Human capital development is the most important challenge in the UAE. That is why it gives me great pleasure to participate in this Forum because this is one of the best ways to address this challenge,” said Mr. Al Shemmari. “We as business leaders and government entities need to partner with educational institutions like AUS to find ways to develop the required human capital.

The event featured six panels including a keynote panel, which addressed the Forum’s theme, “Turning Challenges into Opportunities.” Keynote panelists included Raja Easa Al Gurg, Managing Director of Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group; Fatima Obaid Al Jaber, Chief Operating Officer of Al Jaber Group; and Badria Al Mulla, President of International Emirates Management for Quality (leMQ). Other panels featured prominent speakers from the UAE, KSA, and Qatar discussing the topics Family Business and Entrepreneurship, Urbanism and Construction, Energy, Business and Media.
The University’s annual Career Fair was held parallel to the AUS Business Forum. The Fair provided the AUS community with the opportunity to meet with scores of different local, regional, and international private, semi-government and government agencies interested in recruiting AUS students and graduates as either full-time employees and/or interns.

"The Career Fair is truly a gateway to opportunity. It interfaces the AUS laboratory, where our students acquire skills and knowledge, and the world of business, where these skills and knowledge are put to use. Graduating seniors and alumni have the wonderful convenience of interacting with a multitude of company officers ready to hire suitable candidates. Many local and multinational companies participate in the Career Fair, most from the United Arab Emirates but many from other countries as well," Dr. Heath added.

Eighty prominent businesses participated in this year’s Career Fair, including Crescent Petroleum and SAP Middle East as gold sponsors; L’Oreal, Unilever, Petrofac, National Petroleum Construction Company, Cummins and DEWA as silver sponsors; and Al Sayegh Media, Hewlett Packard, Chalhoub Group, Philipps, Shell, Procter & Gamble, Dolphin Energy, Arabtec Construction, SABB, Technolous Integrated Solutions, ADNOC, Tyco Valves, and Ahtom as bronze sponsors.

The Career Fair was organized by the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs at AUS as part of the University’s commitment to provide its students and graduates with opportunities to locate appropriate jobs and prepare them to be integrated within the labor market. Both events attracted a large number of students, alumni, guests, and faculty members.
Mr. Fahed Al Raqbani, Mr. Marwan Al Serkal, Mr. Ziad Makhzoumi, and Dean Peter Di Sabatino during the Urbanism & Construction panel.

Mr. Mustafa Abdel-Wadood, Mr. Jerome Droesch, Dr. George Naufal, Dr. Ismail Genc, and Chancellor Peter Heath during the Business panel.

Dr. Fred Moavenzadeh, Dr. Geoff Nesbitt, Mr. Ali Bin Harib Al-Muhairy, Mr. Fahad Al Qahtani, Mr. Rachid Ouenniche, and Associate Dean Hany El Kadi during the Energy panel.

Chancellor Peter Heath visiting with the Habtoor Leighton Group.

Chancellor Heath speaking to officials from Schlumberger.

Alumni and senior graduates at the HP booth.

Chancellor Peter Heath with officials from Procter and Gamble.

Chancellor Peter Heath with officials from Tyco.

Chancellor Heath visiting with officials from Dolphin Energy.
PepsiCo to Establish a USD 4 Million Scholarship Fund at AUS

Saad Abdul Latif, Chief Executive Officer of PepsiCo Asia, Middle East and Africa (AMEA) announced the establishment of a USD 4 million scholarship as he was delivering a lecture entitled “My Path at PepsiCo and Lessons Learned along the Way” to students, alumni, faculty, and staff at AUS in February.

Based in Dubai, Abdul Latif, who has led the business since September 2008, oversees all PepsiCo food and beverage businesses which generate more than AED 22 billion (US$6 billion) in annual revenues. Prior to his current post, he led PepsiCo’s South Asia, Middle East and Africa business for five years.

“I first walked in to the PepsiCo office in Dubai in 1982. Over the years I have been with the company, I have learnt many valuable lessons. These lessons have helped me get to where I am today,” he said. “I would like to urge everyone to always take the initiative; when an opportunity presents itself, grab it and don’t let it go. I would also advise you to go where others do not dare to go. Often in life, the biggest risks will often give you the biggest rewards,” he said during his lecture.

Touching on some specific lessons learnt, Abdul Latif urged his audience, comprised of students, alumni, faculty members, as well as senior university officials, to be proactive in their personal advancements and to take advantage of all available opportunities.

In addition to advice pertaining to success in the corporate world, Abdul Latif also spoke about the many important charitable initiatives that PepsiCo is involved in. These include programs such as Tomooh that has placed over 5,000 students in higher education through grants and scholarships. Other initiatives Abdul Latif is involved in include PlaNet Finance and the Arab International Women’s Forum.

As CEO of the company’s AMEA Division, Abdul Latif is responsible for a territory that spans more than 90 countries and is home to more than 70 percent of the world’s population. A 30-year PepsiCo veteran, he has held a wide range of international roles in the corporation’s food and beverage businesses since joining the company in 1982.

Abdul-Latif holds an MBA from the American Graduate School of International Management in Arizona and a BA in Public Administration from the American University of Beirut.

The lecture was part of the AUS Chancellor’s Distinguished Lecture Series, in collaboration with the AUS academic units and the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs. It was attended by Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS; Dr. Thomas Hochstettler, Provost; Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, as well as other senior university officials.
The American University of Sharjah (AUS) received a collection of paintings donated by acclaimed artists in the UAE during their visit to the University on April 1. The venture was initiated by Dr. Najat Meky donating paintings to AUS in recognition of the University’s role in supporting cultural creativity across the arts, literature, and sciences within the larger community. The artists donating paintings to the AUS art collection included: Abdul Rahim Salem, Najat Meky, Mona Al Khaja, Ismail Al Rifai, Mohammed Al Qassab, Mohammed Fahmi, Abdul Qader Al Mubarak, Ehsaan Al Khatib, and Obaid Suroor.

The paintings were received, on behalf of the University, by Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs and Mr. Salem Al Qaseer, AUS Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs. This current project came about through collaboration with the Office of Public Affairs, the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs, and the College of Architecture, Art and Design at the American University of Sharjah, as a continuation of the theme “Art through University and Community Dialogue.”

Furthermore, the paintings were given in an initiative to enrich the art collection at AUS and for art to continue to flourish within the University culture.

“The painting gifts speak to the bond between our University and community leaders in all walks of life, in line with the directives of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah and President of AUS,” stated Mr. Al Qaseer as he gratefully welcomed the artists’ delegation.

Vice Chancellor Mourtada-Sabbah remarked, “Part of the University’s mission is to cultivate the fine arts, literature, and sciences within the Emirates. All creative innovators need similar-minded people to share their often avant-garde ideas and techniques of artistic expression, and to inspire one another in pushing their individual talents forward. The University is committed to enabling students and alumni to further their skills in the arts and sciences through interacting with established experts like the acclaimed artists in the UAE and the GCC.”

During their visit to AUS, the artists thanked the University’s leadership for channeling the latest in scientific and artistic know-how to enhance the networking of professional and alumni artists, which in turn helps students and alumni establish themselves in the art world of community by networking academia as a font of creative enterprise with creative artists, writers, and scientists in the UAE community. They also remarked, “Not only does AUS encourage the arts, but that its striking buildings are ideal for permanently displaying the collection.”

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The agreement was signed by Mr. Tirad Mahmoud, CEO of ADIB and AUS Chancellor Peter Heath in the presence of AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah at ADIB Headquarters in Abu Dhabi.

Commenting on the agreement, Tirad Mahmoud, ADIB’s CEO said “We, at ADIB, believe that education is the best investment one can make, and we are committed to raising levels of knowledge and qualifications of the community. We aim at encouraging more students to pursue a university education as the bank goes beyond financing tuition fees.”

Dr. Peter Heath expressed his gratitude to ADIB for supporting the educational mission of the University and their willingness to partner with higher education programs to benefit the community.

“This generous contribution will actively contribute to AUS’s mission of graduating the best and the brightest trained workers, to build a viable human resource pool for the UAE and beyond,” he added. “We are especially grateful to ADIB for this generous contribution and we look forward to continue avenues of mutual collaboration.”

AUS Vice Chancellor, Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah thanked ADIB for their generosity and commented, “The UAE increasingly prepares the caliber of manpower necessary to direct its future development through leading institutions of higher education. The generosity of ADIB will contribute considerably to providing opportunities for the very best students to pursue their education at the AUS.”

Every scholarships granted by “The ADIB Scholarship Fund” will be available to all students from different majors, as long as they maintain excellent academic marks and do not have the financial capacity to complete their higher education.
Influential Alumnus Encourages Social Contribution by Giving to AUS

AUS alumnus Bachar Ghadri contributed AED 50,000, on behalf of Nadia Taylor, Co-founder and Director of TNA Australia, to the Alumni Scholarship Fund, during his recent visit to the University. In an effort to encourage AUS constituencies to raise philanthropic awareness within the community.

Bachar graduated from AUS in 2002, with a degree in electrical and electronic engineering. He has been the General Manager of TNA Middle East, since 2009, after being promoted from regional sales manager.

TNA is a leading global supplier of integrated food packaging solutions with over 6,000 systems installed across more than 120 countries. The company provides a comprehensive range of products including spraying, distribution, seasoning, weighing, packaging, metal detection and verification solutions, plus promotional and cutting equipment. TNA’s unique combination of innovative technologies, extensive project management experience and 24/7 global support ensures customers achieve faster, more reliable and flexible packaged food products at the lowest cost of ownership.

He emphasized that TNA Australia’s main objective is philanthropic initiatives, which raises the importance of spreading a culture of philanthropy and enhancing the societal fabric with a heightened sense of Corporate Social Responsibility. “The recipient of this scholarship should himself remain grateful for.

The gift was received, on behalf of AUS, by Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, who thanked alumnus Bachar Ghadri for his contribution and Nadia Taylor’s wide-spread philanthropic actions. “This contribution speaks to the rising awareness among our alumni of the needed culture of philanthropy, which is creating ripples in the effort to build the fabrics of society by having such capacity building exercises arising from among the alumni. Alumnus Bachar initiated this contribution by inspiring TNA Australia to give to AUS, with the genuine purpose of helping his fellow alumni and most especially financially challenged bright students who are in the quest for education,” remarked Vice Chancellor Mourtada.

Bachar initially insisted that Vice Chancellor Mourtada and the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs not publicize this gift. However, in a recognized need to share such contributions with fellow members of the AUS community and the various constituencies of AUS, Bachar allowed this donation to be announced. As a graduate of AUS, who appreciates the excellent education he received, Bachar wants to encourage and emphasize the sense of social contributions for those, who in spite of their intellect found themselves challenged financially and to allow them to avail themselves of the excellent education at AUS that he himself remains grateful for.

The American University of Sharjah announced the establishment of “The Moafaq Al Gaddah Scholarship Fund” following a visit by AUS Chancellor Peter Heath and AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah to Mr. Moafaq Al Gaddah’s, Chairman of Moafaq Al Gaddah Group of Companies (MAG), with the presence of his daughter Jumana Al Gaddah, a 2009 marketing and management graduate of AUS.

Moafaq Al Gaddah Group was established in 1978 in Abu Dhabi. Since then the MAG Group has evolved to become a powerful and vibrant organization embracing more than fifty companies and branches covering almost every country in the world and employing over 2000 personnel. The activities of the group cover different sectors including: commercial, real estate, service, and industry.

The Moafaq Al Gaddah Scholarship Fund has been established with a generous contribution of AED 1 million by Moafaq Al Gaddah Group, which will contribute to enriching the educational mission of AUS to promote academic excellence irrespective of the financial background of the students.

“This contribution speaks to the rising awareness among our alumni of the needed culture of philanthropy, which is creating ripples in the effort to build the fabrics of society by having such capacity building exercises arising from among the alumni. Alumnus Bachar initiated this contribution by inspiring TNA Australia to give to AUS, with the genuine purpose of helping his fellow alumni and most especially financially challenged bright students who are in the quest for education,” remarked Vice Chancellor Mourtada.

Chancellor Peter Heath and Vice Chancellor Nada Mourtada-Sabbah along with Mr. Moafaq Al Gaddah, his daughter alumna Jumana Al Gaddah, and his son Ahmed Al Gaddah
You have taken the “road less traveled” in comparison to many of your AUS classmates in pursuing the rigors of four graduate degrees in political science and related fields. While you were at AUS, what prompted you to pursue such promising postgraduate fields as Security, Peace, Development and International Conflict, at three different European universities?

I must admit that I did not start out aiming to take the “road less traveled” but after taking my first step leaving the US and moving to the Middle East, it changed me forever. Three weeks after arriving in Sharjah and having just started classes, 9/11 happened and it was an eye opening experience for me seeing how the world reacts to law and justice policy and with each year in college I became more and more interested in post 9/11 conflicts especially in the Middle East. I graduated from a conflict resolution program and applied for a multidisciplinary Masters, degree between Austria and Spain. I chose it because it had alternative teaching methodologies, which included peacekeeping simulation classes with the military and other conflict related courses which challenged me to my fullest. My personal academic evolution within the security field led me to international security policy and terrorism. I chose to study in Italy because the program had a strong methodological background and gave me the flexibility to grow on my own. I basically exposed my interests internationally through research periods abroad.

Since you have studied in Italy, Spain, Austria, Russia, the US and China, you would seem to qualify as the alumni with the most diverse cultural experiences. How does living in such a wide variety of cultural settings sharpen your understanding of how the world operates?

Back in the late 90s when I was a high school student in South Texas studying at a specialized medical high school to prepare me for a career in medicine, I never thought that my educational career path was going to change so dramatically, or that I was going to be pursuing it in two separate continents. Nor could I have fathomed that in the following decade I was going to be studying and working in several foreign languages that I couldn’t even speak at the time. Learning languages has really helped me reach a deeper level of interaction and understanding with others; as there is so much to be said about how a language can frame perspectives of the world around us. Something that I have taken with me from every cultural experience was that there are many ways of looking at the world and they are not better or worse but different and understanding the reasoning behind the different perspective can make the world of a difference. As in politics, many times heads of governments criticize the actions of the different groups but they are often unable to appreciate the economic constraints, national interests, linguistic dynamics, and cultural sensitivities that may come into play in a conflict.

You have a wealth of experience in the methods and technologies of identifying peoples and areas of potential conflict. Your experience also involves advising on the most up-to-date intelligence assessments and even running statistical analyses of large databases to seek patterns of potential unrest. With such a wide range of expertise, what would be your most ideal sort of position?

The world of political science statistical methodology has grown tremendously over the past decade and especially in the security field, namely with geospatial abduction analysis. Data mining and managing large and complex sets of data has become more and more in demand from several sectors (politics, economics, banking, advertising, public opinion, intelligence, etc). Although data management and analysis expertise have many uses, my ideal job would be one where I could use these skills to contribute something positive to society, namely in a field I am most passionate about: international security. Considering my professional background and language skills as well as how much I enjoy multinational workplaces, a multidisciplinary governmental organization would be the most ideal workplace for someone with my skill set and interests.

It would seem that education runs deep in your family, since I recall both your parents are also professors. You have also studied at universities in Spain and in China. What were the most rewarding aspects of teaching?

My teaching experience includes multinational students coming from a wide range of cultures and linguistic backgrounds, which on occasion made it challenging in the classroom setting due to language barriers. From my modest teaching experience I have found that the most rewarding aspects were getting students interested and curious about the world and about politics and how it affects them and the world around them. In class the most rewarding moments have been the pleasantly surprising critical comments and analyses towards the end of the semester when the students feel most comfortable in the classroom and most confident with the material. It’s an incredible feeling to see some students transform from knowing and caring very little about the international political science to being aware, critical, and concerned about events that happen around the world.

Some social analysts contend that the world is heading towards a single global society with shared laws and agreed upon human rights. Would you agree or disagree with this assessment that countries are seeking ways other than armed conflict to resolve differences? Please share with our readers your reasons.

As an academic my first response would be, who are these social analysts, what institutions do they represent, what data have they used and how did they measure it. Considering how many countries there are in the world today with very different cultures, histories, languages, and value systems I don’t think it is fair to say that everyone has the same definition of what “human rights” mean when applied to law and justice. From a social perspective, however I would be more inclined to partially agree that more and more cultural, musical, and lifestyle commodities seem to manifest themselves in a similar fashion throughout many countries (Food (ex: McDonalds), Lifestyle (ex: Twitter), Clothing (ex: Adidas), Pop Music (ex: Lady Gaga), Hollywood movies (ex: Titanic, etc). Much of this is quite dependent on the dissemination of this very information at the local level and can vary on the country based on the citizens’ access to the internet and the financial ability to purchase commercial commodities (worth mentioning is a decent level of human security as a prerequisite).

In terms of countries avoiding armed conflict in efforts to resolve differences, I do agree and think that countries do attempt to pursue diplomatic options. But just because countries would like to settle things in an amicable fashion and avoid any unnecessary collateral damage it does not mean that things work out at the negotiating table; even if the parties agree to the pre-negotiating terms prior to getting to the negotiating table. The pursuit and protection of national interests as the primary end goal, should they be threatened however, armed conflict seems to remain a convincing option for coercive diplomacy in achieving these ends.

You are among a few AUS alumni who have authored a published book. Now that your first book is in print, can you look back and say that there were satisfying aspects of writing? To have finished a book certainly must feel like a monumental accomplishment. Although it is difficult to anticipate what experiences will come your way in future years that would be worthy of other books, are there any topics that you consider would be sufficiently interesting to write about?

It truly was an incredible feeling to have authored a published book and I feel happy to have been able to contribute in my own way to the public opinion literature on security and counter terrorism policy. In the past three years I have lived, studied, and worked in five countries across three continents and noted many curious observations about the world; how globalization has affected us. Inspired by this, I am actually already working on my second book which deviates from the security realm and focuses on the way we live today and how globalization has affected us. From a political science perspective based on its values, intentions, methods, goals, etc. I have found that it is best to gather as much information as possible and try to understand the activist/ activist group’s perspective based on its values, intentions, methods, goals, etc. to construct a tailored profile of the activist group. In the past few years, I have been a political artist in concert with the new movement in the Middle East, turning a new era of anger, fatigue, and frustration into art. It is incredibly empowering to be invested in artistic change. I create a multidisciplinary orientation which is no coincidence for me. My parents have always instilled the notion that you must make an effort towards a single global society with shared laws and agreed upon human rights. Some of my friends and family members have given me much food for thought in many of these respects. It’s an incredible feeling to see some students transform from knowing and caring very little about the international political science to being aware, critical, and concerned about events that happen around the world.

To have finished a book certainly must feel like a monumental accomplishment. Although it is difficult to anticipate what experiences will come your way in future years that would be worthy of other books, are there any topics that you consider would be sufficiently interesting to write about?

What kinds of working hours are they interested in (travel, deadline based, online work, 9-5, flexible hours)? What languages and cultures would they like to interact with? In a globalized world political science, sociology, anthropology, and economics majors have to think about the broader impact of their job and career.

More importantly, I would recommend that students pursue careers where they feel that they can grow and be fulfilled. Be it in politics as a diplomat, in a university as a professor, in journalism as a political reporter, or even in art as a political artist. I would recommend students work towards what they will think they will make them happy personally and professionally and let things evolve on their own. It is important to always be being flexible, motivated and able to move on with your new opinions. Being flexible is the most important thing to think about. Some lucrative political science jobs include: intelligence analysts (political/economic), political risk advisors, political advisors, political liaison officers, or diplomats.
American University of Sharjah Alumni Association (AUSAA) held its second election on May 26 to elect representatives to the Association’s Board.

The election, which was administered by the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA) is yet another significant milestone in the Association’s life. After a quorum was established, the following officers were elected by the members of the AUSAA Council to represent the next phase of the AUS Alumni Association and the 7000 graduates of the University for the next two years:

The new elected officers are:

Alumnus Ahmed Al-Jbori, ’05 SBM, President;
Alumna Budoor Al-Amoudi, ’05 CEN, Vice President;
Alumnus Ahmed Al Reyami, ’08 CEN, Executive of the Council;
Alumnus Ahmed Al-Naqbi, ’02 CEN, Treasurer
Alumna Melissa Bayik, ’04 CAAD, Executive of Administration

Dr. Peter Heath, AUS Chancellor, congratulated the newly elected members and wished them success in fulfilling their responsibility of taking AUSAA to greater heights of excellence, distinction and achievement.

“I am pleased at the great sense of professionalism and collegiality. This shows the dynamic role the AUSAA plays in that it regularly involves several thousands of its members in its governance and in various activities,” said Dr. Heath.

Ahmed Al Jbori, AUSAA President-elect, “thanked his fellow council members for the confidence they entrusted him with and pledged to commit every effort to leading the AUS Alumni Association to the highest spheres of excellence and fulfillment.”

Dr. Heath and Dr. Mourtada-Sabbah also expressed their sincere gratitude to members of the previous AUSAA Board under the leadership of AUSAA President Sheikha Azza Al Nuaimi for their accomplishments during the past year. These members were: Musbah Abu Jarad, AUSAA Vice President; Karim AbouAjram, AUSAA Executive of Council; Ahmed Al Jbori, AUSAA Treasurer; Melissa Bayik, AUSAA Executive of Administration; Abdullah El Shazly, Director of Institutional Advancement; and Sheikh Mohammed Faisal Al Qassimi, Founding AUSAA President.

Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, expressed her satisfaction at the high level of participation and involvement of the University’s graduates in this election where a number of outstanding candidates competed. She also thanked the AUSAA Council members for taking time out of their weekend to take part in the second elections of the Board, especially as many came from overseas.

“AUS alumni leaders, as the University’s youngest ambassadors, continue to play an important role in enhancing the reputation of AUS in the region and beyond. You, our educated alumni, will take the necessary improvements for society when it comes to your turn in assuming the mantle of leadership,” said Dr. Mourtada-Sabbah.

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Would you please tell us briefly about yourself?

My name is Karim Abou Ajram and I am originally Lebanese with a Venezuelan nationality. I have lived in the UAE for the past 20 years. I graduated from AUS in 2005 with a Bachelor’s degree in Design Management and in 2012 with an EMBA degree. I am also very proud to say that I have been a very active alumnus in the AUS Alumni Association for the past 5 years. Moreover, I am working in the branding and marketing communication fields.

What were your responsibilities as the AUSAA Executive of the Council?

The Executive of the Council is responsible for managing the official communications for the AUSAA Board, the regional Chapters, and alumni members. The Executive of the Council works in cooperation with the Director of Alumni Affairs and is responsible for identifying and recommending alumni volunteers for the association’s events and activities.

Why were you interested in serving on the board?

In order to serve my alma mater, its community, and further elevate the reputation of AUS regionally and internationally. I also wanted to act as a positive catalyst for advancing our association in order to accomplish the objectives of the AUS Alumni Association as it continues to support its alumni and the regional chapters with their ongoing events and activities.

What did you accomplish during your tenure on the board?

With the help of the Board, I was able to accomplish many goals which included privilege programs for alumni, helping Alumni connect/network with each other, establishing, activating and supporting chapters, design and marketing and increased the number of AUS alumni serving their alma mater.

How has AUS inspired you in your life?

It has inspired me to become part of a community of young, aspiring, and successful individuals where lasting friendships are formed.

In a job, the person has to learn how to communicate well with his/her colleagues as that is the main obligation in any job. Also, it is necessary to be calm under pressure, as often when a job is close to a deadline some people can breakdown. Being a team player is very important in my position as well. Competition is healthy, but learning to be part of a team is the trick.

You are a Columnist at Sail e-Magazine. What issues and trends do you address in your writings?

I started writing in Sail e-Magazine in January 2011. During that time, I concentrated on social issues in the UAE and human nature. Through the column I aim to explore issues in society and discuss emerging new trends. I also discuss issues such as: education and creativity, turning dreams into reality, negative culture, and creativity in advertising, innovation, and more.

In your experience, what are possible challenges for alumnas in the workplace that might be turned into opportunities?

Being open to new ideas and adapting to the environment that you are placed in is a key factor. The will to learn, to spend long hours, and to sacrifice for the sake of learning shapes your knowledge curve. Many people graduate from university in the belief they will be managers on the first day of their jobs. However, in reality that is not the case. They are put in a test environment to prove the survival of the fittest theory. The person emerging from that test will reap the reward. What all graduates need to bear in mind is that they have to be hard workers, learn from their surroundings, and adapt to their environment.

You seem to represent the “new” Emirati woman by surrounding herself with a team and collaborating with others to achieve goals. What advice do you have for other women?

In any job, the person has to learn how to communicate well with his/her colleagues. A woman should not feel intimidated by a cause needs to add value to the person and make him/her feel satisfied. That is the reason why I take part in many initiatives, charity events, and the column writings. My advice to every AUS alumnas and students is to participate in everything that pleases them, to follow their dreams and to stand up for a cause they believe in. A woman should not feel intimidated because of gender, religion, or race as no one can hold her down except for herself. She needs to stand up tall, dust herself and try again if she fails, because in the end she will succeed.

Would you please introduce yourself in a few lines?

I am an Emirati, who graduated from AUS with a bachelor’s degree in mass communication in 2008. My experience lies mainly in corporate communications, PR, and social media. I work in Noor Islamic Bank as a marketing and corporate communications officer. I am also the marketing director of Think Up GCC (www.thinkup.gcc), which is the first talent and PR agency that is slanted towards representing Emirati and GCC nationals and is fully owned/ run by Emiratis. I am also a columnist for “Words, Observations & Ramblings” in a monthly magazine called Sail e-Magazines (sailmagazine.com)

In looking back on your upbringing and education, who or what influenced you to study Mass Communications?

Having said that, I enrolled in the mass communications program at AUS to further my research and knowledge regarding media studies. Since creativity has always been a driving force in my life, I chose to study advertising in addition to mass communications. The way advertising campaigns were generated always intrigued me, and I wanted to be behind the scenes.

What should AUS alumni expect from its new AUSAA branch?

They should expect guidance of course but more importantly constant and consistent support for their ideas and endeavors in order to serve our alma mater. If alumni are content then they would be willing to give back more to AUS.

As a former executive of the council of AUSAA, what would you like to tell our alumni?

Serving your alma mater can also serve you in ways you can’t imagine!...
Al Sayegh Media seems to offer a centralized home for all media and communication solutions residing under one umbrella. Mr. Abdul Latif Al Sayegh, CEO of Al Sayegh Media, took a few moments out of his busy schedule to speak to us about the privileged relationship between his organization and AUS.

Please tell us briefly about Al Sayegh Media; where did the idea of it come from and what is the vision of the company?

The idea of Al Sayegh Media started in 2010, by observing where media was heading. Media is very much evolving and we have been monitoring closely where technology is taking us and how far technology is going to reach. The media industry was entering a continued period and this is where the transformation is happening, from traditional media to the new form of media, which I would call the “future media”. The vision I have is to become one of the leading local agencies that can take the market to another era. The market was hungry for the services we offer because when Al Sayegh Media started, none of the services we had a local agency which understood local consumers, and we as users have to adapt and rejoin the market as soon as we graduate. I have to emphasize that this type of partnership is a must, as we from the industry are keen to get certain criteria and this can be done by helping in the development of these talents. I am very confident that this is still just the beginning of our partnership with AUS.

Al Sayegh Media currently employs 6 AUS alumni and has hosted a number of AUS interns. Through your interactions with AUS graduates, what qualities distinguish them from others and how has their AUS education helped in the advancement of Al Sayegh Media?

I admire the qualities of AUS alumni as they are well-prepared to face the industry, are very determined to face the industry, are very determined to assimilate with the local society, are very ambitious, and they have a good understanding of the market. They are very clear in their vision and they are strong in their approach. They have a good grasp of the market and they understand that they are going to face various challenges and they are determined to overcome them.

Moreover, it is clear that technology is evolving, so social media is a must to use. In other words, media is going social, digital and the drive is the technology and the new mind set of people about what is the easiest way to communicate with one another. Social media is a lifestyle that is separate from social media will not really reposition traditional media; it is the norm of where media is heading. For instance, in the past, there were advancements in the way you store your data, from floppy discs to USBs and so on. It is a normal cycle in the advancement of the life of media, and people should not resist it because it is happening. Users should prepare themselves for that change in the evolving trend of traditional media as they cannot deny its existence. A few years back, it was your choice to use social media but nowadays it is what defines people. There is a high number of technology users and that is a fact. You have to utilize it in a way it benefits you and others.

What advice would you give AUS students studying media?

My advice to AUS students is to take advantage of the excellent education they are getting at AUS. Don’t just take your internship for granted because you have opportunities to learn about what is out there. Don’t let any organization underestimate your talents and even when you join companies, don’t work for the sake of security. Build a career by being serious about what you are doing. AUS alumni are highly skilled. By giving them a fast-track break. We envision that some of them will eventually return as full-fledged employees, as we have been highly impressed with their career. By giving them a fast-track experience in our various departments, they learn in six weeks what might have taken them six years to learn in any other environment.

Each one of the AUS alumni at Al Sayegh Media has a fascinating backstory on how they made the company their professional home. Some had prior exposure to the agency through internships, and subsequently joined permanently immediately after graduation. Mr. Al Sayegh added that “we have all been students before, and we understand that it can be a massive shock to find yourself all alone, floating in the vast sea of employers. So in tandem with AUS, we try to smooth the transition. We don’t believe there’s any such thing as “the outside world” which is separate from university, because it’s all intertwined: even as an employee you’re still learning all the time, because education is part of life – not just students’ lives.”

AUS Alumni Shaping the Industry as Visionaries at Al Sayegh Media

A proudly Emirates-owned company, and one of the UAE’s premier media agencies, Alsayegh Media, currently employs six AUS graduates in diverse specializations spanning social media, search engine optimization, public relations, client service, and video/audio production.

The two organizations established their relationship after acknowledging that they shared the same philosophy of blending world-class standards with a distinctive UAE flavor. CEO of Alsayegh Media, Abdulatif Al Sayegh pointed out that “Our mutually beneficial relationship with AUS stretches far beyond the current graduates, as we have also accommodated a number of AUS interns during academic breaks. We envision that some of them will eventually return as full-fledged employees, as we have been highly impressed with their career. By giving them a fast-track experience in our various departments, they learn in six weeks what might have taken them six years to learn in any other environment.”
The lecture, which was held as part of the Chancellor’s Distinguished Lecture Series in collaboration with the College of Engineering, was followed by a lively question and answer session. The event was attended by Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS; Dr. Thomas Hochstettler, Provost; Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs; Mr. Salem Al Qaseer, Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs; Dr. Cleve McDaniel, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration; Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; as well as other senior officials, deans, faculty members, staff, students, and alumni.

Kamal, who graduated as a civil engineer from Imperial College, University of London, and holds a master’s degree in structural engineering from the same institution, began his civil engineering and construction career in London in 1966. In 1974, he moved to Dubai and started his own construction company. Thirty years later, it became the first private company in the UAE to go public. Today, Arabtec Construction is one of the five largest contractors in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region and specializes in building and civil engineering works. It is a household name in the construction industry in the Gulf.
Expanding Networking Horizons — Lessons From the University of Life

Ambitious Emirati Businessman Speaks to the AUS Community on Successful Business in Challenging Times

Business leader Mr. Hussain Sajwani, Chairman of DAMAC, delivered an engaging lecture entitled “Successful Business in Challenging Times” at the American University of Sharjah (AUS) on Thursday, May 3, in the Main Building on campus.

AUS Chancellor, Peter Heath, welcomed Mr. Sajwani on campus and praised the services of his company. “Hussain Sajwani is a self-driven UAE national and an ambitious entrepreneur who has proven his capability to transfer business vision into corporate reality and to provide the leadership that is necessary to maintain its continuity and growth,” said Chancellor Heath.

Sajwani also briefed the audience on the history of his own organization and said that “you need to think as an entrepreneur even if you are an employee as this will help you to be more creative at providing solutions because you should be able to move fast as we live in the supersonic age.”

One of the most recognized experts in the construction industry, Mr. Philippe Dessoy, General Manager of BESIX, the largest Belgian group operating in the construction industry, Mr. Philippe Dessoy, General Manager of BESIX, delivered an engaging lecture on lessons gained in the university of Life to the American University of Sharjah (AUS) community on May 6, in the Main Building on campus.

Addressing an audience of over 150 students, professors, and alumni, in his lecture entitled “Leadership in the Construction Business: Lessons Gained in the University of Life,” Dessoy took his audience on a professional journey of learning from early childhood learning to on the job learning and the lessons he had learned throughout his career.

“Regardless of the new environment, you still need to learn, and this learning depends largely on you. That’s the University of Life. If you pay attention, you will succeed.”

He then talked about job opportunities for civil engineers generally and specifically with BESIX. “We are always looking for professionals to work in any of, what we call, job families. We have project-based job families such as project development, project management, project execution and project support. We also have a corporate-based job family, which is mainly corporate function,” said Dessoy.

Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs welcomed Mr. Dessoy on campus and said that “the Career Advancement Lecture Series is organized by the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs to bring to AUS a number of high profile and leading business experts to allow AUS Graduating Seniors to connect and interface with high-powered professionals of their respective fields.”

Dessoy has helped spur BESIX into becoming one of the most competitive foreign firms in the region. Big contract wins in the last few years have helped the firm’s reputation grow, as both a single main contractor and within a joint venture. The latter includes work on the Burj Khalifa, the world’s tallest structure, an AED250 million deal with Arabtec to build the Downtown Burj Dubai residential towers, and winning the $797 million contract to build the Doha Convention Centre with Midmac in 2009.

One of the most recognized experts in the construction industry, Mr. Philippe Dessoy, General Manager of BESIX, has proven his capability to transfer business vision into corporate reality and to provide the leadership that is necessary to maintain its continuity and growth,” said Chancellor Heath.

A graduate of the University of Washington with a degree in industrial engineering and economics, Sajwani is the founder, owner, and chairman of the DAMAC group of companies based in Dubai. He is also amongst the most influential UAE nationals, as he was ranked among the 100 most influential people in the Arab world in 2007.

In his charming lecture, Sajwani addressed an audience of over 80 students, professors, and alumni, and shared the reasons Damac survived the recent economic crisis. “We saw the crisis coming, so we prepared for it and we immediately took action from a wise prediction and anticipation of the crisis to minimize its effects on our company,” remarked Sajwani. “To be successful in challenging times you need to be ahead of the game. You need to be brave and not worry about making mistakes because everyone makes mistakes,” he said as he encouraged his audience, to look at new opportunities even in the most challenging times.

Sajwani then went on to give valuable tips on how to be a successful leader in business and in other areas of life. His tips include loving work as a hobby, knowing customers and the people you serve, knowing the business in details, knowing how to deal with people of all kinds, knowing how to manage crisis as well as perseverance. “Don’t ever give up; every business goes through difficult times, so when times are hard, keep trying,” he said.

Dessoy is a 1983 civil engineering graduate of Brussels University, Belgium. Founded in 1909, the company itself has recorded regular and impressive growth, covering all fields of construction. Dessoy was instrumental in expanding Six Construct’s activities in the Middle East to where it is today. As well as having a key part to play in the development of the region’s flagship projects, he is also responsible for all the operations of BESIX Group in the GCC, mainly Oman, the UAE, Qatar, and Bahrain.

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“Honesty, Credibility and Transparency are the Base of All Relationships,” Says Samir Abdulhadi

As part of the American University of Sharjah’s mission to integrate the classroom and practice in the private sector as a means to best strengthen our alumni and students’ skills, a delegation of 12 students and alumni visited Mr. Samir Abdulhadi, Vice Chairman of the Board of Khatib & Alami, at the premises of Khatib & Alami (K & A) in Sharjah on April 23, with Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs.

Abdulhadi discussed the importance of teamwork and collective management for a successful business with the visiting group. “Successful management in any organization should take into consideration a professional attitude, teamwork, as well as a collective management,” remarked Abdulhadi. “Friendly, amicable, and jovial relationships are an absolute must among employees themselves. I look at all my colleagues as either brothers/sisters or sons/daughters. Many employees have been with the company for more than thirty years. That, of course, is due to strong personal relationships, in addition to the professional atmosphere,” he added.

“It is extremely important to build all relationships, internal and external, on basic values such as honesty, credibility, and transparency,” he emphasized as he advised the delegation to be transparent and honest with themselves before being honest in their jobs.

Abdulhadi also briefed the group on the role of Khatib & Alami, which is a multidisciplinary architectural and engineering consulting company, offering clients an integrated approach towards the ever increasing need for concrete and reliable project delivery systems. Moreover, in-house expertise and recruitment of the brightest young minds has enabled meeting the challenges of a rapidly evolving environment. The firm provides its consulting services in architecture, planning, structural, electrical utilities, mechanical, transportation, environmental, telecommunications, industrial and process engineering, geographic information systems (GIS), and information technology (IT).

Vice Chancellor of Development and Alumni Affairs, Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, expressed her gratitude to Mr. Abdulhadi for his support of the American University of Sharjah and his encouragement in building a close relationship between the two organizations, which especially serves AUS’s educational mission. “The University is committed to enabling students and alumni to further their skills in their fields through interacting with established experts like Mr. Samir Abdulhadi,” she remarked.

Human Resources Expert Speaks to AUS Students on the Art of Succeeding During Challenging Times

In his lecture entitled “The art of succeeding in challenging business times,” Al Mushtaghal addressed about 25 AUS students about the pre-employment and post-employment criteria required when starting a career. “Human resources, our people, are our biggest asset as they are the ones who will generate value and create a high value-adding, sustainable business that meets our stakeholders’ expectations,” he emphasized.

Al Mushtaghal also briefed the audience on the latest projects of EMAL, which makes it one of the largest industrial ventures in the UAE outside oil and gas and one of the key projects leading the diversification of the UAE’s economy.

The discussion was attended by Vice Chancellor of Development and Alumni Affairs, Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, who emphasized the University’s keenness on refining the skills and capabilities of students and graduates, as they continue to engage with significant experts in their respective majors. Such interactions give them inspiring lessons, to both their personal as well as their professional lives, from prominent figures in the community.

The lecture, which was held by the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs as part of the "AUS Career Advancement Executive Lecture Series" in collaboration with the AUS academic units, was followed by a lively question and answer session.
First of all, I would like to thank the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs for giving this opportunity to share my short professional journey with all of you. It’s a great pleasure and an appreciated effort indeed.

My name is Ahmed AlQedrah, I am 26 years-old and I come from the UAE. I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in chemical engineering from AUS in 2008. I was fortunate to work at Dubai Exports, Government of Dubai, from August 2008 until March 2011. Then in April 2011, I joined Shell Exploration & Production International Limited, when I decided to progress with my career by discovering a new scope of business. I got cross posted to Muscat, Oman in October 2011 for my first international assignment with Shell.

I also have voluntary roles such as a Section Director in the Society of Petroleum Engineers in the Northern Emirates. Away from work, I scuba dive, write poetry, ride horses, and enjoy life in many diverse ways.

On a typical day in your position at Shell Exploration & Production, what do you do? What did your role at Dubai Exports entail?

My current role at Shell, as a reservoir engineer (a specialty within the petroleum engineering field), includes evaluation of potential oil and gas reservoirs, optimizing hydrocarbon production by choosing and implementing proper recovery schemes, minimizing uncertainties to decide on the characteristics of the future wells to be drilled based on subsurface variables, and to estimate the remaining hydrocarbon resources in time for development fields.

At Dubai Exports, our mandate was to increase Dubai exports of other countries. Except oil, gas, and tourism. I wore two hats: my technical role included the responsibility to guide and consult local manufacturers. Any manufacturer who operated in the UAE was within our scope. We had to be ready to provide consultancies and support to make them more competitive in the international market. On the other hand, I also had a marketing/international business role to make “Made in UAE” visible in the foreign markets by providing support for manufacturers ready to export their products internationally. This role involved a great challenge and diverse communication efforts with local businesses and with officials of other countries. Key skills for this job were being flexible to work with all backgrounds and levels of people, in addition to the ability to think outside of the box and to capture opportunities quickly.

What part of your current job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?

The greatest satisfaction is that I learn something new every day! I meet new people from all over the globe and learn a lot about the places they come from.

Some of the challenges that I found common in both jobs include the responsibility of giving a bright image of your company and country when working in international organizations. Not only do you represent your company, but also your family, university, and most importantly, your country.

Another challenge is being flexible enough to work outside your comfort zone with different levels of people from labor to top senior officials, each of whom comes from a different background. Also sharpening my technical skills and staying up to date with the advancements in my field is another challenge. Finally, there is balancing between continuous travels for work and maintaining the relationships with my beloved people back home.

How did studying at AUS help prepare you to be successful in this profession?

I could write a separate article just to answer this question! Apart from providing appropriate competitive education in chemical engineering, AUS -without noticing it at that time- truly sharpened all the skills I needed to succeed in almost any job! Communication skills, economics, project and time management, business focus, efficiency, and many more skills were undoubtedly underlined within the curriculum.

I proudly and thankfully should mention here that Dubai Exports got my resume from ODAA and surprised me with a call for an interview.

What specific goals, including those related to your profession, have you established for your life?

Of the many things that make me proud is that I contributed in raising the UAE flag in some countries for the first time at international fairs. In the food sector for instance today, one can find “Made in UAE” chocolates in Paris, mineral water in London, and camel milk in Europe.

On the career side, I participated in “Dubai Government Excellence Programme” and was recognized as the Excellent New Employee of the Dubai Economic Department. I managed to climb the career ladder from operational to managerial roles and now I’m specializing in petroleum engineering through a structured development program at Shell.

How do you determine or evaluate success?

Very few would remember the horse that won second place, even when the rider spent enormous efforts in training and preparing for the race. Results against your key performance indicators are all that matters at the end.

If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why?

Would you please introduce yourself in a few lines?

Alumnus Ahmed AlQedrah Assesses Oil Reserves at Shell

Expanding Networking Horizons — Lessons From the University of Life

Media Pioneer Speaks to the AUS Community on Changing Media Landscape

One of the Arab world’s most distinguished media pioneer, Abdul Latif Al Sayegh, Chief Executive Officer of Al Sayegh Media, delivered an inspiring lecture entitled “Media is Evolving: New Opportunities on the Horizon,” at AUS.

Addressing the packed hall, Al Sayegh said that “in media we have two choices: evolve, or become a fossil in history. Al Sayegh Media has evolved from a one-man dream into a media hub of over 50 ambitious talents. Our main thrust is always towards attracting inspirational candidates who can shake up the industry. That is why we have been synergizing with AUS for the Career Fair and internships of various students.”

Al Sayegh briefed the audience on the history of his own organization, Al Sayegh Media, which he founded in early 2010, as he entered the ever more exhilarating world of digital and social media. Al Sayegh Media serves the entire region with unique world-class services like website development, mobile application development, social media management, SEM services, event management, ideography and photography, branding and marketing, media planning/buying, as well as media consultancy.

“Our partnership with AUS has yielded several success stories, one of whom is our Head of Social Media: Rosette Younis. She is an AUS alumna who heads a team of five professionals - four of whom are AUS alumni. She embodies what we seek in a new employee: passion, drive, attitude, creativity and speed. We don’t believe in just filling an opening - if you are talented enough, you will create new openings,” added Al Sayegh.

He encouraged his audience, to look at new opportunities in the media sector as media embarks on a thrilling ride.

“The greatest hunger and thirst for innovation. If this matches your character, then Al Sayegh Media matches your ambitions,” emphasized Al Sayegh.
Where Are You Now? Joumana Al Gaddah: “My Father Has Always Been My Inspiration”

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

My name is Joumana Al Gaddah and I come from Syria. I graduated from AUS in 2009 with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, marketing and management concentration.

Since I was young, my father has always been my inspiration, and I always took him to his work and gave me minor tasks to do such as highlighting listed numbers on some papers. But now I have a real job with huge tasks in his company, Mowafaq Al Gaddah Group of Companies (MAG Group), as the owner representative and marketing director.

MAG Group is one of the largest companies in the region and has a leading and reputable position among the biggest groups of the Middle East. The Group cover different sectors such as commercial, real estate, service, and industrial sectors. Working within the family business is very beneficial and exciting especially since there are times I require flexible working hours. In order to attend to volunteer activities, such as volunteering at the Ro'yati Family Society twice a week as a teacher for Islamic lessons and giving lectures to students in several Dubai schools on Monday mornings, having flexibility is very important. However, in spite of having some advantages working in my family business, there are also some challenges associated with it. The most difficult challenge is when my father, Mowafaq Al Gaddah, owner and chairman of MAG Group, gives me a new task to do. Sometimes it might be hard for me because I might not have the adequate skills to perform the new job, but in the end it will always be a new learning experience for me.

How has your management philosophy evolve as you have gained more experience?

My management philosophy is developing as I involve myself more in the working atmosphere at MAG Group. The Group has a very competitive and challenging market environment, which always encourages me to adapt to the market needs of the customers. And within such an environment, my skills, ideas, visions, and perspectives have to constantly evolve to become a strong strategic partner and a talented mentor within the group in order to succeed.

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

I encourage them to learn as much as they can on their own. It is important that they will get is to come from their own exploration during their career paths. You can't expect people, even your family members, to hand it over to you, especially in family businesses. There are a lot of things that you will learn from your professors, but you should always learn from external sources as well, because ultimately, you will really learn from your own experiences.

Yes, I can't complain about the life I live today, and I'm optimistic about the life I'm planning to have in the future.

From what you have been able to observe in the UAE job market, what advice would you give new AUS graduates who are in the process of finding their first positions or are just beginning their careers?

First impressions count! Be confident and remember that you’re backed-up by the strong positive reputation of AUS. A US- First impressions count! Be confident and remember that you’re backed-up by the strong positive reputation of AUS. CV presentation is vital. Start with a job whenever you can, try to avoid staying jobless in every possible way.

American University of Sharjah (AUS) Professor, Dr. Mahboub E. Hashem, Head of the Department of Mass Communication, and a professor of communication at AUS, represented the region at the prestigious "NATO and the Arab Spring Conference" organized by the NATO Defense College Foundation in cooperation with the Istituto Affari Internazionali, in Italy three times in a row.

The conference attracted an extremely discerning audience and considerable media interest as well as a number of excellent speakers from Europe, the US, and the Middle East, which offered particularly relevant and thought-provoking insights into the major changes expected to occur in the Arab world following the events of the Arab Spring.

Dr. Hashem and his Research...

Dr. Hashem has written books, chapters in books and encyclopedias, and periodical articles. He has also delivered numerous papers at national and international conferences as evident in his extensive resume, and served as a panel member on a variety of topics including: public speaking, effective presentational skills, effective communication skills, intercultural/interpersonal communication, organizational communication and leadership, theories of mass media and research methods.

Dr. Hashem at AUS...

As part of enhancing the mass communication curriculum, Dr. Hashem stated that two new 300-level courses will be introduced next fall. These are Social Media for Mass Communication and Strategies for Creative Content. The Department of Mass Communication is also looking into creating a media center on campus so students can have hands on practice in what they are studying. The media center will consist of newsrooms so students can practice gathering news to be published in a newspaper or magazine, or broadcast on television, cable, or radio.

Prior to joining AUS, Dr. Hashem served as the Director of Graduate Studies of the Department of Communication at Fort Hays State University in Kansas, USA. Additionally he worked as a business and communication consultant, referent, public speaker, trainer and/or lecturer for the Governor's Gifted Institute of Ohio, and numerous institutions, television stations, churches, clubs, and schools. He also served as Vice President and President of the Kansas Speech Communication Association, Chair of Administrative Affairs of the College of Communication and Documentation at the Lebanese University, and chair to numerous committees and programs at international, national, regional, and local conventions.

Dr. Hashem at AUS...

Dr. Hashem has been at AUS for the past 10 years and founded the Department of Mass Communication (MCM) at AUS and chaired it for six years. Prior to that, he chaired the Department of English, Mass Communication, and Translation at AUS. He has been teaching a variety of communication courses, skills, and performing business consulting activities for over 25 years in several countries, including the US. He earned a PhD in Communication from Florida State University, Tallahassee, USA. Dr. Hashem has studied several languages such as Arabic (native), English, French, Persian and Latin.

Dr. Hashem at AUS...

Dr. Hashem also attained the position of managing editor of the Global Media Journal (GMEM)-Arabian edition. He emphasized his gratitude to AUS Chancellor Dr. Peter Heath for granting him a course release to have time for managing the journal, which is published in 16 languages. In addition to serving on the GMJ advisory board, he serves as an editorial board member on several journals and other various publications.

Dr. Hashem Beyond AUS...

It is worth mentioning that Dr. Hashem has a son, Joseph, who is currently studying Accounting at AUS and a younger son, Paul, who is planning to study medicine in the USA. Aside from work, Dr. Hashem enjoys cooking as well as swimming and walking to stay fit.
My name is Mahmood and I am from Pakistan. My family moved to the UAE when I was in grade 8 and I completed high school at the Pakistani Islamia Higher Secondary School, Sharjah. I was never a serious or studious student. Sports and mischief ran in my blood. I was a back bencher and would study just before the exam, but I always passed my finals. One fine day I was taken for a tour around AUS by our then neighbor, Asif Khawaja, who is also an alumnus. From that day on, everything at AUS fascinated me: the buildings, teachers, ambience, beautiful palm trees, sports complex... and as if I was in Alice in Wonderland I told myself that one day I would be there as a student.

My education...

Education at AUS was very different than conventional institutions. Professors are very lively and interactive. They kept all the students on their toes and were very involved; however, they were always very kind to go beyond all our questions over and over if not in the classroom then in their offices, even beyond office hours. When we talk about education at AUS, it is not limited to books and classrooms. AUS is an institution that nourishes one’s social, physical, and intellectual personality. It provides the students with the facilities and environment beyond their imaginations, which is there to enhance and strengthen the foundations that are indispensable to the practical life beyond the AUS boundaries.

Speaking of social education, studying with over 50 different nationalities gave us an opportunity to learn about the different cultures of all those countries, their local dress, their food, and their norms. Global Day is one fine example. I can very well relate this to my work and it is really very helpful and beneficial when dealing with our international guests!

Finally, speaking of the physical education I received, the state of the art sports complex and the expensive equipment with personal trainers made me the state of the art sports complex and the expensive equipment with personal trainers made me the

The most challenging aspect in my job...

AUS doesn’t only make you a bookworm, but also shapes your social, interactive, and intellectual personality with critical thinking. My job requires dealing with people from a variety of statures and different ethnic and cultural background, and thanks to AUS I feel very confident while dealing with them. AUS made me proactive rather than reactive, I am confident and my approach is positive and with my homework done ahead of time I have a propensity to get good results for the Kanoo Group.

The experience I gained from working at The Kanoo Group...

If I have to write about my experiences at the Kanoo Group, it could very well be either a book or an empty page. It would be a book because every day is a learning experience full of excitement and challenges. And an empty page because, every day I feel I have just started from the beginning as I learn new things and I realize how ignorant I am and there is still a lot to learn.

My goals in life...

The most important goal in life for me is to be honest and work with integrity maintaining my pride and keeping my job. Keeping your job at times or rather at many times honesty can cost you a job. Sometimes you say something or your observation is contrary to your boss, and what he thinks is right, and according to you his decision is awfully wrong. So then you have to make a decision, either to sell your conscious mind for a raise or promotion or be honest in your job and advise him/her according to your best understanding and interest of the company. But then again, there are always moderate and diplomatic ways to communicate your ideas and that is what AUS helped me gain throughout my studies.

My advice to AUS alumni and new graduates...

Like everyone, I do have some regrets and among the biggest is that I wasted so much of my time. I wasted time not utilizing my free electives at university, I took them as an opportunity to score a high grade and just to increase my GPA, but trust me the only person who cares about your GPA is you.

To my fellow students...

Don’t take anything for granted. His Highness Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council, Ruler of Sharjah and President of AUS is working hard on building the reputation of AUS throughout the region for its academic excellence and multicultural campus life. The faculty at AUS is at the disposal of the students; learn from them as much as you can to gain knowledge and utilize their services now, because trust me they all are as good as consultants, scientists, and philosophers.

So my fellow students use your time at AUS wisely, as knowledge is the key to a prosperous life.

To my fellow alumni...

Always be in touch with each other, and be active at the social gatherings, like the annual Alumni Reunion dinners and Ramadan iftars arranged by ODAA. These events are organized for a reason and that is where we may benefit from each other and share our experiences, for as they say “experience can never...
Dr. Peter Di Sabatino, Dean of CAAD. “This furniture fair and design week in Milan is the most important annual design event globally; and the selection process for SaloneSatellite is extremely competitive. I am very proud of the students and faculty from the College of Architecture, Art and Design; they have done excellent work,” he said.

The eight pieces selected from CAAD are all designed by women (by coincidence, since AUS is a co-educational institution) of Middle Eastern heritage, with some of the furniture being highly influenced by specific traditions, practices, and context. The students are Rasha Dakkak, Sarah Alagroobi, Maha Habib, Noor Jararah, Ghnwa Soucar, Heba Hammad, Danah Al Kubaisy, and Marwa Abdulla Hasan. Their works come from courses taught by Bill Sarnecky, Assistant Professor in Architecture, and Amir Berbic, Associate Professor in Design.

“After teaching beginning furniture design for five years at AUS, I teamed up this past semester with Amir Berbic to teach a new course entitled Form, Furniture and Graphics. Students in the course were encouraged to explore the potentially reciprocal relationship between two-dimensional graphics and three-dimensional form. Four of the eight pieces traveling to Milan for the exhibition emerged from this course,” said Sarnecky.

“Amir uniquely represented a multinational educational community that was genuinely reflected in the cultural diversity of our participating students. They represented not only their University, but the whole region,” said Sarnecky.

“Amir’s Prayer Chair” originates from her desire to aid in the act of praying. According to Islamic tradition, those who cannot physically endure prostration may pray in a sitting position. The typographic pattern on the skin of the chair is derived from the Arabic letter kaf and refers to the “The Throne” (Ayatul-Kursi), a powerful verse in the Holy Quran. The verse states: “His Chair doth extend, over the heavens and the Earth...” This chair rocks to aid in the act of praying.

The concept behind Emirati Sarah Alagroobi’s project “Amal’s Prayer Chair” originates from her desire to aid her late grandmother and mother who struggled to pray during the Arab Spring uprisings. The polycarbonate panels of Heba Hammad’s table entitled “Candelabra,” originally responded to the ritual of burning candles. The cells of the panels would define pathways for the resulting wax trails. During the design and construction process, the piece evolved into a celebration of its own existence as a minimalist and transparent object.

Danah Al Kubaisy, from Saudi Arabia, explores eruption as a formal quality in “D-Bench,” and the deregulation of a rational ordering system along its length. The piece consists of 36 3mm-thick hand-shaped aluminum bars fastened with machine screws to a welded aluminum tube frame. The piece was sandblasted after fabrication and assembly.

The selection of the work exhibited at SaloneSatellite reflects the academic vision and institutional goals of the College of Architecture, Art and Design at AUS, which support a culture of design excellence, entrepreneurship, and leadership in both the creative culture and the creative economy. Design faculty and students at CAAD have a history of making, in applied and aesthetic contexts that contribute significantly to the regional and international material culture.

“All the AUS students received offers to produce their work, but no decision has been made yet, as these works are the property of the students,” said Dean Di Sabatino. “We kept the contact information of these manufacturers for the students to assess the offers in more detail.”
Do you see distinctly Gulf styles in city design, domestic architecture, commercial architecture, furniture, and in artistic painting? If so, would you characterize how the regions own cultural values and aspirations are being expressed?

People here lean towards the classical style, which is what they are comfortable with and accustomed to. The young generation is more adventurous and more forward thinking, they have taken a different path towards Spanish, Mexican, Japanese and more exotic extremes that are on the rise. I find architecture in this region a delight for onlookers— even the odd and bizarre houses call for recognition; admire the creative spirit and unity in which everyone loves the glorious construction of homes in their different forms and structures. That is an admirable spirit that adds to the mix.

Can you envision ways that the AUS Alumni Association could help aspiring artists among its members find ways to display their artwork? For example, should the AUSAA sponsor an annual art fair or an art gallery downtown near the campus?

Thank you for bringing this up. Actually, I am working in coordination with Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, in doing some work to create an Art Pavilion that launches from AUS and travels around the world. It is a very exciting project, and we invite all artistic designers to take part in it. This aims to show the world the colorful varieties of the art schools that have made the UAE their home.

What is your advice for other alumni interested in starting their own businesses? What are the prospects for women running their own firms in the UAE or Qatar?

Be fearless in pursuing your dreams. We read and hear inspirational success stories all the time, the weak sheep copy and may succeed, but the innovative leaders make their own nest atop the mountain.
Paula Doyle heads a department that assists in creating an environment where people can develop their career in order to realize their full potential. “Our people are our greatest asset” says Paula. “As they grow and develop their careers, this, in turn, will help AUS develop and reach its goal of becoming the leader in higher education in the region,” she adds.

Paula has more than 25 years experience in the Human Resources field. Shortly after leaving college with a degree in Human Resources and Industrial Relations, she began her career with the Wellcome Foundation (now Glaxo SmithKline Beecham), a multi-national healthcare provider, working her way up to take on management roles within Europe and the UAE. She joined AUS in 1999 and says she is proud to have helped with AUS’s successful growth and development.

Taking the opportunity of developing her career further, Paula completed the MBA degree program at AUS, which, she says, helped give meaning and context to all her years of experience in HR. “It provided me with a clearer strategic focus regarding HR and how it can contribute to the University’s bottom line,” she remarked.

Paula’s HR strategy for AUS continues to be career development. “I get great satisfaction in assisting staff in reaching their potential,” she says. “Recently, we introduced an online pilot training for AUS staff. This gives more staff the opportunity to explore alternative career options.” Her main challenge over the next five years is ensuring that AUS retains its talented staff strength that can help the University grow and achieve its strategic goals.

Discussing the role of HR in the Gulf region, Paula says the profession has evolved since she first came to the UAE 1998, but then again the entire country has evolved. “At that time, the job of an HR Manager was considered to be administrative only. But now people realize that HR involves different specializations such as recruitment, compensation and benefits, employee relations, and so on.” The Gulf region’s multi-cultural society is also beneficial to organizations, she says, pointing out that AUS has more than 30 different nationalities. “It’s proven that the more diverse the workforce, the more successful an organization can be. As the world becomes a smaller place, many multi-nationals see the value of a multi-cultural workplace.”

Describing herself as a people-centered person, Paula advises that people entering the field of HR should be persistent and have the ability to develop relationships with people. She also cautions that the job entails making tough decisions involving people’s lives and careers.

Looking to the future Paula says her goal at AUS is to encourage staff to become engaged in the organization. “So many organizations are not running at their full potential as they have not yet learned how to engage their employees. AUS is a great organization and has a great future; I want our staff to feel they have a say in that future and that they feel responsible for its success!”

On a typical day in your position at the Dubai Police, what do you do?

I spend the day either in the forensics lab analyzing and examining physical evidence related to firearms and tool marks collected from crime scenes or at crime scenes collecting evidence that we examine in the lab.

What part of this job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?

In our field, every day we face something new. With each case we discover a new technology that has been used, which makes us do more research and learn more about the field. Therefore you can’t stop at a point and say, “I reached the top or I know everything”. So the job makes you improve your skills and knowledge and stay updated.

How did studying at AUS help prepare you to be successful in this profession?

First of all, we learned how to work in teams. This is important for many jobs, but especially for my current line of work, because no matter how much
Maha’s Vintage Boutique: “Old Fashion is the New Fashion”

Alumna Maha Abdul Rasheed, the founder of Dubai’s most popular vintage boutique, Bambah, graduated from AUS with a bachelor’s in business administration, as a marketing and management major. Offering an exquisite treasure of vintage fashion from the 1920s to the 1980s handpicked from around the world, Maha has been a vintage collector for quite some time. She has picked up pieces from Tokyo, Paris, London, New York, Amsterdam, and more, so you can imagine the collection she has acquired!

Would you please introduce yourself in a few lines?
My name is Maha, I come from Egypt, I’m 26 years old and I have a strong passion for vintage. I am a marketer by profession and I grew up with a very high entrepreneurial spirit. I’ve been living in Dubai for almost 15 years now and I have had the chance of visiting numerous countries around the world, landing on almost all seven continents. I started my career in a leading advertising agency, where I got a better understanding of building and managing brands.

Why did you decide to open a vintage store and how did you come up with the name Bambah Boutique?
Bambah is a stand-alone destination boutique for ladies vintage fashion and accessories. The whole idea of Bambah is a fun place where people can just come in and have a good time and explore some unique vintage pieces at very affordable prices. The collection is all handpicked from around the world and is, of course, in pristine condition. The styles and designs are extremely exclusive as there is only one of each piece, so you are guaranteed a unique look. The collection is also very reasonably priced which makes it easier for customers to experiment with pieces and have fun buying them.

I have always had a passion for vintage. I have been a collector for almost seven years now and I’m always traveling around the world and hunting for unique pieces that you are unlikely to find in conventional shopping areas. I would always go through my mother and grandmother’s pictures from the old days and long for their styles and fashion. I started collecting a while back and then I decided that Dubai could do with a one-off vintage boutique. I felt like shoppers here needed a nice change from the current shopping scene and needed more options to shop from; and hence the idea of Bambah was born. I was also encouraged when the concept of vintage started to be widely accepted in the region and Dubai in particular.

Bambah means ‘pink’ in Egyptian Arabic, and was a term used in Egyptian TV in the 1940s to express happiness.

What do you like most about vintage items and how and where do you find your unique pieces?
To me, vintage is more than just a collection of clothes and accessories; it’s more about a lifestyle and how you style yourself. What I like the most about vintage is the exclusivity of wearing it. Because it’s unique in nature, you will be guaranteed that no one else will be wearing the same piece, which gives you an edge over the crowd. I also love how vintage will always enable you to make a statement piece, and you are shopping without expectations, which always makes it easier for customers to experiment with pieces and have fun buying them.

I have always had a passion for vintage. I have been a collector for almost seven years now and I’m always traveling around the world and hunting for unique pieces that you are unlikely to find in conventional shopping areas. I would always go through my mother and grandmother’s pictures from the old days and long for their styles and fashion. I started collecting a while back and then I decided that Dubai could do with a one-off vintage boutique. I felt like shoppers here needed a nice change from the current shopping scene and needed more options to shop from; and hence the idea of Bambah was born. I was also encouraged when the concept of vintage started to be widely accepted in the region and Dubai in particular.

Bambah means ‘pink’ in Egyptian Arabic, and was a term used in Egyptian TV in the 1940s to express happiness.

To differentiate needs. I also understood how the big giants conduct business and how I could apply their methods to my small business where applicable.

Tell us more about winning the Visionaries category at the Emirates Woman 'Woman of the Year Awards 2011.'

The Emirates Woman, ‘Woman of the Year Awards’ is the region’s most prestigious, glamorous, and inspiring annual event. It has four categories: Achievers, Artists, Humanitarians, and Visionaries. In its sixth year, the Emirates Woman, ‘Woman of the Year Awards’ continues to honor and celebrate the achievements of women in the business, arts and culture, philanthropic, and visionary fields in the UAE. The Emirates Woman team thrives constantly to seek out, recognize, and celebrate the incredible and inspirational women that make the UAE the success story it is – from those running billion-dollar companies and the most creative of entrepreneurs, to heart-felt humanitarians and women moving mountains in their quest to achieve incredible things.

I am over the moon with my award! I feel very proud of Bambah and myself, as I was not expecting to win at all. I’m honored and extremely thankful to everyone who voted for me. Winning this award gave me a great boost and confidence and has already encouraged me to explore new ideas and will definitely push me into more exciting ventures.

Who is your favorite fashion icon?
Two of my style icons from the past are Saud Hosny and Jean Patchett. I like the way they are both very feminine and very confident in their styles. Nowadays, I find Penelope Cruz to have a very influential style; she is very elegant. She also mixes and matches different designers, labels, styles, and looks which make her style truly unique and unexpected.

What advice do you have for AUS graduating students and alumni who want to become entrepreneurs?
‘Go For It!’ If you have a unique idea with a great business plan and you’ve done your research, don’t hesitate and just go for it. Opportunities only come once, and you have to always take the risk. Don’t let people bring you down or change your mind, and always have faith in yourself.
AUS Alumni rally in a Karting Race…

The AUSAA Abu Dhabi Chapter organized a thrilling karting tournament for around thirty-six alumni at Al Forsan International Sports Resort in Abu Dhabi in March 2012.

“Shadow” Fellow Alumni…

Twenty alumni competed in a paintball tournament that was also organized by the AUSAA Abu Dhabi Chapter at Al Forsan International Sports Resort in Abu Dhabi in April 2012.

... and Enjoy a BBQ Day Out

As part of their Professional Development events, the AUSAA Abu Dhabi Chapter introduced recently a “Work Shadow Day”, where two alumni working at Deloitte Abu Dhabi “shadowed” two recent AUS graduates in an effort to help them learn more about real professional life, within the industry in which they are specialized.

The AUSAA Abu Dhabi Chapter organized a fun day out for thirty alumni at the Eastern Corniche Abu Dhabi in December 2011, through which they enjoyed a barbeque, a football tournament and card games.
Sidrah Shaikh: “The Exhibition Was an Opportunity to Give Back to AUS”

A designer at Herman Miller Dubai and an interior design alumna, Sidrah Shaikh managed the Herman Miller exhibition entitled “Purposeful Design, A Journey through Ergonomic Excellence of Herman Miller Seating” which was housed in the College of Architecture, Art and Design from December 2011 to February 2012.

What is the nature of your job with Herman Miller Dubai? Do you handle design, marketing, sales, or combinations of these tasks?

The primary purpose of my job is to support the Herman Miller team in Dubai in the design and preparation of office interior layouts, specification of products, sales presentations, and support of the tender process. I work directly with potential and existing clients, and where appropriate with dealer personnel and the architecture and design community, to ensure the team achieves or exceeds volume goal assignments.

How did your undergraduate education in CAAD prepare you for your current job responsibilities?

I graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Interior Design from CAAD. The program included well-structured design and planning courses with the added knowledge of design management, which constructively helped me understand the design business and practical aspect of the field. With great instructions from highly capable design studio professors at CAAD, I felt well prepared to step into the working world of design.

Briefly, describe the product line of Herman Miller Dubai? What distinguishes the product line of Herman Miller from other avant-garde office furniture designers and distributors?

Herman Miller is one of the world’s largest office and healthcare furniture manufacturers and is recognized as an industry leader in design innovation and manufacturing for the environment.

The name Herman Miller had become synonymous with “modern” furniture. Working with legendary designers George Nelson and Charles and Ray Eames, the company produced pieces that would become classics of industrial design.

We’ve collaborated with some of the most outstanding designers in the world, including Alexander Girard, Isamu Noguchi, Robert Propst, Bill Stumpf, Don Chadwick, Ayse Birsel, Studio 7.5, Yves Béhar, Doug Ball, and many talented others.

Today, in addition to our classic pieces and new designs for the home, Herman Miller is a recognized innovator in contemporary interior furnishings, solutions for healthcare environments, office, home, learning and related technologies and services. A publicly held company headquartered in Zeeland, Michigan, we have manufacturing facilities in the United States, China, Italy, and the United Kingdom and sales offices, dealers, licensees, and distributors over 100 countries. In addition, the collaboration between Herman Miller and AUS has enabled the visitors to touch and feel the product and have a truly interactive experience.

How was the concept of an art installation inviting the visitors into the design space and process conceptualized? How did you assemble the wide variety of behind-the-scenes drawings, photographs and various sorts of prototypes to convey the complex step-by-step process of design?

The main purpose of the art installation was to showcase prototype parts of chairs, which were suspended to reveal their design details, material compositions, and form. The exhibition space allowed this suspension to be seen effectively by the visitors and the curiosity generated by the nature of their form attracted a lot of intrigued students.

We had approached our team in the UK and US offices to collate graphics and data. We also communicated with the designers of the chairs who generously shared with us design process images and drawings for this exhibition.

Innovation in ideas or designs is at the heart of any university as a “marketplace of ideas.” What does the success story of Herman Miller have to teach us at AUS?

By taking this initiative, Herman Miller has put forward its heritage and successful research knowledge of over 30 years, to students and faculty, with the intention to further educate the young design community of the region, about our values and mission. At the same time, the exhibition enabled the visitors to touch and feel the product and have an interactive experience.

Purposeful Design, the exhibition, focused on the design culture and heritage of Herman Miller ergonomic seating products. The exhibits followed through a time-line journey of task chairs, where each of the nine heritage line chairs were presented with details of its Design Story, Product Story, Designer, and Sustainability. The range started from the very first ergonomic task chair, Ergon by Bill Stumpf in 1976, through to the latest cutting edge design and ergonomic chair, Sayl by Yves Behar.

The exhibition also showcased informative product and designers’ videos that added another layer to this rich journey of design culture. Exhibition visitors also benefited from design process drawings, sketches, and prototype images, along with actual samples of suspended chair backs and parts, to reflect product details and material composition.

The exhibition was organized in an environment that enabled the visitors to touch and feel the product and have a truly interactive experience.

How did you handle design, marketing, sales, or combinations of these tasks?

I graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Interior Design from CAAD, the College of Architecture, Art and Design from AUS. I believe ergonomics is critical, because in an ideal economy, people who perform at their best make all the difference. If you would envision a “Gulf style” of office furniture, what would be some of the themes emphasized? Would they be ergonomic?

Like so many of the creative arts, interior design education would seem to be enhanced by students and young alumni collaborating with AUS faculty. What would be some ways that the CAAD faculty could actively involve their students in commercial design off campus?

I believe as students we learn best when we are exposed to the practical, business side of the field, parallel to our education, and this can be achieved by involving students in site visits, lectures/seminars by practicing architects/designers, encouraging participation in design competitions, internships, etc. Collaborations such as this exhibition have been successful in reaching out to students of this region and educating them in a different way.

If you would envision a “Gulf style” of office furniture, what would be some of the themes emphasized? Would they be ergonomic?

Emerging design and styles in furniture are becoming more and more focused on people, rather than product. We believe ergonomics is critical, because in an ideal economy, people who perform at their best make all the difference. In addition, iconic design and branding is something manufacturers feel the need to incorporate in furniture to survive in the Gulf market specifically. Sustainability and environmental sensitivity is also something that has been a powerful part of furniture design. I believe the Gulf style, as such, would be one set by educated customers and designers, who not only appreciate aesthetics but are also looking out for sensitive and intelligent design.
5 Minutes With …
Alumna Eman Al Yousuf

My name is Eman Iqbal Al Yousuf. I graduated from AUS in 2009 with a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering. I always had a passion for math and chemistry, since I was in school. I was honored to join AUS in an important step to fulfill one of my dreams of becoming a chemical engineer who serves her country and adds to its success. During my education at AUS, I learned the key elements of success. I got help and support from faculty members, and my fellowy colleagues from day one until the day I left campus to seek other successes in my career and personal life.

Working experience…

My first working experience was at DUBAL (Dubai Aluminum) as an intern for two months, an experience that was very informative and challenging.

After my graduation from AUS, I started looking for a career within my major in chemical engineering. Being an AUS alumna, finding a job was not a problem. However, I faced a turning point in my life when a business opportunity came up. I learned during my four years at AUS to take advantage of chances and seek the best of any situation life may present. Therefore, I started a business in high-quality stationary and office accessories, Prints Design, which is one of a kind in the UAE and Middle East. With the help of my family, and especially my father, Iqbal Al Yousuf, President and CEO of Al Yousuf L.L.C., Prints Design is now one of the leading businesses when it comes to high-end stylish stationary.

Prints Design today has two showrooms; one in Mercato Mall and another in Mirfield City Centre and there are more to come. We deal with many international famous brands such as; ACME, Fabriano Boutique, Marimekko, Tombow, Fabre-Castle, Sakura, GrandLuxe, KCK, Casio, Reossler Paper, such as; ACME, Fabriano Boutique, Marimekko, Tombow, etc. We deal with many international famous brands such as; ACME, Fabriano Boutique, Marimekko, Tombow, etc.

Our products are known for their excellent quality, stylish colors, and uniqueness. Moreover, we are a member of the Emirates Environment Group providing recycled and green stationary that suits all creative needs.

Soon we will be launching the first and an exclusive Emirati greeting cards line including cards designed by Freej Cartoon, Shaabiat Al Cartoon, Amal Murad (famous abaya designer) and Emirates Environment Group.

My Book…

I have been writing since primary school; they were simple story imitations of many novels that I was keen on reading. Books were always my best and closest friends as they opened thousands of worlds in front of my eyes. To me, reading is more than just a hobby, it is a way of living, by which life gets a special meaning and depth.

I love reading books by authors such as: the Bronte sisters, Agatha Christie, George Bernard Shaw, Paulo Coelho, Victor Hugo, Mark Twain, and many more. I also enjoy reading books by Arabic authors like Tawfiq Al Hakeem, Ghada Al Samman, Yousef Idris and poets such as Ilia Abo Madhi, Badr Shakir Al Sayab, Aba Al Qasim Al Shibi, and many others.

I recently published my first book, Wujossh Insan (Human’s Faces), which is a collection of 14 different short stories. The stories target different characters’ lives through snapshots. They go deep into a Human’s life to ask philosophical questions about our existence, happiness, dreams, and ambitions.

None of the characters in the stories have names as I believe that we are only different from the outside. We may be different in terms of our names and looks, but we are not different when it comes to how we think, react, and face our fears and challenges.

I have published some of my stories in Arabic magazines such as Qur Al Lura. I have worked as a reporter and a columnist, as a side job to being the managing director of Prints Design, such as in Wazzup youth magazines, and I recently published an article about feminism and women’s literature in the Dubai Al Thaqafiya magazine.

Human characters inspire me a lot. I believe that this complicated living soul is a miracle and that we have great potential and can fulfill whatever we want if we are strong enough to wake up and start achieving our dreams. I like writing about both philosophical and social aspects of life and I tackle those moments when we figure out who we are and what we really are here to do.

Future plans…

I am working hard to achieve success both in my career and in my writing. I would love to publish more stories that would add toistic literature and create new methodologies in Arabic short story writing. I thank God for all his great gifts, my family for their support and for always being there to have me believe in myself, AUS for putting me on the right path of success and for creating the person I am today, and for all my friends, work colleagues, and readers.

Leaving behind a legacy that goes far beyond any degrees, awards, and academic achievements, Dr. Ibrahim Sadek was one of a kind. He was nothing short of an ideal teacher, advisor, researcher, mentor, and uncle. As my father’s youngest brother, we grew up knowing three things about Amoo Ibrahim: that he was a professor who loved math, that he had worked in the US and had received numerous awards for his accomplishments and the third, that he was fun. The last, we quickly but surely found out on our own.

As his niece, something I never quite understood about him was how he was always so calm, cool, and collected and was consistently joking and laughing. He gave us the impression that he was never stressed out, impatient, or over worked. Unlike most of us, he had the talent of never letting the little things in life get to him. He was a big picture kind of man with no expectations from anyone but himself. Taking absolutely everything with the grace of an innocent child who acknowledges not what could go wrong in a situation but only how to enjoy the moment, he was no different with his students than with me, and that is no doubt why he was immensely loved.

Unlike any other family member’s death I have experienced, I actually found out on blackberry messenger before anyone from my family had a chance to call me. Like a celebrity in life and in death with thousands remembering him at the moment he passed away with a big smile, he positively affected so many people’s lives beyond our family circle. A significant indicator of this was how crowded the mosque was after his funeral. He had many similarities to Friday prayers with the colossal crowd of students, family, friends, and colleagues all wanting to pay their respects and bless his soul.

I never in my life heard him utter a harsh word, roll his eyes in disapproval, or immerse himself in judging and gossiping about anyone. Never. He was the epitome of who you would want to be on your best day. With a permanent smile on his face at all times, it was as though he knew that he knew that there was a time limit to everything. And that the ultimate solution to the biggest of problems in life was knowing that these so called problems would ultimately be solved and soon pass. He lived by the philosophy that everything in this life is temporary and so why taint it with negativity, judgment, and disregard, particularly when you have the option of spreading happiness and positivity.

When people came to him with any conflict or worry, he was always armed and ready to solve it - tackling any problem no matter how large or small as though it were a textbook equation. His approach was always the same - that every problem, be it mathematical or not, had a solution. The challenge was finding that solution by multiplying and breaking down the factors to the remaining right figure that would lead you to the ultimate answer. Unfortunately for us, there is no solution to the problem we are faced with in losing such an unbelievable man.

Known by many as Associate Dean of the American University in Sharjah, to me and my brother and sister, he was simply our favorite Amoo. Teaching us lessons about life’s trials and achievements he had a habit of making every issue seem like it could be solved within a matter of seconds, like it was no big deal. More often than not, and to many more than just his family - he was that magician.

By profession, many knew that he had a way with numbers, and sitting down with him for a few seconds one would quickly see that he also had a way with words. Never failing to make people from all walks of life smile and feel like that was important and worth his time, our Amoo was a diamond in the rough. The tweets, facebook messages, emails, texts, and phone calls that have been going on since his death are a mere fraction of how many lives he touched and his influence and loss has proved nothing short of a triple effect.

Perhaps an occupational hazard was that he had an elephant’s memory, as they say, with the charming skill of remembering everyone’s name. Usually first and last names of his many students, AUS staff, and even our childhood friends he had met only once and usually for a few minutes. You would think that he remembered everyone’s name because they had left such a huge impression on him but that wasn’t the case. He remembered their names because he knew that it mattered and that it would make them feel that they mattered. It was an unrehearsed authentic concern for everyone around him. Acts one imagines only angels having the skill and patience to master.

Although never experienced firsthand, he had a distinct and highly unconventional teaching method. In fact, when I first moved to Dubai I met many people who would ask me if I was related to him and then ask me if I sang as well as him. It didn’t take me long to learn that this was a clear reference to his far from professionally serious renditions of Jim Khaliloom in between intense calculus and differential equations – a tactic to keep students alert, interested and
most of all smiling. Although I never had the pleasure of taking calculus with him or any other higher level of math for that matter, I did have the honor of having him sit by me and explain 4th grade algebra in the most charming way.

I still remember the long wooden dining room in Riyadh to this day and trying to tackle $9y = 25$. I can still hear his voice as he leaned over me to explain it and soothe my frustrations, “So ammo you see this y, haram, he’s jealous of the other side so you have to either give or take away 9 from both sides of the equal sign to keep both sides happy.”

I now know that it was a basic and fundamental law of algebra – to keep both sides of the equation balanced. He pleasantly explained it all in the way that a 4th grader would understand. Equations in the 4th grade quickly became simple - a matter of justice and fairness, something I understood.

Hating conflict, confrontation, disrespect, and disregard, I grew up knowing he would be fun and always engage in interesting conversations with me. When I was 7 and obsessed with ballet, he would mention that he too had studied ballet to get me to laugh. Soon enough I was 21 and graduating college, and he would ask about where I had applied for my masters and offer advice if I asked, never forceful with his suggestions. Then before I knew it I was 29 and I was getting married. He had such a talent in never upsetting everyone and so made sure that he attended my wedding and left early the next morning in order not to miss AUS registration the very next day. He always did whatever he could for both of his families.

I remember moving to Dubai and having dinner with him on many occasions where our meal would be interrupted by a student stopping by our table to shake his hand, greet him and thank him for this, that or the other. A course dropped, added, or simply to say hi. I used to tease him and ask how many students he had paid to pass by the restaurant and offer him these compliments to which he would laugh and shrug as if to say “I have no idea.” He was a celebrity by any definition. Admired, respected and followed, even having his own Facebook fan page. Ever so modest in his achievements and how well loved he was, there was no denying the turn out to show respect and say goodbye to this remarkable human being.

Always asking about my sister he would make me show him the latest pictures and videos of her two sons. He was so good at keeping a connective thread with us and our lives dismissing the notion of possibly asking us any superficial questions out of habit. He would always ask about my brother Karim and his latest achievements in medicine and then murmur, “That’s so good. Hamdillah hamdillah” once I updated him on his latest accomplishment, particularly now that he is working at Mass General Hospital at Harvard. We always felt that he was proud of us no matter what our latest news was and simply happy to see us happy, as if that was enough.

I felt and still feel proud to carry the same last name as him and he has left behind a legacy of funny jokes, muddled and always entertaining language skills, and that ever so caring smile that will be remembered for many years to come. Through his death I vow to emulate his overly positive approach to life, his openness to anything and everything new, and his genuine care and love for everyone from his family to the cafeteria staff who served him lunch everyday. There is a perpetual and eternal hole at The American University of Sharjah, Dubai and most of all in my family. The epitome of genuineness and an undeniably charming sense of humor, Ibrahim Sadek was simply, unforgettable and his memory lives on beyond the four walls of any classroom or campus.

How we will live on without him is a problem with no solution in sight, and so, we must handle it as he would want us to. With a smile and appreciation of all that has passed and with a promise to try our hardest in everything we aim to achieve in life.

It is simply undeniable that his academic value cannot be ignored, and that his human value will never be replaced.

Sara Walid Sadek
Dr. Ibrahim Sadek’s niece

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. Our address is ODAA@aus.edu We look forward to hearing from each and every one of you.

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