

AUS | CONNECT

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI AFFAIRS



Sharjah Ruler Opens International Conference on American Government



His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi along with Dr. James Thurber, Dr. Gilles Andreani, Dr. Gilles Kepel, Dr. Stephen Wayne, Chancellor Peter Heath and Vice Chancellor Nada Mourtada-Sabbah

An array of renowned scholars from around the world gathered to discuss American government policies at an international conference entitled "American Government Conference-US Policy from Presidential Elections to Shifting Paradigms in the Middle East," on October 9, 2011, at The Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi Center for Gulf Studies (Al Darah), University City, Sharjah. The day-long event was inaugurated by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah, and President of American University of Sharjah, who also visited an exhibition of His Highness's rare collections held as part of the conference. Academics and experts from the United States, Europe, and the Middle East discussed how US President Barack Obama's policies have impacted the Middle East. Discussions throughout the conference focused on a number

of significant issues including how the Obama administration has guided or reacted to major events; whether Obama's quiet "lead from behind" strategy has advanced broad changes that were already afoot; and whether President Obama's policies hinder initiatives or actually catalyze events.

Speaking at the opening session, Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS, welcomed all the delegates on behalf of the Ruler of Sharjah. "It gives me great pleasure to welcome our distinguished roster of scholars in political science and related fields, faculty from universities across the Gulf, prominent members of the community, and AUS alumni and students," he said. "While President Obama serves as President of the United States half a world away, our conference perspective is from the Middle East. The question becomes, is



His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi tours Al Darah with AUS Officials



His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Trustee Hamid D. Jafar, Dr. James Thurber, Dr. Peter Heath and Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah

the Middle East experiencing paradigm change that reflects the shift in US policy orientation from the Bush administration to President Obama's? In other words, has our cultural lens for perceiving or ordering our world changed sufficiently?" asked Chancellor Heath.

The opening session was also addressed by Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, and Dr. Mark Rush, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, AUS. "We assemble today to better understand the issues confronting the Gulf and the wider Middle East," said Dr. Mourtada-Sabbah. "The Middle East is undergoing changes the likes of which have not been seen in generations. How have the policies emanating from President Barack Obama's administration, with all of the pressures and forces that he must balance, impacted the Middle East? More pointedly, did President Obama's foreign policies catalyze these changes, or did the same innovative global forces operating here also elect the first African-American to the White House?" she said.

"We are fortunate to have authorities from the Middle East, Europe, and the United States with us today, who bring empirical evaluations as to whether Obama's policies or persona have effected paradigm change in the Middle East. The distinguished speakers today will probe the increasingly two-way flow of interaction between these two strategic regions," she added. She also thanked His Highness, the Sharjah Ruler, for honoring the conference with his presence as well as the speakers for sharing their insightful contributions.

The conference got off to an interesting start with the first panel discussion focusing on "Assessing President Obama." The presentation of Dr. James Thurber, Distinguished Professor and Director, Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies and Department of Government, at the American University, Washington, entitled "Assessing President Obama and the 112th Congress," highlighted a number of significant questions related to President Obama's incumbency thus far. Dr. Thurber noted that since his assumption of office, President Obama has



Trustee Hamid D. Jafar and Chancellor Dr. Peter Heath along with, H.E. Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al Thani, Dr. Amr Abdul Hamid, Mr. Lovraj Talwar and part of the audience



Dr. Peter Heath with H.E. Justin Siberell and his spouse

moved on numerous issues. He also said that we should also bear in mind that President Obama inherited the crisis afflicting the banks and auto industry as well as two wars from the previous administration.

As the first African-American US president, Obama is viewed differently by people on either side of the political spectrum. According to Professor Thurber, as far as President Obama's challenges for this year and the next, he felt that the strong parties and interest groups leave slight room for real change with Obama facing little consensus on problems and threats afflicting the nation, ranging from jobs, debt-deficit, education and healthcare to Afghanistan and the Middle East. "And there is even less consensus on solutions to these problems," he concluded.

Addressing the topic, "Obama, Europe, and the Middle East," Dr. Gilles Andreani, Former Director of the Policy Planning Department in the French Ministry and Professor at the University of Paris II, stated that among Europeans Obama enjoyed unprecedented levels of popularity when he came into office, with approval ratings being close to an incredible 90 percent. Dr. Andreani said that Europeans appreciated the fact that Obama had inherited a difficult situation when he came into office, with two wars and a rapidly deteriorating economy. However, over the past three years, there has been a steady decline in the President's popularity on the continent. Dr. Andreani stated that Obama had a lot of goodwill in Europe but appears to have little interest in the continent, compared to some of his predecessors.

His Excellency Justin Siberell, United States Consul General to the United Arab Emirates, delivered a keynote address at the event noting the high standard of scholarship represented among the academics in the room, "which speaks to the emergence of the American University of Sharjah as a serious and respected institution of higher learning, acknowledged today as one of the finest

in the region."

The conference had three other panel discussions that focused on wide ranging topics dealing with the Obama administration. Dr. Stephen Wayne, Professor of Government at Georgetown University; Dr. Matthew Bonham, Professor of Political Science and International Relations, Syracuse University; Dr. Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, Professor of Political Science, UAE University, Dr. Shafeeq Ghabra, Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University; Dr. Burdett Loomis, Professor of Political Science, University of Kansas; and Professor Claudia Hartley Thurber, Esq., Consultant in Occupational Safety and Health Policy, Former Counsel for Health Standards, Occupational and Health Administration, US Department of Labor also spoke at the conference.

One of the world's preeminent experts on the Middle East, Professor Gilles Kepel, Director of Doctoral Studies on the Arab/Muslim World, Institute of Political Studies, Paris, addressed the audience at the closing dinner.

The opening ceremony was attended by Sheikh Salem Bin Abdullah Al Qassimi, Director of the Office of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah; Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al Thani, Director of the Office of the AUS President; AUS Trustees Hamid Jafar and Maroun Samaan; Dr. Amr Abdul Hamid, Special Advisor to His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah for Higher Education; Ali Al Merri, Director General of The Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi Center for Gulf Studies (Al Darah); as well as other senior university officials, deans, faculty and staff, alumni, students and academics, scholars and prominent industry leaders.

This is the second American government conference to be held at the Center and was organized by the AUS College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA).

Chancellor Heath's Address

It gives me great pleasure to welcome our alumni back to your academic home of AUS. We are especially pleased that you are spending time with your fellow alumni to rekindle the ties that bind us into an extended educational family. You sharpened the intellect for dealing with the wider world at the University as you learned how to deal with your immediate community within your parents' home earlier.

AUS is your second home, now and forever. It delights me to see such a wonderful turnout at our many alumni events. You are the ones who drive the AUS Alumni Association with your enthusiasm and with your organizational acumen to make events happen. I might add that coming up with the right solution and seeing it through to successful events are the hallmarks of an AUS education. I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the wide ranging roster of activities that you are presenting this year.

4 To have so many of your fellow alumni participate surely bespeaks an organization that plays a significant role in the lives of many people. You create venues for worthwhile exchange of information about careers and networking along with great recreation at the same time. The AUS family, like all families, is thus about looking after one another. I have every reason to believe that your imaginative leaders will continue to formulate very meaningful activities as you go through the various stages of life together. Clearly, the AUSAA has created its own ongoing momentum.

However, at this early stage in your career, please do not miss out on ways to perfect your leadership skills through the Alumni Association. Its many opportunities for leadership, the board, the council, as well as the very active chapters are excellent ways to hone your skills while assisting your association and university. Activity abounds for you to join. I am sure that your employer will note that leadership skills developed and demonstrated with the AUSAA readily transfer to the workplace. Some of the standout leaders this year, among many, are Abdullah El Shazly, Ali Abou Khamseen, Bisher Challah, Farid Mohammed, Rami Gaber, Samer Al Gamal, and Wael Saleh. Together you have carried forth the mission of the Association of engaging more and more of your fellow alumni.



Under the umbrella of ODAA, therefore, I urge you to continue to pursue leadership training, professional development of many kinds, excursions of learning and adventure and in the camaraderie of fellow alumni, suggest guest speakers, and attend many of the fine lectures available to you. I also urge you to develop alumni scholarship awards and other prizes in the name of your alumni chapters.

As the University continues to add more outreach programs throughout the Emirates and Gulf, I hope that you will continue to be directly involved in helping advance your alma mater in many avenues of volunteerism. The AUSAA creates fun and collegiality through achievement that benefits all.

Dr. Peter Heath
AUS Chancellor

Vice Chancellor Mourtada's Foreword

As we all know, a university family trains the younger generation on how to evaluate the world around them so that they, our most precious educated alumni, may make the necessary improvements for society when it comes their turn to assume the mantle of leadership.

It is certainly true that during the worldwide economic slowdown we are currently witnessing, superbly trained young workers, such as yourselves, will make the critical difference in devising new solutions for your companies and for your countries.

Being able to pull an economy up by its bootstraps is the real measure of how good an educational system and its research capacity really are. Under Chancellor Heath's administration, AUS is assuming a central position in research and development for the Gulf region in a plan that will bring together many sectors of society.

Today, our alumni cover the globe in their search for knowledge and meaning, and their contributions make a difference everywhere. As alumni who truly love and faithfully support this great institution, I know you share my pride in what we are doing and where we plan to go.

A dynamic educational institution makes an impact on everything it touches; on the minds, dreams, and characters of its students, on the world of ideas and their practical application as we transfer knowledge and innovations to the world beyond our campus, and on the communities with which we engage, locally and around the globe. As we inspire our students, they repay us in full measure in the future. I would also like to reiterate the major role you all play in the wider society. Most of you hold key positions of influence locally and worldwide. Seeing you use the authority you possess to direct the development of our society positively would make us all proud.

This issue of AUS Connect marks the beginning of another year of the AUSAA activities. You will also read in this issue about several accomplished alumni and what they are doing now. Some alumni work in large, well-known companies (national and multinational), while others hold prestigious positions in governmental agencies and international organizations. You will read about a number of entrepreneur-minded alumni, who took the lead and started their own businesses in a variety of fields, while many others are pursuing advanced degrees and graduate studies at AUS or abroad.



One of the key factors in achieving AUS's distinguished reputation and fulfilling the vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah and Founder and President of AUS, in becoming a leading institution of higher learning responding to the needs of contemporary society in the UAE and the Gulf States lies in the significant accomplishments of the AUS alumni in various walks of life.

I want to thank all of you for the amazing support you have always extended to your alma mater. It is the enduring relationships that are cared for by our AUS Alumni Association that will aid you in building your careers in tandem with your fellow alumni.

Finally, I wish to thank the first elected board for their active efforts on your behalf throughout this past academic year. Those are: alumna Sheikha Azza Al Nuaimi, AUSAA President; alumnus Musbah Abu Jarad, AUSAA Vice President; alumnus Karim Abou Ajram, AUSAA Executive of the Council; alumnus Ahmed Al Jbori, AUSAA Treasurer; and alumna Melissa Bayik, AUSAA Executive of Administration. I also wish to recognize AUSAA Founding Board President alumnus Sheikh Mohammed Bin Faisal Al Qassimi and our Director for Institutional Advancement alumnus Abdullah El Shazly.

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

Ruler of Sharjah Inaugurates New AED 90 Million Business School Building



His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi with Trustee Hamid D. Jafar, Chancellor Peter Heath, Mr. Salem Al Qaseer, Dean Malcolm Richards along with Mr. Lovraj Talwar and Mr. Badr Jafar

6 His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, inaugurated the new 90-million dirham state-of-the-art School of Business and Management (SBM) building on the AUS campus on June 13. His Highness also unveiled a plaque expressing AUS's sincere appreciation to the Government of Sharjah and Crescent Petroleum Company for their generous support toward the construction of the SBM building.

The Sharjah Ruler was accompanied by Sheikh Khalid Bin Saqr Al Qassimi, Chairman of the Public Works Department; Sheikh Salem Bin Abdulrahman Al Qassimi Director of the Office of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah; Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah Al Thani, Director of the Office of the AUS President; members of the University's board of trustees; members of the SBM Advisory Council; Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS; as well as other senior government and University officials, faculty members, and members of the media.

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan toured the building and praised its modern design and facilities. He hopes that the new facility will set a new standard for academic buildings in the country as well as for business schools in the region.

"It gives me immense pleasure to see this great project come to fruition," said Chancellor Heath on the occasion. "This building caters to the best practices of sustainability, design, and functionality. We have ensured that both our students as well as our faculty members are provided with the most efficient and stimulating environment to conduct their research, instruction, and studies."

At approximately 14,000 sqm, the new three-storey SBM building increases the University's faculty office and teaching space by 25 percent. Including the computer labs and seminar rooms, 1,100 students can attend class at the same time in the building. Its ground floor comprises classrooms and student space. The first floor is divided equally between classrooms, offices and administrative space. The building's second floor is reserved for faculty offices. All the classrooms have stepped floors and curved continuous counter-tops designed to bring the students closer to the instructor and each other to facilitate group discussion. The building has 18 classrooms that each seat 42 students, one classroom that seats 80, and another 120 students, respectively.

The new facility was designed to provide each of the building's 120 offices with natural light through three open courtyards. These courtyards



His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi with Trustees Skip Fletcher and Riad T. Sadek, Chancellor Peter Heath and Mr. Badr Jafar

bring natural light down into the student areas on the ground floor and avoid expensive air-conditioning of enclosed atriums. The building has been designed to meet the University's sustainability mission and includes insulated walls, an automated lighting system, and a high-efficiency chiller yard.

"I am certain our new SBM building, which was completed on time and within budget, will raise the bar for university buildings around the country," said Dr. Malcolm Richards, Dean of SBM. "Apart from its beautifully designed interior and well-equipped classrooms, this new building also has two computer labs that can each accommodate 24 students; three executive classrooms for use in executive education courses and in our EMBA program; eight 'breakout' rooms available for group work related to executive programs and/or as part of the student placement function within SBM; and six department head offices, with each of the six academic departments having a conference room."

The SBM has recently earned international accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International). Founded in 1916, AACSB International is the longest serving global accrediting body for business schools. This outstanding achievement for SBM as well as for AUS, indicates that the school has gained national and international acclaim for the high quality of its programs and the students it consistently produces. This accreditation, by one of the world's leading accrediting bodies,

confirms that the SBM faculty members have worked extremely hard to devise programs and set standards that are second to none.

AACSB accreditation represents the highest achievement for an educational institution that awards business degrees. As required by the AACSB standards, all accredited schools must go through a peer review process every five years in order to maintain their accreditation. The school is now counted among the AACSB-accredited business schools. Degrees earned by students from SBM will now be more recognizable around the world. It takes a great deal of self evaluation and determination to earn AACSB accreditation. Through accreditation, SBM has not only met specific standards of excellence but has also made a commitment to ongoing improvement to ensure that it will continue to deliver high-quality education to its students.

AACSB accreditation is the hallmark of excellence in business education. Achieving accreditation is a process of rigorous internal review, evaluation and adjustment, and can take several years to complete. During these years, the school develops and implements a plan to meet the AACSB accreditation standards, which require a high-quality teaching environment, a commitment to continuous improvement, and curricula responsive to the needs of businesses.

His Highness Attends Luncheon for Graduating Class of Spring 2011



His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi with Trustees Skip Fletcher, Riad T. Sadek, Hamid D. Jafar and Maroun Semaan along with University officials

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah, and President of American University of Sharjah (AUS), told over 500 AUS graduating students that regardless of where they lived and how much time had elapsed since their graduation, they will always be a part of the AUS family.

In a statement released at a special luncheon held in honor of the AUS Class of Spring 2011 at the University's Main Building on June 13, the Sharjah Ruler said: "No matter how old you are or how far away you are, your memory will always stay etched in our hearts and your names will forever be engraved in the rotunda of this AUS building. You will always be like my children."

In his opening notes addressing the students, His Highness said: "I wish for you to always maintain a connection with AUS, either as graduate students or as members of the alumni association, and I congratulate you and wish you success."

Organized by the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA), this event, honoring over 500 graduating students, preceded the commencement, which was held on June 14.

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

the flexibility and autonomy of mind and spirit to formulate the new solutions sought by your employers throughout your career," she said.

"The parent AUS Alumni Association has an elected board and an overarching council with representatives from each of the graduating classes, as well as from each of the schools and colleges. You will find involvement with your former classmates to be an ongoing support group in seeking employment or answers to the many questions put before you at work," she said. "The AUS Alumni Association is composed of individuals who are well connected, active and fun. The association will be your home away from home," she added. "Remember, you have new worlds to explore but AUS will remain your intellectual foundation and your second home," she concluded.

Also present on the occasion were representatives of Dana Gas, a long-term corporate partner of AUS, who awarded laptops to 10 graduating seniors who excelled in their education and graduated with honors at the top of their class. Nasser Akram, Investor Relations and Corporate Communications Manager and Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah presented and awarded the distinguished graduates with their special gifts and distinction certificates.

The following 10 students were recognized for their academic excellence: Lara Kanbar, Naser Al Sughaiyer, Sami Ahmad Rami Mafti, Sawsan Ahmad Ali, Shihab Samir Hamati and Zeina Mustafa Jendi from the College of Engineering; Hiba Nasim Syed, Human Nasim Syed and Sahar Nabil Abdul Razak from the School of Business and Management and Aya Waly Eldin Shafik Sabry from the College of Arts and Sciences.



Vice Chancellor Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Mr. Nasser Akram and alumni who were recognized for their academic excellence



Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah and Mr. Nasser Akram awarding an alumna



Alumnae at the Luncheon

Alumnus Sheikh Mohammed Al Maktoum, A Talented Diplomat Serving the UAE

Would you please introduce yourself in a few lines?

I am a proud son of the United Arab Emirates and I graduated from the American University of Sharjah majoring in International Studies with a concentration in International Relations. I also completed a graduate degree from the University of Exeter with an MA in International Studies.

Most of my life I have spent doing what I feel will benefit me in the future and that includes pursuing a political career. People who have known me for a long time know that I have been aiming at a job in the diplomatic circles for years. I would probably say that my desire to pursue politics started ten years ago. Now that I have achieved my goal I am very happy. My happiness stems from the fact that now I have the honor of serving my country proudly as a First Secretary of the UAE Embassy in London, and I always thank God every step of the way.

On a typical day in your position as the First Secretary at the UAE Embassy in London, what do you do?

In the Embassy, I am the head of two departments, the Political and Economic departments. Each department has its own goals and challenges.

In the political department we are tasked with following political announcements from the UK government as well as other political organizations, and then analyzing what we have in hand and sending it to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The economic department has almost the same tasks except that it also has the mission of monitoring and analyzing a wider range of economic announcements from the EU that might impact the UK's economy as well as the world economy.

As a diplomat I am also required to attend receptions outside of the Embassy's premises. The ability to network with various types of people is a new experience that I was pleasantly surprised with and am now thoroughly enjoying.

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

Team work is what makes me enjoy this line of work. Working with my fellow diplomats to finish an objective and then suddenly finding that your hard work and concentration has paid off is sufficient to give you the push to achieve more.



However, every job has its challenges and the most challenging part of this work for me is the number of new people I meet regularly. I would not be exaggerating if I said that in this year alone I have probably met more than five hundred individuals from various public and private sectors. This challenge has taught me to concentrate more than usual when meeting new people. In the past, getting to know someone took about two to three meetings, but now every person I meet is important in one way or another so I have conditioned myself to remembering each of them.

Globalization across the world seems to indicate a trend towards greater parity between countries and regions of the world. In your current position are you able to determine long term trends in how the stature of the Middle East vis à vis the European Union is changing?

One would think that if you majored in politics then people would look to you for the prediction of future political events and how countries would react. Even in our interconnected world there are vast amounts of surprises that we never dreamed of happening that start to occur suddenly changing our perception of how countries interact with each

other. In the field of international relations there are various theories of how countries interrelate, and each of these theories have their own corroboration. So the world you predict depends largely on which school of thought you consider yourself part of.

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

The environment that AUS provided me with gave me the knowledge required to be able to be who I am now. It taught me how to interact with various kinds of people from across the globe that have different and sometimes opposing opinions to mine. It also provided me with the tools for effective leadership and management of large teams.

Based on your experience in London, do you think that AUS should consider adding field courses in International Studies, where undergraduate students earn course credit during the summer to study an aspect of International Studies in a foreign setting? What would be the pros and cons to learning first-hand through field studies or internships in a foreign country as an undergraduate?

I always encourage firsthand experience when it comes to learning. When I first arrived at the Embassy I started to learn by visiting various departments and training with them for a day. At the end of my month-long training I managed to gather a lot of knowledge just by living in the same atmosphere that every employee lives in.

I would highly recommend setting up training courses abroad that include workshops for our AUS undergraduate students. I have attended some workshops here in London and despite being only a few days long, they have provided me with vast amounts of information that were very practical in my line of work.

The only disadvantage I see for undergraduate students to study in a foreign country like the UK is that they will have to be prepared to handle the different rating system of the university or college that they apply to. Knowing beforehand that the marking system in the UK differs drastically from the marking system in the US is the key to overcoming this obstacle.

In a cosmopolitan city like London I would guess that there is ample opportunity to compare the quality of one's education in discussions with your peers. Based on a viewpoint from your experience gained outside of the UAE, what do you consider the overall strengths of an AUS education to be?

My previous point doesn't belittle the education I received at AUS. On the contrary, we had many

tough teachers who heightened my learning ability. An AUS education is hands down one of the toughest in the Middle East. Many people who have graduated from AUS have gone on to take a leading role in various top governmental and private industries.

What special advice would you give an AUS student entering your field of study?

I personally advise international studies students to always take the initiative in education. Sometimes simple things like reading a book before your next class will make you enjoy your education more while actually getting things done. Remember, always have an open mind when you dive into the field of international studies. There is an incredible amount of debate happening in this field, and having a calm personality is one of its requirements.

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

For our new graduates that are going to work in the near future or have started working, my advice to them is to be tough but fair when making decisions. Great leaders are usually the ones who have given the toughest decisions in the shortest amount of time.



H.E. Sheikh Mohammed Al Maktoum with H.E. Mariam Al Roumi

AUSAA Vice President, Musbah Abu Jarad Shares His Thoughts

Would you please tell us briefly about yourself?

My name is Musbah Abu Jarad and I come from a small village called Masafi, in the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah. I was raised in a family that enjoys reading and traveling, and these have been developed to be among my hobbies. I am honored to be a graduate of AUS with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, class of 2004. I also hold a masters degree in quality management from the University of Wollongong, class of 2007. I worked at Schlumberger as a wireline field engineer following graduation until 2007. After that I joined Aldar as a pre-qualification engineer and acting commercial manager, where I still work today.

What are your responsibilities as the vice president of AUSAA?

As a vice president my duties include serving AUS alumni along with a team of dedicated volunteers; furthermore, I am required to replace the president in case of his/her absence. In addition to that, I work closely with the Director of Alumni Affairs in reviewing and recommending applications for new chapters and charter renewals for existing chapters. I represent the board in evaluating the annual plans for each chapter, and different duties are assigned to me from time to time when the need arises as required and charged by the AUSAA board.

Why were you interested in serving on the board?

Being a member of the big family of the AUS Alumni Association is like going back home to AUS. Most of all it is because we enjoy what we do, in terms of helping other alumni, assisting current students, raising the caliber of our university from being just a university to being a hub for social interaction, higher education, and a home for all alumni and our families. This is mainly why I wanted to give back to AUS. The board gave me the chance, place, and the know how to do it all. This position also allows me to be close to enthusiastic alumni who are willing to give of their time and effort in order to serve their alma mater under the AUSAA.

What future events and activities are you planning for the alumni?

The different geographical and professional chapters under the flagship of the AUSAA always have a variety of events and activities planned. We continue to develop novel events to serve all the interests of our dear alumni, whether it is professional, like career fairs and business forums, or social like alumni trips and activities. Furthermore, our annual gathering with His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi at our yearly reunion dinner is our chance



to meet His Highness and listen to his fatherly advice at our second home, AUS. This is one of the greatest events that all AUS alumni look forward to. Ongoing successful events like movie premiers, dinners, trips, and activities like karting, paintball, etc. are all in the pipeline for the coming year as well.

What would you like to accomplish during your tenure on the board?

Our biggest accomplishment would be to see more of our alumni connected to AUS, whether by showing up at AUSAA events, or participating in them. We would also like to see ambassadors of AUS in every alumnus's workplace, country, society, and even at home. In this way we can ensure the spread of AUS alumni everywhere.

What should AUS alumni expect from its board?

They should expect transparency and timely communication when it comes to alma mater issues. They should also expect us to be close to them, listen to their opinions, ideas, and needs. Further, they can expect us to draw the road map for the AUSAA with our different partners, both internally within AUS and externally, and shape the organization to what the majority of AUS alumni are looking for.

As the vice president of AUSAA, what would you like to tell our alumni?

AUS is your home, and your home will always welcome you back! Moreover, we are accessible and very willing to listen to your concerns. We are developing ourselves together with you and the help of your feedback. Thus, we are looking forward to hearing from you, seeing you, and always giving back to you, or to AUS. Once you are an alumnus/ alumna, you are an ambassador of AUS, and we want you to take this mark with you wherever you go and always talk to us about what is important to you and share your opinions for supporting your alma mater.

AED 5 Million Endowment to Establish “The Shabana and Faizal Scholarship” at AUS



Chancellor Peter Heath and Vice Chancellor Nada Mourtada-Sabbah along with Mr. Faizal Kottikollon and Mrs. Shabana Faizal

On November 16, AUS announced the establishment of “The Shabana and Faizal Scholarship,” with a generous gift of AED 5 million by Shabana Faizal and Faizal Kottikollon, Co-Founders of UAE-based KEF Holdings. The scholarship is meant for needy and meritorious students to avail themselves of the excellent education provided at AUS.

Dr. Peter Heath, AUS Chancellor, expressed his gratitude to both Shabana Faizal and Faizal Kottikollon for their active support of the educational mission of the University and their farsightedness in partnering with higher education to benefit the community. “The Shabana and Faizal Scholarship will allow bright students whose finances preclude them from joining AUS, to benefit from this gift and permit AUS to select the best and brightest students irrespective of their financial background,” he said.

Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, thanked both Shabana Faizal and Faizal Kottikollon for their generosity and said that “allowing the most talented students to avail themselves of the excellent education that AUS offers will certainly enrich the social and professional fabric of the UAE.”

KEF Holdings is an integrated valve manufacturer and provider of steel castings to the oil and gas, chemical, mining and power industries. KEF serves over 70 clients including leading market players in the oil and gas industries such as Takreer, ENOC, Qatar Petroleum, KOC, PDO, Qatar Gas, and Tyco. KEF was recognized for its best-in-class practices, as evidenced by their award of Best Foundry in the World by Weir Clear Liquid, a division of Weir Group.

AUS Alumni Association Board Elects Alumnus Al Jbori As AUSAA Treasurer



Alumnus Ahmed Al Jbori graduated from AUS in 2005 with a degree in economics and then graduated from the AUS MBA program in 2008. He is currently concluding his PhD research program in 'New Institutional Economics' through the University of Wales, UK. Moreover, he is simultaneously studying for the 'Certificate of Financial and Valuation Modeling,' a Wall Street training professional qualification for investment

bankers. He has received numerous awards and scholarships in recognition of his academic excellence. On the professional front, Ahmed is the Business Development Manager at Binghatti Holding Limited and previously worked as a Senior Investment Officer at Shipping World L.L.C.

Ahmed nominated himself for the position of AUSAA Treasurer, which recently became vacant when Musbah Abu Jarad took on the position of AUSAA Vice President. During his studies at AUS, Ahmed was also founder and elected President of the AUS Economics Club and held earlier roles at AUS such as the Executive Vice President for the AUS Alumni Association. He was also a member of the CFP (Committee for Implementing the Founding Constitution) for AUSAA.

Ahmed believes that serving as Treasurer will contribute to the success of the AUSAA community, especially in light of the fact that there is a strong effort and commitment from our alma mater to continuously support the Association. As an alumnus, he trusts that the AUSAA provides AUS alumni with the ability to network and participate in numerous events and social development programs, providing them with a considerable advantage at the local, regional, and global level.

AUS Alumnus Delivers Presentation on Architectural Projects

AUS alumnus Abdullah Al Shamsi recently gave a presentation at the College of Architecture, Art and Design (CAAD). Al Shamsi talked about his firm's architectural projects in the presentation entitled "Poke. Like. Comment."

During the lecture, Al Shamsi discussed some aspects of the design process and then showcased four projects he was involved with: a multi-building mixed-use project in Dubai Media City, a villa, a bridge, and a museum.

Abdullah Al Shamsi graduated from AUS with a bachelor's degree in architecture in 2004 and completed his master's degree in advanced architectural design at Columbia University in New York. He is currently founder and managing director of SHAPE Architecture Practice + Research.



The lecture was held in cooperation with CAAD, which regularly features lectures by professionals and experts across the world involved in different areas of design.

AUS Receives a Painting Donated by UAE Artist Najat Meky



Vice Chancellors Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah and Salem Al Qaseer receiving the painting from Dr. Najat Meky

The American University of Sharjah (AUS) received a painting donated by the acclaimed UAE artist Dr. Najat Meky, during her recent visit to the University, in recognition of the University's role in supporting cultural creativity across the arts, literature, and science within the larger community.

The painting, entitled "Women in the Art and Arabian Cities," was 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.

"The gift speaks 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, UAE Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah and President of AUS," stated Mr. Al Qaseer whose office and the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs collaborated to bring this initiative to AUS. "We are very grateful to Dr. Najat Meky for her generous initiative and her masterpiece which will be proudly displayed at AUS, as it has been in many prominent venues in the UAE and the GCC," he added.

"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," remarked Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah. "The University is committed to enabling students and alumni to further their skills in the arts and sciences through interacting with established experts like Dr. Meky. AUS gratefully welcomes Dr. Najat Meky's illustrious art, that not only represents our mission in supporting creativity within the community but enhances the beauty of our campus with Emirati themes," concluded Dr. Mourtada-Sabbah.

Dr. Meky thanked the University's leadership for channeling the latest in scientific and artistic know-how to enhance the repertoire of community and alumni. "This initiative networks academia as a font of creative enterprise with creative artists, writers and scientists in the UAE community. My aim is to contribute to strengthening the relationship and exchanges between the University and the community in line with the vision of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah," said Dr. Meky.

"All communities in the forefront of creative endeavors need a critical mass of artists, scientists and other innovative-thinking persons to interact with one another and to instill their special gifts to the next generation. Sharjah has established itself as the cultural capital of the Arab world, and AUS plays a very central role in this regard," Dr. Meky noted.

Alumna Lara Kanbar, the Recipient of the President's Cup at Spring 2011 Commencement



His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi awarding alumna Lara Kanbar with the President's Cup

Tell us briefly about yourself.

I grew up in Al-Ain, in a wonderfully supportive family with three siblings. Ever since high school, I was intrigued with the idea of engineering and finding solutions to practical problems. At AUS, I studied Electrical Engineering and minored in Biomedical Engineering. I guess you could say I am a bit of a perfectionist. I tend to set high standards for everything I do, and I challenge myself to meet my goals, whether it be living independently or designing a fully-functioning engineering project!

How do you determine or evaluate success?

I think success is not measured by a paycheck, a grade, or a title. These are all things which come and go with time. Personally, I would prefer to be influential and improve the lives of people around me; that is my true measure of success. The way I

see it, ambition is a powerful motivator, but it must be used wisely. You will never be remembered for how much money you had in your lifetime, or how high your rank was in a particular job. You will be remembered for your ethics, your way with people, and your contributions to enriching and bettering your society.

What has been your most rewarding accomplishment?

So far, I have to say that earning the prestigious President's Cup title ranks as one of the greatest accomplishments I have been blessed with. It is very gratifying to look back on my undergraduate studies and know that I accomplished something like this. I feel honored to have made my family and friends proud, and I am pleased to have earned this Cup for the College of Engineering.

What were some of your favorite class(es) at AUS? Why were they your favorite?

Oh wow, it is very difficult to pick a single class! If you ask any of my friends, I was always the one sitting up front and asking questions in class. I enjoyed the senior-level engineering courses most, since they were the ones that delved into design and research based work. Outside engineering, the social sciences were my favorites because I learned many useful things that are truly vital in my everyday life and in my dealings with people.

What extra-curricular activities were you involved with?

I did some community service work at AUS, and participated in some off campus activities. My main extra-curricular interest was the IEEE Student Branch UAE, the world's largest professional association dedicated to advancing technological innovation and excellence for the benefit of humanity, of which I was the Newsletter Editor and Public Relations Manager. I was also a research assistant within the Electrical Engineering department, and that was an excellent way to learn about how ideas are passed through a research and development phase to create innovation.

What was your most memorable involvement at AUS?

The most gratifying experience I took part in at AUS was undoubtedly the IEEE Student Branch's Study Tour to Italy in 2010. It was a brilliant way to learn about the practical fields of engineering, understand the challenges of current technological needs, and see Italy with all my friends!

Do you have any plans for an advanced degree?

Yes, I am pursuing a Masters in Biomedical Engineering right now at McGill University in Canada, and that has actually been a challenge in itself: uprooting my life in the UAE and moving to another continent! I am confident that I can

do it, God willing, since those four years of residential halls at AUS taught me a thing or two about responsibility and independence! It is great, I get to do research work on actual clinically relevant projects that have a profound practical impact. Academically speaking, I feel prepared for what will come, and I hope for the best!

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

I probably would choose the same path for myself. AUS is where I developed my personality and discovered who I really am. Since AUS's student body is somewhat smaller than other universities abroad, the class size is perfect for holding discussions and promoting learning. There are many opportunities for students to stand out and take part in areas that interest them, be it sports, research, or competitions; I would not trade that for anything. Also, I was able to stay close with my family for my undergraduate studies, which was a priceless gift.

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

AUS provides a program which is truly well-rounded in every sense of the word. Within my major as an electrical engineering student, I graduated with knowledge in biomedical engineering, circuit design, signal processing, and electronics. I also graduated with knowledge in emotional intelligence, feminism, and anthropology, among many others. Not only that, but AUS has a multicultural environment which gives you the chance to learn about many cultures. I can honestly say AUS teaches you to respect people from all nationalities. Mainly, AUS provides opportunities, and as students, we ought to take advantage of these because they eventually shape the rest of our lives.

Success Stories: Alumnus Salah Al-Zaben Excels at the Kuwaiti Council of Ministers

Would you please introduce yourself in a few lines.

My name is Salah Al-Zaben and I come from Kuwait. I graduated from AUS in June 2004, with a bachelor's degree in International Relations. I began work in the Citizens Services Department in the Council of Ministers in the State of Kuwait in September 2005, and I then moved around departments within the Council. Currently, I work in the Audit Bureau Studies Department at the General Secretariat Office at the Kuwaiti Council of Ministers.

On a typical day in your position at the Kuwaiti Council of Ministers, what do you do?

I study and analyze the Audit Bureau Annual Report and then present the Council of Ministers with recommendations on how to improve various government sectors including semi-private sectors such as the Kuwait Investment Authority and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. My department conducts meetings with all the government sectors and seeks their opinions on how to improve their performances making sure that they don't face obstacles in the future.

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

I have been working for this department for more than three years now; I really enjoy meeting with people and also networking with many personnel in various sectors of the government. This improves my networking skills, as I get to meet new people every year, and learn something new. The most challenging part of my job is getting things done on time, as replies from Ministries usually take time and this affects the deadlines of my report submissions to my department.

How did studying International Studies help prepare you to being successful in this job?

Studying at AUS has built in me confidence, and has strengthened my communication skills. Studying international relations at AUS helped me to learn how government organizations work, and also what I can expect of those organizations. It has been a challenge for me to switch from English to Arabic during my work in the Government Performance Follow-up Agency at the Kuwaiti Council of Ministers, as I studied in English and then had to use Arabic terminology at my job, as this is the main communication medium in Kuwait.

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



I have many goals in life, mainly to serve my country by making a difference. But I also have another major goal set for my career, which is working hard to promote myself and gain a good working position in the future, and maybe become a Deputy Prime Minister one day!

What special advice would you give a person entering your field of study?

In my opinion, reading is the key to success in our field. It is always better to have knowledge from different sources. Being prepared for class at AUS is really important, and mainly if you don't understand some concept in class, do ask your professor to explain it and do further research about it, as it will positively make a difference when you understand that concept.

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

I would not change anything, but I would love to redo my experience at AUS as it has been the door to my success in my career.

What advice would you give AUS undergraduate/graduate students?

Choose your path wisely as it will affect your future a lot, and when you hit any obstacles in your path don't stop, just look at them as new experiences you learned.

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

It was the most excellent experience in my life, so I don't want you to miss it.

Tofol Al Nasr: Alumni Voices from Washington, DC



Tofol Al Nasr in a souvenir photo with Madeleine Albright in Pittsburgh in 2010

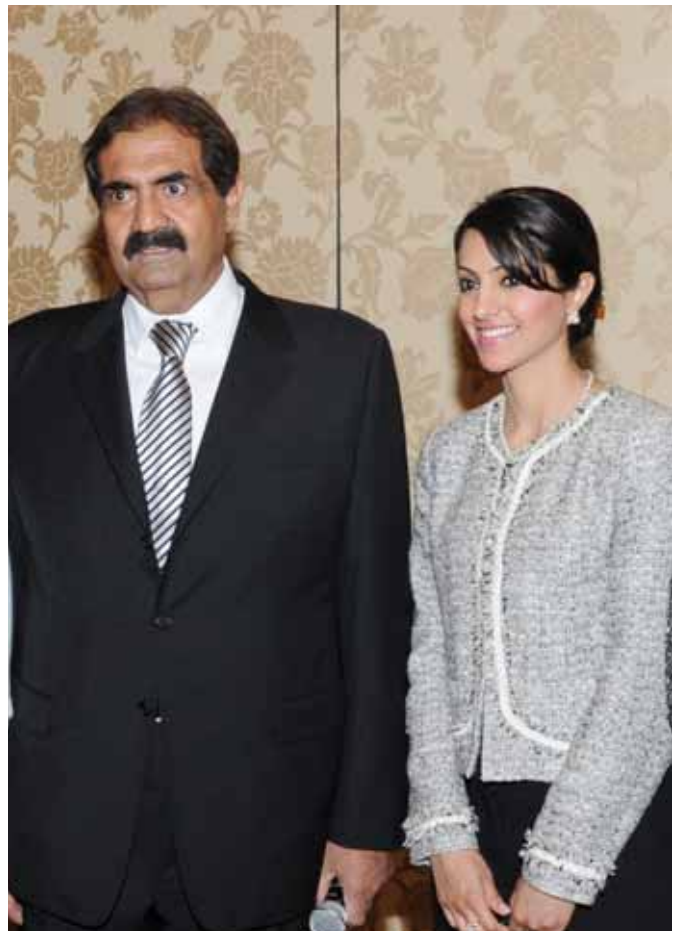
I graduated from AUS in 2006 with a bachelor's in Business Administration. Currently, I am working at ExxonMobil Corporation in Washington, DC as an International Government Relations Advisor. Previously, I served as a Senior Marketing Officer at Qatar Petroleum. While at Qatar Petroleum, I also represented the State of Qatar's interests on the Economic Commission Board at the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, United Nations, and other international bodies.

After that, I pursued a Master's degree in International Commerce and Policy at George Mason University in Virginia. Parallel to my Master's degree coursework, I was also a contributing editor to Qatar's English-language newspaper, The Peninsula. In addition I contributed articles to scholarly journals and daily newspapers like Abu Dhabi's The National. Meanwhile, I worked with the Embassy of Qatar in Washington, DC as a Congressional Affairs Officer. That position entailed that I spend most of my time on Capitol Hill organizing events

and receptions in honor of high-level Qatari dignitaries, including His Highness the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani.

I also serve on the board of several business councils, facilitating trade between the US and European and Eurasia countries, and I was the founding member of Qatar's Women's Association.

Looking back, my academic career at AUS was one of the best experiences of my life. It was a remarkable time where I learned in an encouraging yet challenging environment, and formed extraordinary friendships that I still maintain to this day. Although my friends from AUS and I live and work in different parts of the world now, we visit each other as often as we can, and keep one another up to date about our lives.



Tofol in a souvenir photo with H.H. Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of Qatar in Washington, DC in 2011

Alumni Spouses Share Their Experience at AUS



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

Samer El Gamal, an AUS alumnus, graduated from AUS twice. The first time I graduated with a BSc in Electrical and Electronics Engineering in Spring 2003. My second graduation was in Spring 2011 as a holder of an MSc in Engineering Systems Management. With regards to my work experience, I have been working with Emirates Telecommunications Corporation (Etisalat) since completing my BSc in 2003.

Hana Abou Khreibeh. I graduated as a computer engineer from AUS in Spring 2004, then pursued my masters degree in Engineering Systems Management at AUS and graduated in Spring 2011. I am currently working as an Application Support for an oil and gas company (ZADCO) located in Abu Dhabi and have been there since March 2007. Before that I worked for almost two years as a System Engineer in an IT networking company (Beta IT) located in Dubai.

You had an exciting educational career at AUS. What were some of your peak experiences together along this educational trail that motivated you to keep going?

Hana: I believe that AUS provides quality education and continuing with my masters degree has really enlightened me and widened my horizons. The ESM professors shared a lot of their professional and personal experiences, which added value to the theoretical part of the courses. One of the key things that motivated me to complete the relatively tough

requirements of the ESM program was doing it with my husband.

Samer: In addition to Hana's comments, I would say that the sincere commitment that you sense in each class or activity you attend at AUS makes you always want to keep going, not only to achieve but to excel.

Do you think working on your MS degree after marriage was harder or easier than studying while being single? Why or why not?

Hana and Samer: It was definitely harder. As a married couple we had a lot of additional responsibilities that we didn't need to worry about while being single and doing our bachelors. There is the responsibility of taking care of each other's needs along with taking care of the house. There is the social responsibility towards parents (from both sides), relatives, friends, and even acquaintances. There is the responsibility towards the office work and our careers. However, the support we provided for each other definitely made this trip easier.

What were subject areas outside of your major that you found particularly exciting and worthwhile?

Samer: During my undergraduate study I was always interested in management studies. That was one of the reasons that I chose Engineering Management to be the topic of my MSc. Nowadays, I feel that I need to focus more on topics that relate to the social sciences, human nature, and the analysis of human activities.

Hana: I would say that the best additional experience that I had during my MSc is becoming a mother, although it is a lot of hard work!

What were some of your favorite class(es) at AUS? Why were they your favorite?

Hana and Samer: HR Management (ESM course) was particularly interesting because it touched on human nature and preferences and gave guidelines on how things should be done to motivate and get the best out of the main assets of organizations (i.e. the employees).

Innovation and Entrepreneurship (MBA course) was also interesting because it provided guidelines on how to build a business plan for those who are interested in initiating their own businesses.

Working on our MSc professional projects and taking it from the proposal phase to the defense phase was an unforgettable experience as well.

What extra-curricular activities were you involved with?

Samer: I was always involved in student clubs and organizations throughout my undergraduate studies at AUS. Continuously participating in Global Day activities and working on student gatherings throughout the year were some of the tasks I took part in. During my undergraduate years, I was placed on the student activities honor list twice. During my MSc studies, I was focused on my family, the MSc, and the AUSAA.

When you were students, what did you like to do for fun (outside of the classroom)?

Samer: Hang out with friends as an undergrad. However, during my MSc, my best moments were the ones spent with Khalid, my son.

Hana: Spend time with the family, especially when the weather was pleasant.

What was your most memorable involvement at AUS?

Hana and Samer: During our undergraduate years, the Global Day preparations and "cleaning" up afterwards were the most memorable moments. After graduation, developing the provisional constitution of AUSAA and then the permanent one were among the most important contributions I had.

Samer, as the representative of the AUSAA Abu Dhabi Chapter, what are your responsibilities?

As Abu Dhabi Chapter representative, I act as the focal point of communication between AUS alumni in Abu Dhabi and their alma mater. Enhancing communication in addition to strengthening the relationships among the alumni themselves through the initiatives and activities that are organized by the Abu Dhabi Chapter Committee is another major aspect of my work.

How did you get involved with the Alumni Association?

Being involved in student activities at all levels during my undergraduate studies became part of my personality. My involvement with AUSAA started in the summer of 2005 when my friend Mahmoud Ghaith, who had just been elected as the new president of the Alumni Association at that time, asked me if I would be interested in working on taking the AUSAA towards a level that would properly reflect and represent AUS alumni. Since then, I have been involved with AUSAA in all its phases.

What would you tell recent graduates about getting involved with AUSAA?

AUSAA is an important platform to share ideas, thoughts, initiatives as well as resources among AUS alumni. It is the best forum for AUS alumni to work on promoting their alma mater's image as a center of excellence and hence improve their value in society as well as the job market. Working with AUSAA can also help us work together to bridge the gap and create a better match between the excellent academic environment of AUS and the outside business world.

Is there anything you would like to share with our readers?

"It is the obstacles in our journey to excellence that make the journey worthwhile," that is my belief.

AUS To Introduce A Degree In Industrial Engineering

The American University of Sharjah (AUS) is planning to introduce an Industrial Engineering degree that aims to enhance the quality of education within the College of Engineering (CEN) and at AUS generally. The new degree will provide a general technical education that will qualify AUS graduates for employment in the local manufacturing environment.



22

According to AUS Provost, Dr. Thomas Hochstettler, the program focuses particularly on those areas of need that are reflected in the current market for skilled labor in Sharjah and the UAE as a whole. "This is an example of AUS finding ways to be responsive by expanding the engineering curriculum for a profound effect on the commercial sector of the UAE," said Dr. Hochstettler. An extensive survey of local employers, human resource specialists, and alumni working in local manufacturing and commercial enterprises reveals that the two primary areas of need at the present time and for the foreseeable future are the following: Supply Chain and Logistic Engineering and Quality and Maintenance Engineering. "We used the resources we have available to fulfill the economic growth of the nation," added the Provost.

With the ever increasing demand for greater efficiency in manufacturing and distribution systems, the local economy is snapping up every graduate who has some degree of training in supply chain management, including not only alumni from the College of Engineering but also those students from the School of Business and Management who have trained in the specific area of supply chain management. By focusing the curriculum on supply chain engineering, AUS

will be responsive to the need for well-trained engineers in the important technical field of logistics process optimization.

"This will be an attractive major to students, particularly to Emirati students who would like to combine engineering and management as this will create additional opportunities for collaboration between CEN and the faculty in SBM, expanding upon the collaborations that already exist," added Dr. Hochstettler. Moreover, with the implementation of the full-fledged major in Industrial Engineering, AUS anticipates ever increasing opportunities over time for cross-listing and cross-teaching of courses with faculty in the Departments of Management and Management Information Systems.

Furthermore, Dr. Hochstettler explained that there is a growth in the labor market for positions in the field of quality planning, which focuses on pre-emptively and proactively engaging in the incorporation of decisions concerning the quality of the end product in the production process itself. The program that AUS has designed will provide specific training for students to be able to move into such positions immediately upon graduation. The traditional skill sets associated with quality monitoring and

quality control will also be taught as part of the industrial engineering major, with a particular focus on local industries.

Through the medium of internships and work opportunities, AUS envisions a close collaboration with local businesses in creating a degree that will be immediately and concretely responsive to local conditions. "This degree has the potential to enhance the reputation of AUS both in the Emirate of Sharjah and the UAE as a whole, in delivering relevant higher education. It is important to remember that AUS is an ornament to Sharjah and this enhancement will help us to be responsible for supporting the vision of this institution," remarked the Provost.

Dr. Hochstettler also noted that as the infrastructure of the local economy becomes more mature and begins to age, it is very natural that graduates who can readily move into maintenance engineering—as opposed to construction engineering and related fields—will become ever more in demand. "Our curriculum in industrial engineering has been specifically designed to provide training in maintenance management. We further envision that this aspect of the major will evolve over time as the industrial base of the UAE continues to grow and develop," he stated.

Finally, the Provost expressed his gratitude to the AUS Board of Trustees for their sustained interest in pursuing high quality programs, like the degree in Industrial Engineering, and for their continuous support to AUS. "The AUS degree in industrial engineering will become a critical element in the success of the local economy to remain competitive within the global context," remarked Dr. Hochstettler.

Where Are You Now?



Rania Zalami
SBM, '07

I completed my bachelor's in Business Administration at AUS and am currently pursuing my MBA at AUS as well. I am also working full-time as an Account Manager at Meltwater Group, where I have to manage over 100 client accounts. Each client has their own needs; therefore, I am required to understand the clients' industries and make independent decisions in situations that demand immediate attention. During my undergraduate studies, I discovered my real interest in the fields of finance and marketing. The required courses in SBM at AUS exposed me to the fields and allowed me to understand the fundamentals of these two subjects. In my current position, I constantly need to apply what I learned at AUS to be able to manage my day to day responsibilities.

Despite the fact that I feel my biggest achievements are still ahead of me, I am proud to have received a bachelor's degree. I believe it has opened the door to many opportunities and I will have even more opportunities once I receive my MBA. My biggest challenge so far has been to balance my MBA, work and personal life. Time management is something that I need to practice every day in order for me to be able to find the equilibrium. I am still trying to overcome this challenge by figuring out how to organize my time, priorities, and energy appropriately.

Alumna Azza Salem Al Qaseer Earns Master's Degree from the Chelsea College of Art and Design, London

Tell us a few words about yourself.

My name is Azza Salem Al Qaseer. I graduated from AUS in 2008 from the College of Architecture, Art and Design with a bachelor's degree in Visual Communications and a minor in Design Management.

What graduate program did you pursue?

I recently graduated with a Master of Arts in Graphic Design Communication from Chelsea College of Art and Design, which is part of the University of the Arts London.

Where does your interest come from in pursuing this particular field of study?

I always thought of myself as a visual observer. I 'See, Observe, Analyze, and React' to design. For the past few years, I have been dealing with design in a manner that only promotes arts and cultural events, since design is a fairly new area of study in the UAE. However, since coming to London to study for my Master's degree I have noticed the multi-faceted power of design that is visible in everyday life.

How does it relate to your previous studies at AUS?

When I was studying Visual Communications at AUS, I felt that I was studying design while being challenged by a set of rules adhering to the basic foundations of design. On the other hand, during my Master's program there was a lot of experimentation with the designs you create, which makes you become your own teacher.

What is the greatest challenge you faced as you were working on this degree?

The greatest challenge for me while pursuing this degree was integrating theory within my practice and relating it to my research, because our final outcome had to be guided by a combination of critical theory, research, and design practice.



How do you think your AUS educational background helped you in continuing your studies?

Studying design at AUS helped me a lot in my research methodologies and design concept development. Although there was not a Critical Theory course that is directly associated with design, I tried taking many diverse courses as electives to give myself a well-rounded experience at AUS. I encourage AUS CAAD students to take as many diverse humanities and social sciences courses as they can, and step out of their comfort zone because this will make them better designers.

What are your career ambitions?

I would like to own a personal design studio that will change people's generic idea of design and let them see the bigger role it plays in society without them realizing it. I would also like to start creating my own personal projects in order to maintain my design research development.

How do you think this degree will prepare you for your future work?

While studying in London, I was able to meet professionals at an international level, create a larger contact base and open my eyes to other design possibilities. I hope I can move myself forward with these new methodologies and apply them in my future prospects.

What do you hope to do now after completing your Master's degree?

I am currently enrolled in a couple of short courses at Chelsea College of Art and Design to improve my technical skills in other areas of design, especially the programs I did not have the chance to experiment with during my studies.

What do you consider to be your greatest achievement to date?

My greatest achievement to date is making my parents and family in the UAE proud of me for attaining my Master's degree with a Merit classification, since they were and will always be my foremost supporters, and without them I wouldn't be where I am now.

Professor Mark Rush, Dean of CAS, Urges Alumni to Support Students at AUS



Can you tell us about your work experience?

I have been a professor since 1990 when I received my PhD from Johns Hopkins. Prior to coming to AUS, I spent my entire career at Washington and Lee University.

Why were you interested in the deanship of CAS here at AUS?

I believe that a strong Arts and Science program is the core of any great university. The chance to work with the faculty and students presented a wonderful opportunity. I was thrilled to accept.

What do you hope to accomplish at CAS?

I hope to accomplish the goals that the Provost and Chancellor presented to me: to promote, expand, and strengthen Arts and Sciences.

Does CAS have any plans for introducing new programs?

CAS faculty are considering several new programs. A master's program in Mathematics is the principal focus at this time.

In your opinion, what distinguishes AUS's College of Arts and Sciences from its peer institutions?

Arts and Sciences at AUS is committed to the traditional liberal vision of education: free inquiry, creative discussion, interdisciplinarity, breadth, and flexibility. The challenges facing the world today can best be solved by a solid liberal educational experience. The College of Arts and Sciences' commitment to this model of education gives AUS a special depth as well as breadth and makes it a unique educational institution in the region.

How would you like alumni to help CAS achieve its goals?

Alumni can serve a university best by providing advice and support to the institution and serving collectively and individually as mentors of current students. The AUS experience links alumni and undergraduates and thereby serves as a network for students as they head out into the world. As well, the advice and trusteeship of alumni helps a university keep in touch with the world for which it prepares its students. This is a dynamic relationship. Its success depends upon the generosity and support of the alumni.

AUS Alumni Association Holds its Second Council Meeting



Vice Chancellor Nada Mourtada-Sabbah with members of the AUSAA Council in a souvenir group photo

The AUS Alumni Association (AUSAA) Council held its second bi-annual meeting for 2011 on October 21-22, as a retreat at Al Forsan International Sports Resort in Abu Dhabi. The meeting was attended by Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, AUS Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs and members of the AUSAA Board.

Around forty alumni leaders, from the GCC and across the globe, gathered to review the achievements and accomplishments of the AUSAA over the past academic year under the active leadership of its board.

The Council is made up of representatives of all the chapters of the Association as well as class representatives from each of the colleges and schools corresponding to every year of graduation.

The Council also discussed future planned activities to be undertaken by its various chapters for the current academic year. The responsibility of the Council is also to implement the rationale of the AUSAA as defined in the Constitution and By-Laws as approved by His

Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah, and Founder and President of the American University of Sharjah.

The retreat included recreational activities such as paintball, karting, horseback riding, shooting and archery as a token of appreciation for the alumni for serving as active representatives of their respective constituencies in the AUSAA and for their continuous feedback and support of their alumni association and alma mater.

Chancellor Heath expressed his profound satisfaction at the meaningful role played by AUSAA Council in bringing multi-faceted support to AUS. Vice Chancellor Mourtada, spoke of her pride at the high level of maturity and involvement witnessed from the young alumni leaders who continue to play an important role in enhancing the reputation of AUS as its youngest ambassadors from all walks of life.



Council members Amr Al Masri, Ahmed Halabi, Osama Al Aashiq, Bishr Challah, Salah Zaben and Ali Abou Khamseen



AUSAA Board members Ahmed Al Jbori, Melissa Bayik, Musbah Abu Jarad and council member Salah Zaben



AUSAA Council members during the retreat activities



AUSAA Council members during the retreat activities

Alumnus Sultan Al Darmaki of Style

Born and raised in the UAE, alumnus Sultan Al Darmaki graduated from AUS in 2004 with a degree in marketing and is now based in London operating his own company DARMAKI, which is the Middle East's first luxury footwear couture brand.

DARMAKI combines artistic and cultural influences with the excellence of superior Italian manufacturing. Its signature is truly inspirational designs, a wide range of exquisite materials, and painstaking attention to detail.

After graduation, Sultan joined Mubadala as a Senior Communications Officer, a position he holds until today. However, Sultan's passion for the fashion industry has been a part of his life since he was 10, when he used to sketch footwear and fashion. "Being indulged in the luxury industry for a very long time in the UAE, I felt that it was time to do something different, so I decided to go into women's footwear, as it has no limits to creativity," said Sultan.

The major challenge that concerned Sultan right from the beginning was local and Middle Eastern support, as fashion is not a conventional career choice for a person coming from an important Emirati family. Showing respect to the UAE's culture was very significant for Sultan given his decision to use the family name for the brand. "Culturally and traditionally, it is not always seen as acceptable to actually be involved in the fashion industry, which was one of the main reasons I held off on the idea for quite some time," explained Sultan.

DARMAKI's most significant achievement to date has been the acquisition of one of its debut designs by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London to be housed as part of its permanent collection of significant footwear through the ages. DARMAKI has also been nominated as a Global Entrepreneur by the UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) program.

Acclaimed fashion experts have described DARMAKI's designs as a "Walking Work of Art" and an "Art Installation" with styles fusing cutting edge trends and techniques with a truly feminine twist. Some of the distinguishing features of DARMAKI, which differentiate it from other designer footwear brands, are that each shoe has intricate details and incorporates an inspiring blend of rich materials giving the shoe its own unique character, as well as a challenging and innovative construction and extraordinary use of motifs. DARMAKI has also developed its own signature exotic materials which are used to evoke the custom made feel of the final product.



Sultan believes that a woman's personality is revealed through her shoes. He is inspired by beauty in all its forms with his designs transforming ephemeral beauty into wearable 'objet d'art'. Sultan is an enthusiastic and passionate designer who has reinterpreted the art of shoe design by daring to combine a breathtaking array of luxurious and rare embellishments in each design.

Asked about his plans for the next five years, Sultan explained that he and his team are concentrating on building the brand now and are planning to stock their brand at different retail stores locally and internationally, including New York, China, and Japan. His shoes are already available at retailers in UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and online on a luxury e-commerce site.

Sultan is an example of a determined Emirati pioneering in new lines of business and taking his culture out to the world through his growing international fashion brand.

First Arab Woman to Summit Mount Everest Shares her Inspiring Story with AUS Alumni and Students



Ms. Suzanne Al Houby

The American University of Sharjah organized an inspirational evening with Suzanne Al-Houby, the first Arab woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest. The event was held on November 1, at the Park Hyatt in Dubai.

Al-Houby, a Palestinian-born, UAE-based mother of two, summited Mount Everest, the world's tallest mountain, on May 21, 2011. "It is a great privilege to be known as the first Arab woman to reach the top of the world. I will never forget the moment when my dream became a reality," said Al-Houby. "I encourage you all to reach for the stars because if you dream big, you will reach your maximum potential," she added.

AUS Chancellor Dr. Peter Heath thanked Al-Houby for sharing the motivational story behind her ambition to climb both the corporate ladder and world peaks. Chancellor Heath addressed the audience stating that, "AUS takes pride in hosting inspirational personalities like Ms. Al-Houby, and events such as these motivate our students and graduates to do better and push themselves further. By organizing such events for our students and alumni, we affirm our continuous commitment



Chancellor Peter Heath with Mr. Riad Kamal and Ms. Suzanne Al Houby

to our students while at AUS and long after they have graduated. It is the aim of AUS to bring our students and alumni in contact with inspirational personalities such as Suzanne; real people they can learn from and aspire to be," said Dr. Heath.

Mr. Riad Kamal, CEO of Arabtec and Deputy Chairman of the Welfare Association, whom Chancellor Heath thanked for availing this opportunity to the AUS community, also addressed the audience, "It took 22 years after Sir Edmund Hillary (1953) for the first woman to summit Mount Everest in 1975 and it has taken 36 years thereafter for the first Arab woman to reach that mantel. It was not Everest that Suzanne A-Houby conquered but the fear within."

A lifelong mountaineer, Al-Houby is no stranger to the record books. In 2003, she became the first Arab woman to reach the Everest Base Camp. She is also the first Arab woman to scale Mount Elbrus, the highest point in Europe, and the first Palestinian woman to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak. To date, she has successfully reached the summit of the highest mountains on five of the world's seven continents.



Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah and Dean Mark Rush along with distinguished guests Mr. Samir Abdul Hadi, Mr. Amjad Dweik and Mr. Faysal Rasoul



Part of the audience

AUS Alumnae Take Part in a Summer School Program at Al Maktoum College of Higher Education, Scotland



Vice Chancellor Nada Mourtada-Sabbah with H.E. Mirza Al Sayegh, H.E. Abdulrahman Al Mutawaei, Dr. Mohammed Murad Abdalla and Mr. Nayaz Qazi

A delegation of AUS alumnae celebrated the finale of the 12th study program, for female university students from the UAE and Qatar, at Al Maktoum College of Higher Education in Dundee, Scotland during June and July 2011.

The four-week long summer program at Al Maktoum College of Higher Education, which is sponsored by H.H. Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai and Minister of Finance of the United Arab Emirates, aims to train and educate students' overall learning and understanding of the challenges of global dialogue and exchange, and prepare them as potential future leaders in their countries.

His Excellency Mirza Al Sayegh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education, gave a speech congratulating the alumnae upon their successful completion of the program. "Needless to say, the female students on the summer school program are among those being trained for future potential leadership in the Emirates, where women, as you are all aware, are more involved in government," H.E. Al Sayegh said.

"Exciting opportunities lie ahead for you and we encourage you to realize your visions and your potential in whichever path to leadership you each choose to follow; and here I pay tribute to the leaders who have built the country and

particularly Sheikh Zayed and Sheikh Rashid," he added.

Moreover, Dr. Hossein Godazgar, Acting Principal at Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education, commented on the new skills and abilities that the students have acquired and how they have learned to develop themselves as independent and autonomous individuals and as future leaders. "You have developed a new outlook on life and diverse cultures and on the challenges and opportunities that you face, and you have established new friendships and gained further social capitals," commented Dr. Godazgar.

The six alumnae who participated in the Summer School Program 2011 include: Budoor Al Amoudi (Master of Business Administration, 2009), Hind Al Ali (Bachelor degree in Chemical Engineering, 2009), Suhaila Al Falasi (Bachelor degree in Finance, 2011), Shamma Al Falasi (Bachelor degree in Visual Communication, 2010), Rawdha Mardas (Bachelor degree in Business Administration, 2008), and Hend Bin Dhaher (Bachelor degree in Business Administration, 2008).

The ceremony was attended by His Excellency Mr. Mirza Al Sayegh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education, His Excellency Mr. Abd Al Rahim Al-Marri, the Cultural Attaché at the

UAE Embassy in London, Dr. Hossein Godazgar, Acting Principal, Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education, Dr. Nada Mourtada- Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs of the American University of Sharjah, Mr. Salem Al Qaseer, Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs of the American University of Sharjah, Dr. Sulaiman Al Jassem, Vice President of Zayed University, Dr. Nabil Ibrahim, Chancellor of Abu Dhabi University, in addition to high ranking delegations from the British University in Dubai, Higher Colleges of Technology, and Qatar University.

AUS looks forward to continuous collaboration with Al-Maktoum College as it builds mutual benefits both institutions, by promoting the advancement of the study of Islam and Muslims, multiculturalism, and inter-religious dialogue through joint research and academic conferences on topics of common interest. In addition to that, AUS conveys its gratitude to Al-Maktoum College for providing AUS with the opportunity to participate once again in the symposium and to H.H. Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum for his constant support to train young women for future potential leadership in the Emirates.



Alumnae in a souvenir photo with H.H. Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum and Vice Chancellor Nada Mourtada-Sabbah

Below are some quotes from the AUS alumnae who went on this program:

"Summer school at Al-Maktoum College was quite interesting and full of knowledge. The journey was enjoyable too because it was a mix of academic projects, such as the presentations that we had to prepare, and the places we visited in different parts of Scotland. Both the projects and the trips contributed to our knowledge. The training at Al-Maktoum College started by teaching us some Scottish vocabulary, which I believe was extremely important to communicate with members of the college in addition to others, such as the hotel staff. We were asked to work on three different projects. Additionally, we attended lectures that revolved around leadership, culture, religion, and many other remarkable topics. As for the visits and trips that we had, the visit to the Scottish Parliament was such a new experience. We were very fortunate to attend a debate that was held between two ministers, and we had the opportunity to talk to the Minister of Health and Sports. Overall, the journey was full of new experiences and new friendships that I'll always remember!"

Suhaila Al Falasi
(Bachelor degree in Finance, 2011)

"Often I seek inspiration and seize the chance whenever an opportunity knocks on my door. The phone call I got from the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs about Al Maktoum College Leadership Program in Dundee, Scotland, could not have come at a better time. During our stay there, every day meant new discoveries that varied such as the Scottish culture, its parliament, and educational system. And of course I cannot forget Scotland's spectacular cities and breathtaking nature. The program was an experience of a lifetime in itself! However, having the privilege of personally meeting His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah, Founder and President of AUS, and sharing a heart to heart motivational talk was the cherry on top of the six week experience."

Hend Bin Dhafer
(Bachelor degree in Business Administration, 2008)

Dr. Fadi Aloul, An Inspiring Professor to AUS Students and Alumni

Dr. Fadi Aloul is an Associate Professor of Computer Science and Engineering in the College of Engineering at AUS, he has been at the University since 2004. Dr. Aloul received his PhD in Computer Science and Engineering from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Committed to excellence in teaching, research, and service, he expects nothing less than the very best from himself and his students. His goal is to make a difference in education in the UAE. He strongly believes that education is the foundation of all great societies and investing in the intellectual evolution of a nation is essential to the success and sustainability of its society. He hopes that his past, present, and future ventures will always contribute to helping establish the UAE as a fully developed knowledge-based society.

He has recently been on a winning streak with three prestigious awards under his belt – the 2009 Sheikh Khalifa Award for Excellence in Higher Education, 2011 AUS CEN Excellence in Teaching Award, and the 2008 Gulf Imagine Cup organized by Microsoft. Dr. Aloul took some time from his busy schedule to share some of his thoughts with our readers.



across the country, and then selected you as the overall winner?

I look at teaching as a hobby and not a job and this actually motivates me. It is worth noting that I teach the course 'Introduction to Engineering and Computing', which is a class of 400 students per semester. I like to treat my students as my younger siblings. Respecting and getting to know my students can help me gain their trust and improve the learning environment. Doing my best to simplify the subject to make it enjoyable and easy to understand is very important. I try to mix theory with practical lessons from their everyday life practices, especially for their age group. I tend to use the social media, e.g. facebook, in addition to the latest technologies in animated presentations and videos to enhance the learning experience of the students. These methods tend to excite students in class, make them participate more, and be more creative. It is always a challenge to keep the attention of a class of 400 students and that is the reason I try to keep them engaged all the time. One of my latest teaching methods is having the students engage in lectures using their mobile phones. An example would be to display a challenging question for the students on a screen and give them the chance to SMS their answers. The first few winners receive bonus points. The students enjoy this exercise and always make sure to have phone credit before coming to my lectures!

32 **Someone with your credentials would have many opportunities around the world. What attracted you to the UAE and to AUS?**

I was raised in the UAE, and completed my university studies, BS, MS, and PhD degrees in Michigan. In 2003, I visited AUS and was impressed by its beautiful campus and its high standards. It was a new non-profit university whose goal was to deliver excellent education to its students and develop the students' professional skills to succeed in life. It blended the higher education model of the US with the culture and heritage of Sharjah. The university's environment was amazing and encouraged the faculty and students to excel in education. No wonder it attracted the best faculty, staff, and students.

More importantly, I was inspired by the vision and dream of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah, and President of AUS, when he built University City, which is meant to be a huge project to last for generations to come with a mission to become a UAE-based top worldwide educational institute. I had to be part of this mission and help bring it to reality.

Obviously you must enjoy the classroom or the IT laboratory to have received the H.H. Sheikh Khalifa, UAE's President Award for Higher Education. What are some of the special teaching techniques that you believe placed you in the top category of educators

What are some of the courses that you teach and projects that your students worked on?

I established an elective course in 2005 called 'Computer and Network Security'. In this course, the class project has to be about a topic that will not end up getting shelved, but rather an idea that can be used in the real world. I also encourage the students to use their projects in competitions and publish their work in the media and in scientific journals. I believe this will help the students in their future plans, whether it is continuing their graduate studies, joining industry, or starting their own business. In fact, many of my students have received awards and published articles at international conferences. For instance, my team of four students won the 2008 Microsoft Imagine Cup Gulf Competition, for designing a wireless device that can efficiently track the pollution levels in the city. The device was called PolluMAP. The device can be used by governments, companies, and NGOs. My students were invited to France to present their project at the World Finals.

In an "information age," it would seem that having the capacity to break into other countries' information banks would be a vital way to keep ahead of rivals. Do you envision IT espionage to almost outpace conventional warfare in upcoming decades? If so, why or why not?

I am a professor of security and my favorite quote is: "the first thing you learn about security is that nothing is secure!" I developed the course I teach on IT security from scratch and I am pleased that it is one of the courses that is in great demand. My students and I are actively involved in research projects that seek to find ways to reduce cyber attacks and increase IT security awareness among the residents of UAE. An example was the annual UAE War Drive project that we launched in 2006. The idea is to study the security settings of wireless access points in UAE. It is easy to steal data or hack into insecure wireless access points since you don't need to be physically attached to the access point. The students studied the trend of insecure wireless access points over the years and published the data, in addition to the recommended security settings in various media articles. The good news is that most UAE residents today are aware of the security threats associated with wireless access points and have enabled advanced security settings.

Interestingly, statistics show that as of 2006, the returns of cybercrime exceeded illegal drug crimes. As cyber attacks are increasing, hackers today are actively targeting the weakest link: the computer users. Everyone should continuously educate themselves on the latest IT security threats and ways to protect themselves. The demand for IT security consultants is increasing and I encourage students to consider this field.

What is the IEEE and what do you do in your capacity as the IEEE UAE Gold Chair?

IEEE stands for the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. It is an international organization dedicated to advancing technological innovation and excellence for the benefit of humanity. The 'GOLD Chair' refers to the Graduates of the Last Decade in UAE. I founded IEEE GOLD in 2005 and it includes over 200 members who actively volunteer in organizing seminars, conferences, and workshops. In 2007, I launched the annual IEEE Made-In-UAE Competition which attracts professional entrepreneurs and innovators to share their ideas and help them bring them to reality. The main aim of the Made-In-UAE competition is to turn the UAE into a knowledge-based producer, made in the UAE and sold internationally. In 2010, I launched the first Graduate Forum in the Middle East, which was held at the IEEE GCC conference. The Forum attracts Masters and PhD students to display their graduate work in a poster session. The students get to interact with faculty, students, and professionals to help them get feedback about their research work, build professional networks, and help them find jobs or continue their graduate education. The Forum is the place to learn about the latest research project ideas in the region.

What were some of your major awards and accomplishments throughout your professional career?

In addition to the three major awards, the 2009 Sheikh Khalifa Award for Excellence in Higher Education, the 2011 AUS CEN Excellence in Teaching Award, and the 2008 Gulf Imagine Cup organized by Microsoft, my research interests cover mainly computer security and design automation and optimization. This has led to 85 publications, one US Patent, several research grants, and being a renowned speaker at international conferences in my field of expertise.

What advice do you give to the students you teach about studying engineering?

I always advise my students to choose something that they like, learn as much as they can during their university years, even if they make mistakes as they will learn from them. Work hard but also work smart. If you believe in something go ahead and do it, take your time and gain the skills to make it successful.

What activities do you enjoy doing outside of teaching and research?

I am a family-oriented person and other than my work, I spend most of my time with my two young children. I also enjoy travelling and like to learn about new cultures and people.

AUSAA Launches the Alumni Ramadan Events Series



Vice Chancellor Nada Mourtada-Sabbah with AUSAA Founding Board President Sheikh Mohammed Al Qassimi, Former AUSAA President Eisa Al Ali and members of the AUSAA Board, Dubai Chapter and Events Chapter

The American University of Sharjah Alumni Association (AUSAA) and the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA) organized a series of events throughout the month of Ramadan. The purpose of these events was to build on the strong relationships between AUS graduates, their fellow alumni, and their alma mater during the holy month.

The first event was a Sharjah Ramadan Iftar on August 17th that brought 550 AUS alumni back to the main campus. This was a significant percentage of the total alumni who have graduated during the past few years and who now live in dozens of countries. AUS Chancellor, Dr. Peter Heath, expressed his gratitude at seeing so many of the alumni journey back to what he termed "their academic home."

Dr. Heath also congratulated the Alumni Association on the wide range of activities that brought together alumni from far and wide this year under the umbrella of the University's Office of Development and Alumni Affairs. "The goal of the AUSAA is to actively involve as many alumni as possible. The AUSAA is the most active alumni group in the Gulf," Dr. Heath pointed out, and he invited all alumni to actively participate.

"The many opportunities of the Alumni Association, like leadership on the Board, the Council, as well as the very active chapters are excellent ways to hone your leadership skills while assisting your Association and University," he remarked. The Chancellor also commended the very active chapter leaders of the Alumni Association, including alumnus Farid Abdullah (Dubai Chapter), alumnus Samer Al Jamal (Abu Dhabi Chapter), and alumnus Rami Jaber (Events Chapter), as well as Ali Abu

Khamseen and Bishr Challah from the regional chapters in Kuwait and Syria respectively.

Dr. Heath extended his gratitude to MAF Dalkia, Pepsi Co., and Emirates NBD, for their generosity in sponsoring the well-attended Iftar. As with most of the alumni events, seriousness of purpose was mixed with celebration and good-natured fun, including raffle prizes being awarded.

In welcoming the alumni back to AUS, Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, noted that "Although the holy month is a particularly busy time for family and friends, the sheer number of returning graduates for this first Iftar shows the very special place AUS holds in the alumni's identity. A university family trains students in how to evaluate the world around them so that they may make the necessary improvements for society when it comes their turn to assume the mantle of leadership. Superbly trained young workers will make the critical difference in devising new solutions for your companies and for your countries to push beyond economic slowdowns that may materialize from time to time." Dr. Mourtada-Sabbah also commended the first elected Board of the Alumni Association for their energetic efforts in presenting a wide variety of events and programs.

On behalf of the AUS Alumni Association, AUSAA Vice President Musbah Abu Jarad reviewed the most memorable achievements of the year. He invited his fellow alumni to join one of the many active chapters. "Our activities are both skill building and fun, and especially under the proactive presidency of Sheikha Azza Al Nuaimi, the new AUSAA President," he commented. Vice President Abu Jarad likened the style of the

Association to “rolling up your sleeves and taking on tasks that a young graduate would have only imagined but would not have thought possible. The AUSAA, however, is the vehicle with the talent and resources to make anything happen.”

As the distinguished guest of honor of the Iftar, Mr. Khalifa Bin Braik, Vice President of Sharjah Holding, discussed how the AUS graduates could continue to perfect their fine leadership skills, along with AUS’s famous “can-do-attitude,” to succeed in the marketplace. He also reviewed the essential tenets of entrepreneurship from the perspective of the many business divisions of Sharjah Holding.

Guest speaker Mr. Maher Al Aghbar, Business Development Director for the Middle East at

MAF Dalkia, introduced the alumni to the wide-ranging operations available for them at MAF Dalkia. The firm is looking forward to employing several AUS graduates. Representatives of sponsoring companies attended to meet with alumni, including alumnus Ibrahim Fikri, HR Manager Emirates NBD, and alumna Reema Al Shamekh GCC Beverages BU, PepsiCo, as well as Samir Cardy, Business Development Manager MAF Dalkia, Samir Mukatash, HR Director MAF Dalkia, Radia Boussalia, Marketing and Communications Manager MAF Dalkia.

The AUSAA Abu Dhabi Chapter organized the second Alumni Iftar this year on August 20, at Park Rotana Abu Dhabi. This event hosted more than 200 AUS alumni.



Chancellor Peter Heath presents a token of appreciation to Mr. Khalifa Bin Braik in the presence of Vice Chancellor Nada Mourtada-Sabbah and Musbah Abu Jarad



Chancellor Peter Heath presents a token of appreciation to Mr. Maher Al Aghbar

Distinguished guest speaker, Mr. Sultan Al Hajji, Vice President of Institutional Development at Total UAE, addressed the audience of AUS alumni in an inspiring speech about the importance of having a clear 'vision' to the future. He also encouraged them to continue to challenge themselves in order to reach their maximum levels of creativity and productivity.

Alumnus Samer El GamaL, AUSAA Abu Dhabi Chapter Representative, also welcomed the alumni to the second Abu Dhabi Chapter Iftar. He shed light on the major activities that the Abu Dhabi Chapter undertook during the past year and encouraged alumni to join the Abu Dhabi Chapter. The Abu Dhabi Iftar concluded with the awarding of valuable raffle prizes.

Furthermore, the AUSAA Events Chapter, with the support of AUSAA Dubai Chapter, hosted a Dubai Suhoor at Al Asateer Tent at the Atlantis Hotel on August 24. The 150 alumni who attended were greeted by Dr. Mourtada-Sabbah, AUSAA Past President Sheikh Mohammed Faisal Al-Qassimi,

AUSAA Past President Eisa Al Ali, and members of the AUSAA Board, chapter representatives, and committee members. The purpose of the gathering was for the alumni to get together with their old friends and build social and business relationships with their new fellow alumni.

The Alumni Ramadan Events Series concluded with the Second Annual Ramadan Sports Tournament organized by the AUSAA Events Chapter with playoffs for men's and women's basketball and soccer.

This year's tournament included nine teams for the Male Soccer Tournament, four teams for the Male Basketball 'Street ball' Tournament and four teams for the Female Basketball 'Street ball' Tournament. The games were held on August 15, 16, 22 and 23, 2011 at the Dubai American Academy in Dubai.

This tournament drew on the alumni camaraderie and their wish to participate in healthy social practices during the holy month.



Chancellor Peter Heath and Vice Chancellor Nada Mourtada-Sabbah hosting Mr. Sultan Al Hajji along with alumni Musbah Abu Jarad and Samer El Gamal



Vice Chancellor Nada Mourtada-Sabbah and alumnus Abdullah El Shazly along with members of the AUSAA Abu Dhabi Chapter



Chancellor Peter Heath and alumnus Samer El Gamal along with members of the AUSAA Abu Dhabi Chapter



Vice Chancellor Nada Mourtada-Sabbah with AUSA Founding Board President Sheikh Mohammed Al Qassimi, and Former AUSA President Eisa Al Ali



Dr. Peter Heath, Mr. Sultan Al Hajji and alumnus Samer El Gamal



Guests at the Dubai Suhoor



Guests at the Dubai Suhoor



Guests at the Dubai Suhoor



Guests at the Dubai Suhoor



Second Annual Ramadan Sports Tournament



Second Annual Ramadan Sports Tournament



Second Annual Ramadan Sports Tournament



Second Annual Ramadan Sports Tournament

AUS Alumnus Represents UAE as International Advisory Committee Member at Prestigious International Conference in Malaysia

Alumnus Dr. Wael Saleh Becomes the Founder and Chairman of UAE Society for Trenchless Technology

Dr. Engineer Wael Mouin Saleh, AUS alumnus '01, who is the first AUS graduate to receive a PhD, has recently been appointed as a member of the International Advisory Committee for the Malaysian International NDT Conference and Exhibition 2011 (MINDTCE 11), scheduled to be held from 21 to 22, November 2011 in Port Dickson, Negri Sembilan, Malaysia. His contribution as an International Advisory Committee Member alongside nine other highly esteemed members will give extra leverage to the prestige of this conference and attract participation from various parts of the world. The other members of the Advisory Committee include: one member from USA, one from Russia, one from China, one from Japan, one from Australia, two members from Korea, and one from Singapore. This conference is supported by the Malaysian Nuclear Agency and other Malaysian governmental entities. Dr. Saleh's travel to the conference will be sponsored by the AUS Alumni Association.

Dr. Saleh has also been appointed as the founder and chairman of the UAE Society for Trenchless Technology (UAESTT). Trenchless technology covers any techniques, processes or procedures, including the equipment, machines and materials involved, which minimizes or eliminates the need for surface excavation or reduces environmental damage or reduces the associated costs for underground work. It deals with the installation, maintenance, and repair of underground

services and utilities. UAESTT is affiliated with the International Society for Trenchless Technology (ISTT) in the UK and the US and shares the same basic concerns for the environmental and social costs of utilities trenching. UAESTT will be the first Trenchless Technology society in the GCC and Arab countries.

Dr. Saleh's PhD research was sponsored by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah. He has been the only associate editor for the ASCE Journal of Pipeline Systems Engineering and Practice from the GCC for over a year. Dr. Saleh has received a number of awards and accolades for his research, including UK Honorary University Fellow, and the Young Scientist Bursary Award at the 2004 Conference on Precision Electromagnetic Measurements, London, UK, where only 20 scientists were chosen worldwide. Furthermore, he was a presenter at Britain's Top Younger Engineers presentation, where he was among 95 of Britain's top young research engineers from university and industrial research laboratories, who presented their work at the House of Commons, UK; and he was the only scientist from the UAE to receive an invitation letter from the conference chairman to attend the International Symposium on Microwave Technology, Fukuoka, Japan. Dr. Saleh obtained his PhD in Electrical Engineering from the University of Exeter in 2007, and he won the UK Advanced Technologies Research Institute Award for the best PhD thesis.

AUS Graduates Shine at Cityscape Global Awards for Architecture in Emerging Markets 2011



Alumnus Naji Muneer receiving an award at Cityscape Global Awards

American University of Sharjah (AUS) alumnus Naji Muneer was recently announced the winner of the Young Architect category at the Cityscape Global Awards for Architecture in Emerging Markets. AUS alumni Kelly Anastassiou and Yara Zakharia were the runners up. All the shortlisted projects for the Young Architect Award were by alumni of CAAD.

Established in 2002, the award is the most high profile architectural event in the region and recognizes architects and developers who have shown excellence in design and rewards them for their outstanding achievements and performance in architecture. The winners are chosen based on their forward thinking vision in architecture and design.

The nominees for the Young Architect category included Naji Muneer with his project "Rejuvenation Refuge," Harsha Sharma with "Panoptican Theatre and Museum of Gold," Sara Al Khawaja and her project "Caravan Serai," Kelly Anastassiou and Yara Zakharia with "Boundaries of a Deployable Structure" and Wasib Mahmood with his work "Bank of Sharjah Headquarters."

This is Muneer's second award recently. He won the "Opulence" category at the Emirates Airlines' Skywards Future Artist competition as well.

AUS Alumna Wins Honors At The 14Th European Microwave Week

AUS alumna Mai Ali has won third prize in the Student Challenge Competition at the 14th European Microwave Week, which was held in October in Manchester, United Kingdom. Mai received her Masters of Science in Electrical Engineering degree with distinction from AUS, in the fall of 2010.

Mai teamed up with two students from Stanford University and produced a poster entitled "Safe House." The poster summarizes her research done at AUS under the supervision of Dr. Lutfi Albasha and Dr. Hasan Al-Nashash, faculty members from the AUS Department of Electrical Engineering, along with research from published papers in the European Microwave Conference (EuMC). The team chose the theme, "Technology for Aging Population" and they used it to create their 'safe house' poster comprising a glucose monitoring system, a heart rate monitoring system and a fall detection system.



"This award is a real honor," said Mai. "I hope it will help bring focus to our winning project. Our safe house will allow elderly people to continue living in their homes and still be safe as all these state-of-the-art monitoring systems will be sending continuous signals to their doctors to enable the doctors to monitor their health and safety electronically," she said.

European Microwave Week is the premier event in this field in Europe featuring the European Microwave Conference, the European Microwave Integrated Circuits Conference and the European Radar Conference.

Alumni Sister and Brother Share their Educational Experiences



Aditi Vora



Chirag Vora

40

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

Aditi: I graduated from AUS in 2002 with a bachelor's degree in Interior Design. I then pursued an MA in 3-Dimensional Design, specializing in Furniture Design, in 2003 at Kent Institute of Art and Design, UK. I have worked with various architecture firms since graduating including: Kamal Malik Architects in Mumbai, Design Cell in Kolkata, and Watt International in Dubai. In those firms I worked as a senior interior designer for projects including shopping malls, corporate interiors, residential apartments, luxury villas, and five- star hotels. Moreover, I started my own company in January 2011 called 'AVN Interior Architects' and have successfully completed a Thai Spa, a residential project, and the Kalimati Speech and Communication Centre in Dubai. On-going projects include a college in Gujarat, India, corporate offices, and luxury residential apartments in Mumbai, India. I have also been an associate member of the prestigious Indian Institute of Interior Designers (IIID) since 2009.

Chirag: I graduated from AUS with a degree in Business Administration in 2005, specializing in marketing and finance. I am currently the director of two businesses: Bafleh Jewelry and Art Gelato. Bafleh Jewelry is our family business;

it was established in 1992, and became one of the leading wholesale jewelry stores in Dubai. Over the years Bafleh has emerged from a mere wholesaler to being an icon in the jewelry industry. The product line consists of a perfect combination of traditional classics as well as fashionable modern accessories suitable to meet all needs. The jewelry is fabricated in various parts of the world such as Singapore, India, Italy, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Kuwait. We are currently operating from three offices at The Gold Centre building in Deira. Art Gelato is a self-made brand, where we produce and sell fresh Italian gelato and frozen yoghurt. We currently have a store in al A Diyaffa Street in Dubai and we will soon be opening branches in malls.

Aditi, please share with our readers what ignited the spark in you to start a new business venture and what challenges do you face?

Aditi: The years of working with various renowned architects helped me in acquiring knowledge and experience that encouraged me to start my own company. It is a big responsibility to have one's own practice, as one is accountable for everything from designing to execution of the project. It is a bigger challenge to coordinate with a design and execution team to ensure that the final product meets the client's requirements

and is a reflection of the concept that you are trying to bring to life. With a couple of projects already completed successfully and positive client feedback, my enthusiasm to take up bigger challenges keeps growing.

Chirag you mentioned earlier that you work in your family's business. What made you decide to work in the family business?

Chirag: Once you start working in your family business you realize that practical learning is the best means of gaining experience. Every day you are faced with various managerial, financial, and marketing decisions that are unique in their own way. Deciding to start a career with one's family is not an easy one. I think the main reason is that you feel it is a battle between the young generations buzzing with new ideas, versus the older experienced generations resisting change in certain working conditions. However, as time passes, the knowledge of the experienced generations along with the ideas of the youngest ones becomes the perfect combination for success.

You have had an exciting educational career at AUS. What were some of your peak experiences along this educational trail that motivated you to keep going?

Aditi: Studying at AUS allowed us to meet so many people of different nationalities including students and teachers, which was a great learning experience for me.

Chirag: The number of students in each course was limited; that gave us more room to interact with our professors. All the schools were in separate buildings, but we had to take some courses in other schools and colleges on campus, which improved our networking skills. Group studies were also good as they helped in easing peer pressure. I was so comfortable within the learning environment at AUS.

What were subject areas outside of your major that you found particularly exciting and worthwhile?

Aditi: Photography was one of the most interesting courses to me. This knowledge was really helpful in taking creative pictures of interior spaces. I used to enjoy print making class as well.

Chirag: I used to enjoy astronomy, and I also took Arabic courses while studying at AUS. My favorite class, however was marketing as it offered hands-on learning experiences, where we had

to go into the market and conduct surveys on different issues.

What extra-curricular activities were you involved with?

Aditi: I was involved in the design and writing of the first AUS Student 'Talisman', the former name of the Leopard newspaper, and participated in stage performances for AUS Global Day.

Chirag: I was the treasurer of the Indian Cultural Club for a year. I was also active at the sports complex.

When you were students, what did you like to do for fun (outside of the classroom)?

Aditi: I used to enjoy sitting at a coffee shop at AUS or in the Student Center with friends.

Chirag: Like Aditi, I used to hang out at the Student Center or use the sports complex.

What was your most memorable involvement at AUS?

Aditi: Every moment at AUS was memorable to me. There were ups and downs but studying at AUS has granted me a career that I love and an experience that was unforgettable.

Chirag: My most memorable involvement at AUS was when we went to the United States for a study tour with the School of Business and Management.

Is there anything you would like to share with our readers?

Aditi: I advise undergraduate students to enjoy every moment while studying at AUS.

Chirag: AUS transformed me into an intellectual person. It is true that education and learning is available everywhere, but being able to use the education you got and practicing it in our day-to-day business is more important, and I benefited from this advantage at AUS.

Alumna Habiba Abdulaziz, a Community Journalist and an Active Member of the AUSAA Dubai Chapter

Habiba Ahmed Abdulaziz is an Egyptian who lived in Pakistan for most of her childhood, which helped her gain the proper English accent. She graduated from AUS in 2010 with a bachelor's degree in mass communication-journalism.

After graduation, she worked in an advertising company, her family's business in Dubai, with her father in the customer service department. Part of her job was advertising. "You get to learn about local advertising in the UAE and about the taste of people," Habiba commented. From her work experience in the advertising department, she learned about what the Arab audience likes and what a Western audience prefers. "It was more than a working experience to me. I learned about the hassle you face when managing a company." Habiba believes that failure is part of success and it teaches people to be humble. "You hurt yourself by failure, but it makes you stronger."

Habiba currently works at Gulf News as a trainee community journalist. She interviews the public on various social topics. In her job, she likes to examine real-life issues, because she feels that it is part of her job to educate people about matters which might change their opinions and the point of view of the community.

During her studies at AUS, Habiba was the editor of the student newspaper, the Leopard, for three years. "I learned some Photoshop techniques, in addition to my reporting skills, which made me become very reliable, which in turn is helping me now in my job," explained Habiba.

Furthermore, she has been an active member of the AUSAA Dubai Chapter Committee for the past year. She joined this particular chapter as she felt that Dubai is an attractive location and she could connect alumni to each other so they could bond and help each other in various aspects. Habiba also hopes to introduce alumni to entrepreneurs to advise them with regards to career related issues in order to enhance the reputation of AUS.

In the future, Habiba wishes to do a documentary about people who have suffered from dyscalculia in order to educate the public on how to deal with this disability. She plans to produce videos in the Middle East mainly about people suffering from dyscalculia. Dyscalculia (or math disability) is a specific learning disability involving innate difficulty in learning or comprehending simple arithmetic.



Habiba with her sisters Arwa and Yara

Habiba also hopes, through her job as a community reporter, to raise awareness in schools and organizations around the UAE to pay extra attention to the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility and adopt it more. She also wants schools to reconsider their tuition fees as they are becoming more and more expensive, and she believes that fees should go down, as all students have the right to be educated.

Habiba enjoys working as a volunteer with several organizations. She is a member of a United Nations Program called 'We Feed Back,' a volunteer at the Wild Life Society in the USA, where she signs petitions and raises awareness for preserving wild life, and a member of the Save the Japan Dolphins Organization. In her free time, Habiba enjoys reading. A book that left an impression on her was *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold.

Habiba has two sisters currently studying at AUS, Arwa, who is studying visual communication with one year left and Yara, who is studying multimedia design with two more years to go.

Arwa participated in a school project at the College of Architecture, Art and Design and her work was exhibited during the summer at the Memefest competition, the International Festival of Radical Communication in Amsterdam. The Memefest competition explores the boundaries of communication practice, pushing for radical approaches that operate outside of the conventional advertising model.

Both Arwa and Yara look up to their eldest sister Habiba. "She (Habiba) is a good person at heart and when she works for a cause, she puts all her heart in it," said Arwa. Moreover, Yara explained that she would "not give up Habiba for anything in the world!" Habiba is also very proud of her sisters and she is always very supportive of them.

Alumni Marriages & Engagements



Yahya El Halabi and Dana Sarris



Rami and Rana El Haj



Alaa Shanableh and Dana Ibrahim

43

Alumni Baby Booms

Baby Eyan



Alumna Shireen Chaya,
SBM, '08

Baby Mohamad



Alumnus Samer ElGamal,
CEN, '03

Baby Samer



Alumna Arezou Samimi,
CAS, '05

Alumni Working at AUS



Mohammed El Shahed
Director of Student Recruitment

I completed a Master's degree in Arabic/English/Arabic Translation and Interpreting at AUS. I currently

work as the Director of Student Recruitment in the Office of Enrollment Management at the University. My main responsibilities include developing and implementing AUS's student recruitment plans and initiatives, developing and implementing effective communication plans with AUS stockholders, supervising a team of recruiters and admissions staff, providing help and assistance to the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, developing internal policies and procedures, coordinating with other academic and administrative units at AUS, and establishing and maintaining strong work relationships with local, regional, and international secondary education communities to help achieve AUS strategic objectives in terms of diversity, quality of intake, and student retention. One of the definitions of translation and interpreting is "the utilization of cross-languages communication to understand the other." The practice of translation, by itself, certainly strengthens the ability to communicate more clearly and effectively, which is indispensable for individuals and groups operating in multi-cultural environments. I believe studying and working at AUS supports this approach in a broader and professional sense.

44

Where Are You Now ?



Vivian Ibrahim
CAAD, '03

AUS – what a story to tell! After high school, I had dreams of traveling to my home country, Egypt, to study travel and tourism. However, in 1998, I somehow joined AUS to study multimedia, which initially I had no clue that I wanted to study except for the name of the degree, which intrigued me. I spent four memorable years as a student and I am proud to say that I was part of one of the first batches to enroll in the newly established university at that time. I had amazing colleagues with whom I am still friends, in addition to very friendly faculty members, who left an impression on my life. Thus, I worked as a student assistant for a certain period of time. This gave me the opportunity to more deeply understand and appreciate my major.

I graduated in May 2003 and thought my story with AUS had ended at that point. I was so wrong! I accepted a temporary position at AUS in the Continuing Education Center (CEC) as an Audio and Video Instructor, since I love filming, directing, editing, and photography. In 2005, I was contacted by my former photography professor, Tarek Al-Ghoussein, to apply for the job opening of a Photography and Print Assistant in the College of Art, Architecture and Design (CAAD). One year later, I got promoted to Senior Studio Specialist. During that period of time I managed to obtain my MA in Communication and Media Studies from the American University of London in 2007. In 2008, I left AUS and worked as an Assistant to the Dean at the College of Fine Arts and Design at the University of Sharjah.

However, my relationship with AUS was not completely over when I left it. Because two years ago, I was selected as a Class Representative for CAAD from the class of 2003. Till this day, I'm proudly serving as a Council Member in the AUS Alumni Association. It seems like AUS and I can't get enough of each other!

Five AUS Graduates Selected to Join BPG Group as Part of Their 'Be-Whatever' Graduate Trainee Program



Mr. Clark Williams with the five alumnae

Bates PanGulf Group (BPG Group), one of the largest marketing solutions companies in the Middle East, recently hired five 2011 graduates from the American University of Sharjah to join the company as part of their Graduate Training Program titled 'be-whatever'. The Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA) at AUS, along with the Department of Mass Communication, worked very closely with BPG Group to provide a campus forum where the company could present information about the program and also directly interact with interested prospective AUS graduates.

The BPG be-whatever Graduate Trainee Program focused on recruiting up to a dozen brand new graduates from leading universities across the UAE and around the world. Over 900 resumes were received from top graduates across the UAE, the Middle East, North America, Europe, and Asia. Of the final ten be-whatever trainees hired at BPG Group, 50% were AUS graduates.

The be-whatever Graduate Trainee Program is a newly introduced program wherein BPG handpicks the best and brightest graduates and then invests in their growth and learning to mould them as leaders of tomorrow. The program is based on a one-year rotation throughout several of BPG's different business units to allow the 'be-whatever' trainees to gain as much exposure and experience in the integrated departments and the communication industry as possible.

Mr. Clark Williams, Chief Operating Officer, BPG Abu Dhabi, visited the AUS campus twice and gave presentations about the program as well as BPG Group. He maintained that "be-whatever is not

just another initiative by BPG. The Group's senior management will nurture and mentor the talent, thus ensuring that they have the best start possible to become specialists in our industry and future leaders in our organization." Mr. Williams further added, "The job application and interview process for this program was exhaustive. Our goal was to hire the best available talent. It is a great reflection on AUS that so many of the university's graduates not only made our short-list, but represented up to half of all our hiring for this program."

The five be-whatever trainees are not the first AUS alumni to work at BPG Group. In 2006 BPG hired several AUS graduates to join the company in its offices in Dubai, Kuwait, and Abu Dhabi.

"The be-whatever program at BPG is an excellent opportunity for me to learn a lot in a very short period of time," said Mai Shoeib, a spring 2011 graduate in Mass Communication with a concentration in Public Relations. "Being chosen as one out of the 900 applicants also makes me realize that AUS has enabled me to gain skills that are necessary to stand out in this competitive market."

Reem Khalayli, another spring 2011 graduate in Visual Communication Design added, "I really wanted to join BPG when I learned more about the program and saw how much effort they put into choosing the be-whatever candidates. One month into my journey at BPG, I have realized that AUS provided me with the necessary skill sets to be able to work and compete effectively in the workplace. I think that flexibility at work is the key to successfully kick-starting a career as a fresh graduate."

ODAA Updates

The Office of Development and Alumni Affairs was pleased to announce two new additions to its operation late last Spring.



Hiba Fareh
Program Coordinator

I received my primary and secondary education in Jordan and obtained my BA degree in Linguistics and Translation from the University of Sharjah. Then, I decided to pursue my masters in the same field. That is when my journey at AUS began in September 2010 as a Translation and Interpreting MA student. A few months later, I was appointed as a translator for the Global Media Journal that is produced by the Department of Mass Communication at AUS. At the same time, I worked as an administrative assistant in the Dean's office of the College of Arts and Sciences, where I was able to gain outstanding experiences. Nine months later, I was fortunate enough to join the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs as a program coordinator. My duties in this position include organizing the schedule and arranging the appointments of the Vice Chancellor, arranging for development dinners, making reservations, and numerous other duties. I can't deny that my job is not an easy one, but I have to admit that it broadens my mind, expands my experience, and delineates my career. I feel that I have become more mature working at AUS. I am proud to be a student and an employee at AUS.



Ahmed Halabi
Information and Communication Specialist

I graduated from AUS in 2005 with a bachelor's degree in Computer Science. I also completed a master's degree in Strategic Marketing from the University of Wollongong in Dubai in 2009. I worked at Emaar Financial Services for five years as an IT project and support officer reporting to the IT manager. I handled the company's database along with all IT related matters. I joined AUS at the beginning of 2011. My current responsibilities as an information and communication specialist include: all the information technology related issues for the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs, the continuous update of the alumni database, alumni email accounts, the ODAA website, and communication channels between AUS alumni and ODAA. I chair the ODAA Advance Committee, the ODAA Encompass Committee, and the ODAA Information and Technology Committee. In addition to our alumni database, I also maintain a comprehensive database of companies in the UAE, the GCC, and beyond.

Alumna Sets Up Gradberry, A Careers Portal

Alumna Iba Masood, a recent graduate, has started her own online careers portal known as Gradberry.

Iba, a Pakistani national who grew up in the UAE, graduated from AUS with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration/Finance, with a minor in Marketing in 2010. Her finance degree got her a job at General Electric. However, Iba felt that it wasn't what she wanted to do.

"After graduation, we faced several issues with online careers portals, which mainly contained jobs that require 1-5 years of experience," said Iba. Consequently, she wanted to help other fresh graduates and students find employment in a tough job market, which produced her idea for Gradberry.

"Gradberry is an online careers portal, connecting employers with students, fresh graduates, and universities. My colleague, Syed Ahmed, and I are the two co-founders," indicated Iba. Syed, class of 2011, is also a graduate of AUS. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

"Our company is the first of its kind in the Middle East. Currently, there are no social recruitment portals exclusively for brand new graduates and students; they only offer internships, freelance positions, and entry level jobs. On Gradberry, companies will be able to find entry level professionals and interns. Gradberry will also give graduates the opportunity to apply for jobs with zero to two years' work experience," explained Iba.

The aim of Gradberry is to solve issues that three different entities (students, universities, and employers) are currently facing in the marketplace, and change the way they presently look for and post jobs. Employers in the Middle East are currently practicing recruitment 2.0, by simply postings jobs and not communicating with their potential candidates and brand ambassadors. According to Iba, "With Gradberry, we want to enable free flowing information and increase the various forms of communication among the three entities. There is a need for unique talent and leaders in companies, which can only be fulfilled if employers start communicating with graduates who are fresh to the marketplace."

The Gradberry website launched on September 30 and responses from employers, students, and universities alike has been phenomenal. Below are a few of Gradberry's achievements since it started operating in September:



- A network of 4000 dedicated students and graduates, growing daily;
- Over 15,000 page views on the 'coming soon' page, which was launched on September 5th;
- A facebook page with over 1,800 likes, and a twitter following of over 1,900 students and grads;
- Successfully filled several graduate vacancies at multinational organizations such as Meltwater News, tbreak.com, and digital media/PR agencies, during pre-launch, through our facebook application;
- An impressive resume database, consisting of graduates from various universities across the UAE;
- Featured on BBC World, Emirates News, Gulf News and The National.

Finally, Iba explained that for now the business is self-funded though the operating costs are low. "As for the future of Gradberry, we have several plans in place to add new features consistently to the website post launch. We aim to make the job process easier and more enjoyable, for graduates, universities, and employers alike."

Log on to www.gradberry.com to register for job opportunities.

Success Stories: Alumna Anushka Anand

You have had an exciting educational career, rising from your secondary education in Sharjah, to AUS to now working on a PhD in computer science in Chicago. You have gone a long way fast. What were some of your peak experiences along this educational trail that motivated you to keep going?

I have come to realize that the experiences that impact you in life are encounters with people - they can inspire, crush, encourage, challenge, or stimulate you. I count myself blessed to have had some incredible encounters: the AUS Computer Science (CS) professor who challenged me to do a research project, the AUS Electrical Engineering professor who spent hours helping me with a research project just because the problem was interesting, another AUS CS professor who encouraged me to take on the role of President of the ACM Student Chapter at AUS, my PhD adviser who guided (and continues to mentor) me through the academic research world, and finally, the mentor who encouraged me to create a Women in CS group at the University of Illinois at Chicago and to create/organize events that I wanted to see in order to help build a graduate student community in the CS department.

You participated in many extracurricular activities at AUS. Were there specific opportunities that opened other doors for further developing career skills?

At AUS I was a writer for the Leopard student newspaper, which was a great opportunity to meet and collaborate with students from other majors. Working with a diverse team, sharing ideas and communicating clearly were practical skills that helped me in my later exploits. Then I gained a good taste of leadership experience serving as President of the ACM Student Chapter at AUS with the support of the Computer Science department and other students. We helped host the national Programming Contest at AUS in 2003, organized field trips and seminars, and even put together a newsletter. Those were opportunities that taught me about my abilities beyond the academic realm and about identifying potential needs and creating events or opportunities to answer them. These skills have helped me during my graduate school career in Chicago where I have served as an executive officer in the graduate student government, as President of the CS Graduate Students Association as well as President of the Women in CS group. These extracurricular activities have now opened doors for my future career such as my recent selection as one of two student members of the Board of Trustees for the Anita Borg Institute for Women in Technology. This is an organization committed to encouraging the impact of women in technology internationally through the programs and events it creates and sponsors.



Would you describe your personal philosophy about “going-for-it,” meaning to take advantage of what is available? What is your motto?

I do believe in striving to do the best with what you have, when you can. So, that means having goals or dreams in life, working towards them, taking advantage of opportunities that come your way and most importantly picking yourself up, dusting yourself off and trying again and again whenever you hit stumbling blocks. A quote that has always resonated with me is one from Sabeer Bhatia, the creator of Hotmail, who said, “Luck is when opportunity meets hard work.” It’s not quite a motto but I do believe that the adventure of life is to learn, and there are endless possibilities when you see things that way.

What was your most memorable involvement at AUS?

By far, the most memorable event in my time at AUS was going to Cairo, Egypt with other Computer Science undergraduate students as part of a programming team representing AUS in the ACM Arab and African Regional Programming Contest in 2002. I praise the leadership of the CS department at the time for truly encouraging students to participate in such events. I had always wanted to visit Cairo and it was exciting to do so with friends and faculty members and then to participate in an intense contest with other teams from the region.

What subject areas outside of your major did you find particularly exciting and worthwhile?

I started my AUS chapter of life taking classes in the School of Architecture and Design as well as in Computer Science. The first design studio was grueling yet eye-opening as the professor made me appreciate the value of the question “why” as he pointed out that there is a reason behind every choice you make even if it seems like you did not think about it. I also enjoyed Psychology 101 for the basic insights into how we think and I benefited from a Public Speaking course.

You mention that you became fascinated in figuring out how the human brain works and then simulating human intelligence with computers. This sounds like mixing together all course perspectives for a Bachelors degree. Were you able to draw on your general requirements (e.g., social sciences and the sciences) to see what the brain may perceive via neural networks in Artificial Intelligence?

Courses in Biology and Psychology were good for providing basic insights into how the human brain is structured and how it functions. But so much about how the brain works in terms of information processing, understanding and assimilation on the neural-circuitry level is unknown and is being heavily researched. So I’ve learned that mimicking human intelligence artificially goes beyond simply trying to replicate the human brain in computational elements, which was the idea behind neural networks. While there might be some success in that, there is more scope for success in tackling targeted problems like vision (computer vision), learning (machine learning), motion (robotics), language processing (natural language processing), and other areas that have spawned their own computational research fields.

You, perhaps more than most, know that many brains are better than one. AUS is especially interested in what our alumni can tell us from their enriching experiences about possible new programs that AUS might consider. If you were to develop a specialization in Artificial Intelligence at AUS how might that be implemented?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a broad and wonderfully multi-disciplinary area that could bring together researchers and students from Computer Science (CS), Biology, Psychology, Linguistics, Mathematics, Design, Economics and other Engineering fields. I would create an interdisciplinary course regime housed in the CS department. Sub-problems in AI could each spawn a course with occasional guest lecturers from different departments. For instance, machine learning (the study of enabling machines to learn to solve certain problems or do specific tasks) could include guest lecturers on ideas with computational counterparts such as from Psychology on reinforcement learning and from Economics on decision theory. Similarly, a course on Natural Language Processing (the study of

enabling computers to understand language) could have guest lecturers from Linguistics on grammar and all that goes into designing computational linguistics learners. Such research is not only highly impactful but also very exciting to participate in.

Would you tell your fellow alumni, who have branched out into many different fields, how their firms might use Artificial Intelligence? How could Artificial Intelligence be of value to the economy of the UAE?

Artificial Intelligence encompasses many sub-problems with direct impact in many areas of business and industry. Consider data mining (enabling machines to find patterns in large data) and its many applications: classifying types of cancer from microarray (gene) data, predicting stock prices, detecting unexpected traffic behavior on highways, detecting fault conditions in complex systems (like manufacturing processes), analyzing community formation or identifying influential individuals in social networks. The strategy behind data mining is to understand the data (some domain knowledge), build a model to describe the problem, develop an algorithm for the specific task and validate the results of the algorithm. With the prominence of data collection these days, companies would benefit from analyzing their data for uses from (targeted) advertising to building a better product to streamlining their production process.

Briefly can you tell us what “Graph-theoretic Scagnostics” is, which is one possible topic of your PhD specialization? How might that be of use to firms in the UAE?

My PhD research is in devising visually-motivated analytical methods for detecting anomalies (outliers, abnormalities, unexpected behavior) in large data. Anomaly detection algorithms are applied to discover fraud, network intrusions, highway traffic irregularities, and other critical real-life events. My work in “Graph-theoretic Scagnostics” involved creating measures that characterized or described the shapes of point clouds (imagine a 2-dimensional scatterplot of data points). This characterization has beneficial statistical implications and could be used to find common patterns and abnormalities or unexpected associations among variables or features in data. Extending this work to large datasets as well as presenting the results in a visual environment that allows data analysts to understand the findings of automatic algorithms is the focus of my research.

Could you recommend a fairly easy to read book which gives an overview of Artificial Intelligence?

The standard textbook on Artificial Intelligence is Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach by Stuart Russell and Peter Norvig. The first chapter gives a good introduction about the research area, the sub-areas, and its history.

Alumnus Ehab Tawfik Pursues His Masters At The Johns Hopkins University



50

What graduate program did you pursue?

I recently graduated from the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at the Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore, Maryland, with a Masters of Arts in International Relations and International Economics. It is considered to be one of the world's leading and most prestigious graduate schools for the study of international relations, economics, and diplomacy.

Where does your interest come from in pursuing this particular field of study?

I think part of the interest I have in this field comes from my childhood experiences. My earliest political memory was seeing Bill Clinton on TV explaining why the US had just launched missile attacks against a pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum. Everybody was coming up with theories for why this had happened, and as a child every explanation perplexed me. The way that event commanded a local media frenzy and dominated all conversation in society intrigued me. From that time onwards, even though I could not articulate it as such at the time, I had an entrenched desire to understand state politics, state actors, and the motivations behind their behavior: why people, on both sides of the equation, did the things that they did. At home we often talked politics and whether I prompted my parents or the other way, I was always interested. As I grew up there was a lot of things going on in the world that I couldn't explain. Every time I

would pick up a newspaper or a history book I would say, "I can't explain that. Why did that happen?" The field of international relations theory is basically an attempt to develop general propositions to explain the behavior of internationally consequential actors, and because of this it became a natural home for my intellectual curiosities.

My instructors at AUS, from both the economics and the international studies department, also played a large role in allowing this interest to flourish and reinforcing it. Some of these instructors were especially inspiring. Their introductory classes were the subjects of campus gossip, and I just had to enroll to see what all the fuss was about. I was captivated from the first day of class! Through these instructors I was introduced to economics and political science and to their concepts about how the world worked. They engaged their students, intentionally brought their academic research into the classroom and helped us understand and analyze actual world problems, and the academic debates that surrounded them. These instructors were responsible for making students want to read in the field beyond course requirements. My interests in IR and economics, I sincerely owe to them.

How does it relate to your previous studies at AUS?

The graduate program in international relations and international economics that I pursued, strongly relates to my previous studies at AUS. At AUS I attained a solid foundation in economics, which was my major. Simultaneously, I also attained a strong foundation in international relations through the flexibility of the AUS curriculum. I was able to build a strong foundation in international relations by taking electives in the international studies department. I took classes on political science, international relations, international law, international organizations, American government, and a host of other classes. In a sense, my studies at Johns Hopkins University were just an extension of exactly what I was studying at AUS.

What was the greatest challenge you faced as you were working on this degree?

I guess the greatest challenge I faced, which was faced by all students in my program, was the intensity of the workload. For example, in any given week we had about 700-800 pages of required readings to cover. We quickly had to adapt by enhancing our reading skills and through teamwork; we used study groups to share the workload. I cannot overemphasize the

importance of reading skills. In fact if there is any advice I may impart to AUS students it is to read, read, and read. Juggling all of those readings, papers, assignments, presentations and maintaining a healthy social life at the same time was a real feat.

How do you think your AUS educational background helped you in continuing your studies?

I think my AUS educational background was instrumental in my success at SAIS. I was able to learn alongside and successfully compete with students who were graduates of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Cornell, Columbia and a host of other universities, primarily because of the skills and attributes I had developed at AUS. AUS is truly the leading academic institution in the region. Let's start with language. AUS has a pretty rigorous and torture-like schedule of English language graduation requirements. I think they are called ENG classes now, but when I was going to AUS they were the infamous COM classes. Everybody from my time knows them! We had to take COM 101, COM 102, COM 204, COM 225, and COM 208, and yes I remember the course codes. Registration week was an ordeal back then and I am sure is an ordeal today; it's an ordeal everywhere! At any rate, by the time we got out of these classes, we had acquired a commanding knowledge of the language and were very effective at oral and written communication.

I also think that the quantitative skills I received at AUS were important. They allowed me to excel far ahead of my colleagues with similar backgrounds. Generally speaking, the mathematical instruction I received in the AUS economics and quantitative business classes was of a high caliber. I also took pretty advanced quantitative classes in my engineering days at AUS, before I switched majors, and these proved to be invaluable for the advanced economics courses at JHU.

AUS's diverse student body was equally important for my studies in international relations. I think that even if I had not had the foundational study of IR in the international studies department at AUS, AUS would still have prepared me for advanced studies in international relations. At AUS you have friends from every nationality imaginable and every student is like an ambassador to her/his country. Some of the students were the daughters and sons of diplomats! By the time I graduated I was well aware of the different cultures, societies, economies, political structures, and foreign policies of many of the countries represented at AUS, from the US to El Salvador to Nigeria to Libya to Egypt to Iran to Turkey to India and Pakistan. In

that respect, the AUS campus environment was very rewarding. AUS is also unique in this aspect and I don't think there is any university that could boast the same level of diversity. If you have been to any of the previous Global Day events at AUS, you must know what I am talking about! I am sure that as AUS graduates progress in their careers, the AUS alumni network will expand to encompass all corners of the world!

So yes, AUS has helped me a lot. It is with great confidence that I encourage all AUS alumni and current students to pursue further studies, knowing fully that AUS has given them all the necessary tools they will require to compete with the world's brightest students in the world's finest institutions of higher learning.

What are your career ambitions?

You know things are pretty turbulent in the Middle East right now, with the 'Arab Spring' and all. When things do settle down, I think I would very much like to pursue a career in government. However, in the meantime I am contemplating a career in financial markets.

How do you think your Master's degree will prepare you for your future work?

I think that this degree has equipped me with technical research and analytical skills that will come in handy in any policy arena. The school's interdisciplinary approach to international relations has also given me a well-rounded knowledge of international economics, international financial markets, and international law, and I will be able to draw upon these in an increasingly complex international work environment. Equally importantly, the SAIS degree has given me access to one of the world's most influential alumni networks in government, foreign policy, development, and finance. I am very delighted to have such a network to draw upon in the future as I progress in my career.

What do you hope to do now after completing your master's degree?

Outside of my academic and professional careers, I have interests in neoclassical architecture, horticulture, sailing, and music, and it is my hope to see these interests flourish. If you are enthusiastic about any of these activities, or international relations, make sure you use the AUS Office of Development and Alumni Affairs to get a hold of my email!

Alumna Dr. Abeer Fahim Teaches English at AUS



After graduating from AUS in 2005, I moved to Durham, England where I completed an MA and PhD in English Literary Studies. I finished the MA with distinction and was awarded the Overseas Research Student Award to fund my PhD in American Literature. While pursuing my PhD, I taught in the English Department at Durham University for four years. I was also very active on college committees. I helped start a poetry café, an intercultural forum, and an arts society. I was also a college tutor, which gave

me the opportunity to give pastoral support to undergraduate students. Throughout my years in England, I focused on teaching and training. In addition to teaching at Durham University, I completed the CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) at Durham University, which added to my teaching experience. I also joined the DULTA program, the Durham University Learning and Teaching Award accredited by the Higher Education Academy in the UK, and after successfully completing the course at the end of October, I will be awarded an Associate-ship soon. I enjoyed presenting papers at conferences, including a conference at Oxford University and Manchester University, and meeting new people in various academic fields.

I am very happy to be back at AUS as an Assistant Professor teaching in the English Department. To experience being a professor after being a student at AUS is an amazing opportunity. I know what it feels like to be a student at AUS and I know how ambitious the students are. AUS is a great place to study, and students get all the academic and moral support they need. I have always wanted to help students achieve their goals, so I am grateful that I am in the right place. I am enjoying every day of being back at AUS. It makes all the years of hard work worthwhile. I am happy to be back to a place I love.

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.

Office of Development and Alumni Affairs
American University of Sharjah
P.O.Box: 26666, Sharjah, UAE
Tel: +(971) 6 515 2547,
Fax: +(971) 6 515 2297
www.aus.edu