

AUSconnect

The Official Newsletter of the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs



Ruler of Sharjah Appreciates AUS Development Plans

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, communicated his appreciation of the plans that are currently under consideration for future development of the university. This followed a meeting at AUS where His Highness convened with members of the AUS Board of Trustees' Development Committee and thanked them for their efforts. Chancellor Heath expressed his gratitude to His Highness the Ruler by indicating, "On behalf of the Development Committee, I would like to thank His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi for his keen interest in and constant support to the university and its future endeavors."



The Resource Development Committee of the AUS Board of Trustees comprises: Trustee Joseph Brand, Trustee Abdul Jalil Darwish, Trustee Hamid D. Jafar, Trustee Maroun Semaan, Chancellor Peter Heath, and Dr. Nada Mourtada - Sabbah (ex officio). The meeting was also attended by the AUB Vice Chancellor for Development and External Affairs, Mr. Stephen Jeffrey, and AUS Vice Chancellors Salem Al Qaseer and George DeBin. During his visit to campus, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi attended a luncheon and meeting with AUS faculty. More than 300 faculty members from all colleges and schools, CAS, CEN, SBM, and SA&D attended the meeting. The meeting was also attended by Dr. Amr Abdel Hameed, Adviser to the Ruler of Sharjah on Higher Education, and AUS Trustee Maroun Semaan as well as senior AUS officials.

Prince Turki Presents Lecture at AUS on Saudi Diplomacy



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His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, attended a special lecture delivered by His Royal Highness Prince Turki Al Faisal Al Saud, Chairman of the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, on February 1st at AUS. The lecture, entitled "Saudi Diplomacy, Past and Present," drew a large crowd that filled the main auditorium and was attended by senior government officials, Saudi delegates, media officials, faculty and staff, students, and members of the public.

Prince Turki, the former Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the US and the UK, noted that Saudi Arabia's strict adherence to a policy of non-interference in others affairs and its efforts in promoting peace and preventing the proliferation of arms in the region have played a crucial role in the country's diplomatic policy through the years. "Since the beginning, our policy has been based on diplomacy based on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the path set by Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him)," he said.

"Our focus has always been to highlight issues that are relevant to Arabs and Muslims and the challenges faced by the region," he added. "At the recently held Arab economic summit, His Majesty King Abdullah urged all countries to work together on a common platform to successfully tackle issues confronting the region, especially the situation in Palestine," he added. Saudi Arabia has pledged one billion dollars

in support of the people of Gaza. Prince Turki noted that the primary reason for the Kingdom's successful diplomatic policy is that it has been built on principles which are clear and based on truth and goodwill towards all. He added that Saudi Arabia enjoyed a special relationship with the US; however, certain policies pursued by that nation in the recent past have affected the rapport between the Arab world and America. He welcomed the new administration of President Obama and expressed hope that the relationship between America and this region will improve.

As he concluded his lecture, Prince Turki thanked the Ruler of Sharjah for inviting him to AUS and praised the university's reputation and activities. Chancellor Heath also spoke on the occasion and welcomed Prince Turki to the university. The lecture was also attended by senior university officials.

Riad T. Sadek Chair of Civil Engineering Announced



AUS has announced the Riad T. Sadek Chair in Civil Engineering at the American University of Sharjah. A distinguished Full Professor who is a leader in civil engineering with a distinguished record in teaching and scholarship will hold this chair. Mr. Riad T. Sadek, Chair of Al Habtoor Leighton Group endowed the chair with a 15 million AED gift.

AUS Chancellor Heath and Mr. Riad Sadek announced the creation of the chair at a meeting held at Mr. Sadek's office this morning. Present on the occasion was Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Assistant to the Chancellor for

Development and Alumni Affairs. An international search will be announced to identify the inaugural holder of the chair. Mr. Sadek remarked that "the American University of Sharjah has established itself as a leading institution of higher learning in the region, and its graduates continually strengthen local industries in their need to remain on the cutting edge of their product lines." Chancellor Heath emphasized that such a Chair will add additional internationally recognized stature to the faculty. "The American University of Sharjah is proud to be associated to one of the leading figures in the field of Engineering in the UAE and beyond."

Mr. Sadek has been a long time supporter of educational innovation at AUS, and especially that linking industry and university education in mutually beneficial programs --an approach to education in which AUS has excelled. Chancellor Heath and Mr. Sadek also signed an agreement for AUS senior students and recent graduates in the College of Engineering to intern at the Al Habtoor Plant in Koz. The plant has facilities for maintaining the fleet of over 700 vehicles and heavy machines. In earlier gifts, Mr. Sadek financed scholarships for academically excellent students at AUS in a variety of fields of study.

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AUS Graduates Encouraged to be Citizens of the World

Chancellor Peter Heath urged members of the Fall 2008 graduating class to play their due role in society, no matter where they live during a special luncheon held in their honor.

Dr. Heath noted that "The ideal AUS alumnus or alumna will find appropriate solutions to the task set before him/her, in not only its technological or business realms, but for its cultural setting as well." "The AUS alumnus will work and live with equal facility in the Middle East, Asia or the West. The ideal alumnus will strive to improve society, no matter where he or she lives... In short, you are a citizen of the world," he added. He reminded the students that they have been given the conceptual tools to change, as the world around them changes. "You will embrace change and make it work for you,"

said Dr. Heath. "You have the conceptual framework to be productive in different kinds of cultural settings. Remember, the UAE and AUS are microcosms of the world market and the world economy," he concluded. The event, held a day prior to commencement, was attended by members of the graduating class, faculty members, and senior officials of the university. It was organized by the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA). Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Nada Mourtada - Sabbah, Assistant to the Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, congratulated the graduates on their achievements and wished them the best in all their future endeavors. Dr. Mourtada conveyed to the students the important role of the ODAA in their futures. As she acknowledged the inevitability of change in their lives she went on to say, "the ODAA is like a permanent anchorage in this sea of constant change. It is the graduates' harbor and anchor at AUS."

His Highness Attends AUS Graduation and Prai

The American University of Sharjah has evolved into a world-class institution that is playing an active role in helping society tackle various challenges facing it, said His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah and Founder and President of American University of Sharjah. The Sharjah Ruler made these remarks while addressing the fall commencement ceremony on January 8th.

His Highness congratulated the 436 graduates on their achievements and hard work, and expressed pride and satisfaction at the evolution of AUS into an internationally recognized university. "Your university has been a pioneer institution in its interaction and cooperation with various sectors of society, providing academic expertise in successfully tackling the various challenges faced by these sectors," he said. "Today, you are receiving an internationally-recognized university degree that will open the doors to exciting job opportunities and enable

you to pursue graduate studies if you so wish, not just within the region but anywhere in the world. I am sure you feel proud of the rich cultural, academic and educational environment offered by your university, which has enabled you to gain knowledge and learn other complementary skills that have prepared you as active members of society," he added.

Sheikh Sultan said that the university has entered a new era and continues to receive international academic accreditations. "It gives me great pride to congratulate the School of Architecture and Design for receiving accreditation candidacy status from the National Architectural Accreditation Board, which makes it the first and only undergraduate architecture program outside the US to receive such status. In the recent past, we congratulated our students from the College of Engineering for a similar achievement as their undergraduate degree programs gained accreditation from the prestigious Accreditation Board for Engineering



ises University's Dynamic Role in Society

and Technology (ABET), making AUS the second undergraduate engineering program outside the US to receive such accreditation," remarked His Highness.

Chancellor Heath congratulated the graduates and highlighted the academic and peaceful atmosphere at the university. "This moment represents the culmination of many years of study and hard work, first in primary and secondary school and then at a more advanced level, at AUS. During these years you have been guided by teachers, parents, and other adults. Now you yourselves have reached the stage of adulthood, with all of the rights and the responsibilities that that word connotes. It is now time for you to enter into the world of work, family and all of the other responsibilities of adulthood," he said. "You, as a member of this group are especially fortunate. Your parents have worked hard and sacrificed to give you the best possible education. Here at AUS, professors, staff, and administrators have done all that we could to prepare you for whatever opportunities and trials that life may bring. You have mastered the core competencies of your

major concentration of study. More importantly for the long term, we have prepared you for a life of continuous learning. In this period of great change in the world, you have all of the skills of critical thinking and rational analysis to enable you to succeed in whatever pursuit you choose," he added.

The Class of 2008's designated speaker, Fathima Saleem, said that she gained a great deal from her four years at AUS. "AUS is sending out more great minds into the real world to face whatever challenges lie ahead. Some of us will continue our education, some of us will opt for a career, and some of us may start families. But what unites all of us are our ambitions. In order to fulfill these ambitions, we have to step out of our mould and out of our safety net," she said. "Today would not have come if it were not for all those people who worked hard to get us here. God has blessed us with parents who encouraged us to educate ourselves, with rulers who built the universities, and with faculty who taught us and passed on their knowledge," she added.



The Alumni Iftar a

During the holy month of Ramadan a very special series of gatherings the Alumni Iftar and Seminar Series were organized by the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA) at AUS.

Launched under the aegis of AUS Chancellor Dr. Peter Heath, the highly interactive Series was instrumental in giving AUS alumni the opportunity to meet and interact with CEOs and key representatives of various industries and governmental agencies in the Gulf region. In addition, they further functioned to connect alumni to their alma mater as well as served as a "meet the Chancellor event".

The Iftar Series assured AUS alumni of the continuing and ongoing ties they have with AUS. These gatherings also allowed alumni to meet the new chancellor of AUS,

Dr. Heath, and learn about his vision for their alma mater in addition to his strong support of alumni. Additionally, the Iftars provided essential occasions for alumni to connect with leaders of industry and executive officials in the region. These encounters allowed AUS graduates to meet with important figures in their respective fields of interest and discuss issues relevant to alumni in terms of their own jobs, future employment, and prospects in the field.

Finally, the Iftar Series was another expression of AUS's commitment to outreach to its alumni and the community. The ODAA continues to meet the demands inherent in ensuring that alumni feel the connectivity between themselves and their alma mater. These interactive and well-attended dinners, seven in all, were a great step in ensuring AUS's pledge to enhancing and increasing the important relationships between



nd Seminar Series

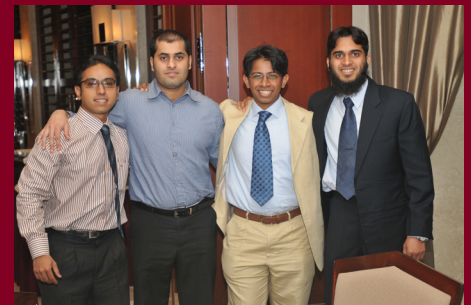
the university, alumni, and the broader community. With the strong leadership and innovative vision of Chancellor Heath, AUS intends to provide alumni with further opportunities to connect with the community and with their alma mater.

Each of the Iftars brought together graduates from a given department and was co-hosted by Dr. Heath and an important community member whose excellence in the field is well-known.

The civil engineering alumni met with Mr. Riad Sadek, Chairman of Al Habtoor Leighton Group. Mr. Wasfi Ataya, President and CEO of Sun Engineering and Contracting Co. LLC, was the guest speaker at the Iftar for mechanical engineers. The graduates of finance and economics were co-hosted by Dr. Nasser Saidi, Chief Economist of the Dubai International

Financial Center and Dr. Heath. Mr. Shaun Killa, Director of Atkins Architecture addressed the graduates of SA&D. Mr. Hamid Jafar, AUS Trustee, addressed graduates of chemical engineering.

The significance of these events cannot be overlooked in terms of the potential they bring to all parties involved. As Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Assistant to the Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, indicated, "These iftars are intended to link recent graduates and AUS faculty with industry and government leaders who are responsible for solving current problems facing the societies of the Gulf in general and the UAE in particular." The importance of the interaction was underscored by Chancellor Heath's address to the alumni, which follows.



Chancellor's Speech to AUS Alumni

Ladies and Gentlemen, AUS alumni:

I would like to begin by thanking our sponsors for so generously hosting these Iftars and for agreeing to share some of their thoughts with us. I would also like to thank all of you for attending this event. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Nada Mourtada - Sabbah for all of her efforts in organizing them.

It is a great pleasure and a privilege for me to begin meeting AUS alumni. You are a group who are, by definition, risk-takers. You took a chance on attending a relatively new university, and you helped build it to become the fine institution of higher education that it is today. You are also among its first graduates and alumni. This means that just as you created AUS's student culture through your energy and ideas, enthusiasm, and engagement at AUS, you now have a similar opportunity to define the role of alumni in the early formation of the AUS alumni association. Since this association is still in its founding years, allow me to share with you some thoughts about your role as alumni of AUS and as members of its alumni association.

Let us begin by thinking together about what the relationship is between the university and its alumni. One characteristic is mutual association. You, as alumni, and the university are tied together forever in a relationship of mutual association.



By this I mean that what you do as alumni, whether good or bad, reflects on the reputation of the university. Whether you do great things or terrible things in your careers, AUS gains or loses in prestige as a result. Similarly, the more AUS's reputation shines, the better it will reflect on you as its alumni. This creates a bond of shared good-will and reciprocal interest between the university and its alumni. We want you to do well and we want you to help us improve as



quickly as possible. When this positive interaction occurs on a continuous basis, both the university and its alumni will gain and benefit.

A second type of relationship that exists between the university and its alumni is mutual support. AUS's alumni constitute a natural networking organization that can help to advance your careers and your interests. As AUS alumni, you share a relationship of joint experience that creates a bond that leads to mutual recognition and reciprocal help. The university can work to organize and promote this relationship in positive ways for you as alumni by arranging events, such as these Iftars, that enable you to join together and reestablish old ties of friendship and create new bonds of collegiality. You can help each other in your careers and should do so, while we can provide the venues and occasions that allow you to get together and reinforce your common ties. This process of connection and reconnection with one another is a prominent function of the AUS alumni association. I promise you that the university will work hard to promote and sustain such activities.

As you grow older and, I hope, develop your relationship with the university in deeper and continuously positive ways, a third form of association will develop between you and AUS. You will come to realize what an immensely important institution a university of AUS's quality is for your society. Through multifaceted activities, a great university has an immense positive impact and plays an enormously important social role. It shapes and develops many dimensions of society and makes them better, whether on the economic front, the cultural front, or the social front. A university like AUS helps solve society's problems and also provides an open public

space that allows issues and questions, important for society, to be discussed and explored. It promotes the values of free inquiry, creativity, originality, social responsibility, ethical behavior, and personal integrity. It is important that you, as alumni, realize the enormously significant social, cultural, intellectual, ethical, and economic role that AUS plays and will continue to play in building the future of the UAE. This is why His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, founded a university that was based in Sharjah but was devoted in its mission to the education and progress of the entire UAE and beyond.

If you support the ideals upon which AUS was founded, then I urge you to support your university. Support it with your personal involvement and active participation, with your positive suggestions and your constructive ideas, and of course, support its physical needs and its fiscal sustainability by contributing to its activities in every way that you can. Societies exist, we take that as a given. But we must recognize that societies can be strong or weak, prosperous or poor, positive or negative in their impact. Good, prosperous, and positive societies do not come into existence by themselves. They must be built stone by stone and layer by layer. By creating and supporting great universities, we simultaneously build great societies. So I urge you to stay connected to your university, AUS, and to stay involved with it. Take full advantage of all the activities, benefits, and opportunities that being an active member of the AUS alumni association offers.

Thank you very much for your attention. And Ramadan Mubarak!



On September 25th the chemical engineering alumni were engaged in a lively and appealing talk by Mr. Hamid D. Jafar, Chairman and CEO of Crescent Petroleum, and Executive Chairman of Dana Gas. His remarks were very informative for the audience of College of Engineering Graduates who attended this particular Iftar event. Mr. Jafar began his talk by discussing the role of chemical engineers in our ever changing world. Mr. Jafar's remarks follow.

"Today, chemical engineers find themselves at the heart of the critical challenges facing our world in the 21st century, from energy sustainability, to water treatment and supply, to environmentally friendly manufacturing. In our region of the Middle East and the GCC in particular, the relatively recent five fold increase in energy prices, combined with increased transportation costs, has meant that our region now has a natural and growing competitive advantage in the processing industries, including chemical and petrochemical manufacturing.

This has meant, and continues to mean today and in the coming years, an ever-growing shift in relocating such industries to our part of the world, helped further by the huge oil revenues generated in the Gulf region, which are approaching one trillion US dollars a year, to fuel investments in industries.

The Gulf region alone contains over 60% of the world's oil and 40% of the world's gas reserves, gas being the quintessential feedstock to the petrochemical and related industries. We in the Gulf also find ourselves today becoming more central geographically in world markets; this is especially relevant given that by the year 2015 Asia, including China, will account for 50% of global demand for commodity chemicals.

Indeed, APICORP has forecasted required investments of over \$500 billion in the region's energy sector in the next five years alone, and all of these projects will require the skills you have acquired as chemical engineers. Very simply put, the scale of opportunities open to you, in our region especially, are immense.

So much for the fortuitous situation you find yourselves in. What do you do with your knowledge? What about sharing? When do we start giving back to others around us? I would like to encourage you to think beyond being chemical engineers and professionals. Think also as good citizens, community leaders, family members, and simply good human beings.

Remember that the work you do is important, especially in meeting the challenges of the modern world and in our region – you will help create jobs and improve lives, as well as adding to the overall economic well-being of our society. This is indeed a very significant responsibility."

In addition to Mr. Jafar's speech, AUS alumni from all Colleges and Schools were able to listen to various experts in their fields discuss issues regarding where their current majors stand today and prospects for the future. The following are some excerpts from several of the enlightening talks during 2008's Iftar Series.

Mr. Riad T. Al Sadik, Chairman of Al Habtoor Leighton Group delivered some advice based on practical experiences that he has encountered during his career to the graduates of Civil Engineering. He first encouraged graduates to believe in themselves and in their abilities to solve any problems they encounter. Secondly, he urged the audience to honor all commitments because people who do so are successful. His



final piece of advice concerned what he termed the “human factor” and he advised the alumni that it is through wise and clever interaction, which gives others their due; they will achieve better results and goals. Mr. Sadik ended his talk with an example of how when he visits construction sites he makes it a point to stand with the lowest paid employees and talk with them and enquire about any problems they face to make them feel that irrespective of the work they do or the level of pay they have they are recognized and therefore they are part of a family or a team.

Dr. Nasser Saidi, Executive Director of the Hawkamah Institute for Corporate Governance and Chief Economist of the Dubai International Financial Centre discussed economics and finance in the region. He noted that the leading sector in the Middle East region for FDI was Financial Services, which accounted for almost 20% of all investment between 2005 to end of Q2 2008. He further indicated that the leading investors in the Middle East were the USA, UK and India providing 24%, 10% and 9% of the investment projects respectively. Finally, Dr. Saidi pointed out that during 2000-2006, Dubai’s GDP grew in real terms by 13% annually while the population expanded by 9% annually, with real per capita income rising by 4%.

Mr. Wasfi Ataya, President and CEO of Sun Engineering and Contracting Co. LLC, addressed mechanical engineering graduates of the College of Engineering and noted the importance their AUS degrees have for them both in the Gulf region and beyond. He commented on the interest regional companies have shown in hiring AUS graduates of the CEN and indicated that this is proof of how highly esteemed their degrees are. He further encouraged the alumni to show support and appreciation for their educations by being helpful to others, both in society and at their alma mater. Mr. Ataya

encouraged this captive audience to focus not only on their careers but also on attaining further education and being effective members of society.

Mr. Selim J. Edde, Country Development Officer- Gulf Region of Cisco Systems, Inc. addressed the Computer Engineering alumni. He observed that it is Cisco’s belief that in order to unlock the human capital in our increasingly young population in the MENA region, we need to address the two following critical areas: first we must invest in the development of human capital – linking education to workforce development and jobs and secondly we must provide the region with an adequate infrastructure. This does not mean just roads, airports, and tall buildings, but most importantly “knowledge infrastructure” or high speed internet access. This is also known as Broadband and should be affordable for all. Mr. Edde summed up by commenting that massive collaboration is required at all levels of a country or a nation to harness the “collective intelligence”, truly transform a community, and yield sustainable wealth.

Mr. Shaun Killa, Director of Atkins Architecture in Dubai, spoke to architecture and design alumni and noted how impressed he has been with the high levels of talent that the SA&D nurtures. He commented that AUS graduates ultimately become architects that are well grounded in international and local architectural philosophy and can hold themselves in the commercial constraints of the architectural profession after they leave their alma mater. He also indicated that it was great to see the success of past graduates and that he believed an alumni program helps create a strong community that has long founding benefits for the graduates and the continued success of the university. Mr. Killa’s final words to the alumni were “keep architectural excellence and innovation at your core and enjoy life’s journey.”



On Linking Town and Gown

Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah

***Assistant to the Chancellor for Development
and Alumni Affairs***

The forging of a university and its alumni with industry into a new consortium is a natural one. Industry is the laboratory where the theory of university education either works or must be rethought. Our alumni practice the ideas gained at AUS and bring new solutions to their places of work. Closely linking industry and university strengthens both and it helps support the countries of the Gulf to take their rightful place among the leaders of the world. His Highness, Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad, founded the American University of Sharjah in order to create new expertise to aid industry and solve problems for the greater social good of this region and beyond.

The relationship with one's alma mater is for life. A university naturally looks after her alumni as a mother follows her offspring throughout their adult lives. It is not coincidental that the root word "mater" is Latin for mother and "alma" signifies educational nurturing. Our fellow alumni thus are like siblings and as such should remain connected. Your relationship with the AUS family continues as your alma mater provides information, conducts seminars, and shares job leads and events that are relevant to your career. It is you who convey how good an AUS education is. And once established in business, you will probably consider hiring a recent AUS graduate, for you know how rigorous his/her educational training is--or you might think of recommending an AUS alumnus or alumna for a job opening you know of.

Under the leadership of Chancellor Heath, a number of initiatives have been developed to enhance alumni relations with one another, with their alma mater, and especially with industry. First, since the university is particularly fortunate in having the captains of industry close at hand, we launched the Iftar and Seminar Series sponsored by key partners from industries. This series will continue as the Dinner and Seminar Series until all departments and majors have been involved. In this format, an evening get together is hosted by a major firm whose leaders offer "cutting edge" sessions from their own experiences. Our speakers thus share insights on the many lessons learned by developing successful



firms and enterprises from the ground up. This is not knowledge from a textbook, but from the "university" of life. Secondly, as an outreach program to the European Union, the ODAA organized a trip to Venice for alumni to interact with leaders and decision-makers in the fields of economics, culture, and politics at the Eurogolfe Forum. Thirdly, a permanent Constitution and By-laws of the AUS Alumni Association have recently been developed by a group of alumni and are now ready to be submitted to the AUS Board of Trustees for approval. We will soon have our operating rules in place to allow us to continue permanently as a dynamic organization created to serve its membership.

Good communications tie the alumni to their alma mater and to their classmates scattered across the world. The ODAA has created several ways to help each of you remain connected, regardless of the geographical distances involved. The ODAA is presently creating a personalized email address system using alumni's first and family names in order to facilitate communication as young professionals instead of the impersonal g000 and b000 inherited from university days. The AUS Alumni Contact Directory that you already have in hard copy will be placed electronically on the AUS website readily facilitating interaction with an old friend or classmate, or in seeking a new hire for your firm. A group of alumni volunteers are currently meeting with the university IT department to design a new user-friendly AUS alumni website. We continually seek

new opportunities for our alumni or graduates-to-be. As an example of this, new internship opportunities for College of Engineering students at the Al Habtoor Koz plant in Dubai have been arranged and will be announced soon.

AUS Connect allows you to connect with your classmates and learn about their lives while additionally, our on line Directory helps you locate fellow alumni at a moment's notice. Connect is an open forum where ideas may be discussed and tried out on one's classmates and other alumni for comment. Connect thus may become a collective mind of the AUS alumni where the many individuals can work through a particular problem together. The Office of Alumni Affairs also wants to hear from you about any internship opportunities or consultancies available within your firms for AUS faculty or other alumni so that the information may be passed along to members of the AUS family. We would also like to know about any significant events in your lives that you would like to share with your colleagues, so you may be recognized in AUS Connect. In this way, AUS Connect offers AUS alumni an ongoing social and professional network that will serve a wide variety of purposes.

I welcome your participation in an exciting new era of alumni-university-industry relations. And I look forward to seeing you at our Second Annual AUS Alumni Reunion Dinner under the aegis of His Highness on February 26. I would like to personally encourage you to come back to your second home, meet your new Chancellor, interact with friends and colleagues, reconnect with your former professors, and help support a good cause by contributing to the AUS Alumni Scholarship Fund.

Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah is Assistant to the Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs and Professor of International Studies. She joined AUS when the university opened its doors in September 1997. Until last year Dr. Mourtada was the Chair of the Department of International Studies. She has authored numerous books and journal articles, and most recently co-edited Globalization and the Gulf (London: Routledge, 2007), and the Supreme Court of the United States (Berkeley: Public Policy Press, 2007). Dr. Mourtada is the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Social Affairs, the peer reviewed quarterly journal of the American University of Sharjah, which she founded, and was elected President of the AUS Faculty Senate for the term 2003-2004.

AUS Chancellor Stresses Collaboration Between Administration and Faculty



Dr. Peter Heath spoke at the conclusion of the one-week 'new faculty orientation' which the university organized to introduce new faculty to the academic operations of the university as well as the social and cultural life at AUS. The university's 354 faculty members were present, including 54 new arrivals. Chancellor Heath urged collaboration between faculty members and administration and indicated this teamwork was vital for the success and development of AUS. Dr. Heath noted, "The university is playing an increasing role in serving the needs of the region. I hope to work together to realize the university's potential help meet its goals." The completion of a decade as an institution of higher learning is also important in setting goals for AUS. Dr. Heath added, "Providing an articulation of the AUS identity and its future strategic plans, continuing to improve our programs, establishing a productive and enriching environment for the faculty and staff, developing a transparent measure of academic success, and enhancing our collaboration with the community and industry are what we need to focus on."

In order to measure success Chancellor Heath explained that "We need all members of the AUS community to be satisfied with the way the university is moving, embrace international best practices in the academic and non-academic realms, and ensure quality control and transparency."

News and Views from our Alumni - Mishal Kanoo



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1. Would you please introduce yourself in a few lines (this is a free “space” including hobbies and anything else you would like to share about yourself)?

First and foremost, I am a husband and a father. Then I am a thinker. Then I am an educator. Then I am an activist. Then I am a writer. Then I am a connoisseur of fine things in life such as art, cars, and watches. Then I am a businessman. In that exact order. My goal is to learn until the day I die. My other goal is to teach what I have learnt to anyone who is willing to listen even if he or she disagrees with me. I love to play chess and read books about history. But most of all I love coming home to the smiles of my wife and children.

2. What is the title of your current position in the Kano family business and what are your current responsibilities? A little more broadly, what does a typical work day schedule look like?

I currently hold two positions. I am the Deputy Chairman of The Kanoo Group in the UAE and Oman and my responsibilities are to oversee the day to day activities

of the group as well as find new avenues of business for the company. I am also a Board Director and Partner in the holding company of Yusuf Bin Ahmed Kanoo. That is the parent company that overlooks all of the family businesses both regionally and internationally. In this role, I play a strategic function in helping shape the direction the company will follow.

As for my day, it starts off anywhere between 7:30 and 10 a.m. depending on what happens the night before. It consists of going through my papers, emails, and meeting with my managers depending on who has what to discuss. It also means that I might have board meetings or meet with other dignitaries from either our principal companies or new companies that we wish to talk to. Then at about 3 or 4 p.m. I might head home or meet up with friends and/or more business partners. At night I try to give time to my family, but even then it is possible that I would have to meet up with business partners. I always have a book to listen to when I drive so that my time is never wasted and if I am lucky to have some time at night, I might write an article or two for the journal where I am published. I do indulge myself with two items that could be considered childish but I like them: Playstation 3 and live football.

3. In a few words, how would you describe the value that your AUS education has brought you in general and to accomplishing the goals in your current position? What role do you see AUS playing in the UAE as the University adds more graduate programs?

One of the main reasons I pursued the EMBA at AUS was that I was afraid that six years after obtaining my last MBA, my mind was not challenged enough and I needed something to push me to think more. AUS definitely played a role in molding me, and I give the university credit for having professors who forced me to challenge myself. This is all any good professor can do. The class materials are always limited but what the professor brings to class is priceless. I think that AUS can play a pivotal role in molding new minds to challenge the status quo and establish in students' minds that what they have learnt is just the beginning and not the end of lifelong education. The role the University must play is that of a facilitator of ideas that flow from the theoretical to the practical.

4. What is your motto in life?

Dare to speak your mind.

5. What was the most memorable book that you recently read?

The last book I read was *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq* by Stephen Kinzer.

6. As an AUS alumnus, what advice you would like to give to fellow AUS alumni?

Go back to your books. They are your references. Remember that we have an obligation to teach what we have learnt in order to spread the knowledge.

7. What advice would you give to current AUS undergraduate and/or graduate students?

Go to class and interact with the professor. Remember it is his or her job to teach you so ask, argue and fight with him or her even though you might fear repercussions on your grade. Please understand that no one looks at your grade other than you. The people you hope will hire you want to see that you are alive and willing to make something of yourself...the rest will follow.

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

It gave me a good spectrum of professors to work with and a curriculum that pushed me further than I would have done on my own. Also, it is one of only two universities in the region that has a good reputation internationally.

9. Any special mention you would like to add?

To the students, I ask that you do not waste the opportunity to learn from experts in their fields and challenge them too. Push them to push you to get to higher levels of knowledge than you would otherwise gain and your life will be better because of it. Also, remember that you have an obligation to learn and then spread that knowledge. Do not be afraid to ask and discover. Do not let your professor corner you. Keep on pushing till it hurts. When it does...you are starting to learn. To the professors, remember that these young men and women need to be pushed because they carry our future as humans to the next generation. They are the people who will mold our world in the years to come and we cannot go easy on them. Let them hurt emotionally even though they might hate you, because you will give them the greatest gift that not even their parents can give them...the opportunity to be somebody significant.

AUS Women's Association (AUSWA) Donates Scholarship Money for Students



The AUS Women's Association collected 40,000 AED as part of the AUSWA Scholarship Fund. The money was given to the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs to contribute to the AUS Scholarship Fund. Chancellor Heath received the check from AUSWA members on behalf of the ODAA.

A Note from AUS Chancellor Heath to AUS Alumni

Dear AUS Alumni,

Recently you heard of the formation by Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah and myself of the Committee to review the drafts of a new Constitution and By-laws (CBRC) for the American University of Sharjah Alumni Association (AUSAA).

This set of documents—referred to also as the founding documents—will take us forward to the next stage in developing our alumni as a core asset of the University. As you are well aware, the American University of Sharjah is made up of four such key groups: faculty, students, staff and alumni, each with a unique and vital role to play in the ongoing health and well-being of our University.

As the enclosed documents indicate, the CBRC (whose members we list below with our deep gratitude) completed its work efficiently after a number of long evening meetings led by Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Assistant to the Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, over the past two weeks. We now ask all alumni to review the documents and invite your comment in person at three meetings to be held in Sharjah, Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

At these gatherings the co-chairs of the CBRC, Sheikh Mohammed Al Quasimi and Salam Abdalla, will introduce a presentation of the founding documents to all in attendance and seek your comment. After these meetings, further revisions to the founding documents will be made as necessary. Then, later in February, I will ask the Board of Trustees to officially endorse this work creating the charter documents for the next stage of development of the AUSAA.

With the expectation of positive action by the Trustees, I will soon appoint in consultation with Dr. Mourtada-Sabbah a

new alumni group to help us create the founding board of the Association. This group, to be known as the Committee to Implement the Founding Process (CIFP), will include all alumni on the CBRC willing to participate and about a dozen other alumni committed to helping the AUSAA move to a new level of success in the years ahead.

If you are willing to assist us in this important process, please let the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA) know of your willingness to do so on or before the first day of 2009 by email odaa@aus.edu. Later we will provide others who might be interested a chance to participate in leadership roles – the new Association, as you will read in the founding documents, is eager to enlist every alumnus and alumna willing to assist the University in engaging all alumni in the ongoing life of the University.

We are entering a wonderful new era in alumni relations at the University just as we are for the University as a whole. With your help, this new Association will energize all alumni and ensure their continued contact with their Alma Mater. Thank you for all you are able and willing to do to assist us in taking alumni relations to the next level of maturity.

CBRC Members (in alphabetical order following the two CBRC co-chairs)

Salam Abdallah (Co-Chair); Sheikh Mohammed Al Qassimi (Co-Chair); Karim Abu Ajram; Anita Akkawi; Melissa Bayik; Amira Bellaith; Fatima Fawwaz; Mahmoud Ghaith; Rami Jaber; Samer Al Jamal; Mahmoud Mohammed Kelli; Sheikh Mohammed Al Maktoum; Saoud Al Nuwais; Abdallah Al Shazli; Rashed Al Tunaiji.

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Chancellor Heath Announces Office of Corporate Relations

In late October Dr. Heath announced a change related to the former Office of Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS). He indicated that CAPS would move from the Office of Student Affairs to the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs and would be renamed the Office of Corporate Relations.

In the past, CAPS had provided a variety of services to students, employers, alumni, and faculty members. The office had disseminated information on career searches, placement services, and career counseling.

According to Dr. Heath, due to the importance of these functions, they will remain part of the duties of the new office. He further noted that the “change has been fully discussed with and approved by the senior

AUS administrators involved.” The Office of Corporate Relations will have a larger mandate and will therefore also have a wider responsibility.

Chancellor Heath noted that this new office “will be charged with developing proactive relationships with the corporations, firms, governmental offices, and other external entities that hire students and interact with AUS and its diverse community.”

Dr. Moza Al-Shehhi, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, indicated her satisfaction with the move. “After establishing and working with CAPS for a year, it is very heartening to see that AUS continues to support its mission and will be giving it an even stronger role on our campus.”

AUS ALUMNI VISIT VENICE, ITALY

For two days in October (16-18) a group of 21 AUS alumni were on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore Venice for the EuroGolfe Forum 2008. Entitled "Europe, the Gulf and the Mediterranean: Reviving Common Legacies, Mapping Our New Region" the forum was a joint venture organized by Sciences Po in Paris and the Giorgio Cini Foundation of Italy. Led By Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Assistant to the Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, the trip was sponsored by the French presidency of the European Union and the Total Group.

The conference was attended by invitees who are leaders and decision-makers in the fields of economics, culture, and politics who were brought together to address these same topics and determine how policies can best be implemented in the regions under discussion. The main goal of the Forum was to enhance relations

between the Gulf Cooperation Council and the EU on multiple levels. EuroGolfe meetings have been held in Abu Dhabi, Menton, and Riyadh in the past, with Venice as the final stop in a five-year process. These forums have been bringing together literally hundreds of leaders, experts, and decision-makers from Europe, the Gulf and the Mediterranean.

The alumni enjoyed an entire session at the Forum which was devoted to students and alumni. It was structured as a workshop that focused on mutual understanding of the concepts of East and West.

Venice EuroGolfe Forum 2008 was a great success. For the AUS alumni it was also a valuable experience both in terms of how much they learned and benefitted from the workshop, in addition to the opportunity they had to visit the beautiful and historic city of Venice.



News and Views from our Alumni - Noura Al Noman



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1. Would you please introduce yourself in a few lines (this is a free “space” including hobbies and anything else you would like to share about yourself)?

I graduated from UAEU in 1986 with a BA in English literature. I immediately joined the Ministry of Education, as a teacher of English. During my teaching years I discovered a love for translation and translated and published a booklet on comparative religion in 1987. In 1993 I worked for the Ministry of Information as a “book censor”, where I was paid to read books - a dream job for someone who loves reading. Also during that time (around 1996) I took the legal translation test at the Ministry of Justice, and after passing it, opened my own legal translation business (Scholar Translations). From 1995 to 2001 I frequently volunteered at the Sharjah Ladies Club, organizing social functions, charity events, regional forums, and conferences. The club, in many ways, became another university for me; I learned everything I know in my professional life at the club. I have been married 21 years, and have two sons and four daughters (ages 10 to 20), we recently added two Siamese kittens to the

family. In 2004, I graduated from AUS with a Masters in Translation and Interpreting. I don't translate anymore because I don't have the time, but it is still a passion of mine, and my husband keeps urging me to pursue my PhD. I love reading and movies and have dabbled in Bonsai tree care from time to time. Recently I've become interested in learning to play the guitar. (My last translation was of a book by Mr. Issa Baluch Transport Logistics, Past, Present and Future - 2005)

2. What is the title of your current position and what are your current responsibilities? A little more broadly, what does a typical work day schedule look like?

Currently, I am the Manager of the Office of Her Highness Sheikh Jawaher Bint Mohammed Al-Qassimi, wife of the Ruler of Sharjah, Chairperson of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs. I started out in 2002 managing Her Highness' private office. My duties included preparing Her Highness' communication with the organizations she founded and other organizations in the region and the world. I prepare H.H.'s calendar of events - which can sometimes include two functions/meetings per week. I am also considered the Chief of Protocol for when H.H. attends public functions. Being one of the busiest women in the UAE, Sheikh Jawaher now chairs or works closely with more than 20 organizations. My job is to continuously update Her Highness regarding their activities and convey her instructions to them. Her Highness has also initiated short-term projects from time to time (like the two major charity events B'Hibak Ya Libnan 06/07, and Salam Ya Sighar 08), and I worked very closely with the teams which organized those two events in addition to others.

3. In a few words, how would you describe the value that your AUS Masters Degree has brought you in general and to accomplishing the goals in your current position? You might describe how you would have looked at a particular topic before and after study at AUS. What role do you see AUS playing in the UAE as the university adds more graduate programs and possibly some doctoral level degree courses of study?

In addition to the prestigious name of AUS, which

gives a greater value to the Masters Degree, I was very fortunate to study under Prof. Basil Hatim, who breathed life into translation studies for me. Before taking the first few modules he offered at AUS - before the MA program was initiated - I had never dreamed that translation could be the three dimensional world he revealed it to be. We may have been acceptable-to-good translators before enrolling in the program, but after graduating, we really were better translators, not because the program offered more practice, but because we finally knew with confidence what we were doing right and what we were doing wrong, and why certain strategies should be used, and we finally had names and justifications for those strategies. It transformed us from amateurs into professionals.

In addition to that, the program offered improved options to students who knew there was something better out there for them, but had been unavailable till this particular MA degree was offered at AUS. This is why institutions like AUS are very important for the UAE. AUS brings the world to our doorsteps, so there is no need to dream or to regret having lost opportunities. As more and more higher education degrees are offered, the opportunities become more accessible and that will surely raise the standards and the confidence of professionals in every field. I would certainly be thrilled if a PhD were offered at AUS.

4. What is your motto in life?

Cooperation and trust can achieve anything. More and more I have found that bringing people together to work on a project means guaranteed success for everyone. Trust is the glue that holds that team together.

5. What was the most memorable book that you recently read? And what film has made the most lasting impression on you?

In the past I read only fiction, but the last five years have changed me and I have started reading popular science, politics, self-improvement, and others. The last book that influenced me was a gift from one of my role models, Sheikha Lubna Al-Qassimi, which is Juan Enriquez's *As the Future Catches You*. I have many favorite movies, but the ones that move me the most are the ones which build bridges between people, the ones which have a message of hope for change.

6. What advice you would like to give to fellow AUS alumni?

I would like for our youth, in general, to think about what it means to belong to a community. Lately I have noticed a lot of selfishness and a love of material things as a priority in life. We all have ambitions for fame and wealth, and it is our right to seek them, but our community is made up of families and these families are our own. Let us not tread on our community values or forget our priorities while we seek fame and wealth. Give some of your time to your community, even if it is one hour per month - helping out our fellow citizens isn't just the domain of social workers, you know!

7. What advice would you give to current AUS undergraduate and/or graduate students?

Being a student has been the most enjoyable time of life for me. Keep the attitude of being a student all your life and you will grow to new heights attained by only a few.

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

Academically it is the best. The campus is a world which you can experience in only a few other places. And it is true what they say, when you graduate from AUS, the local professional world will come knocking on your door to court your favor.

Where Are You Now?

Mohammed Al Bakri, graduated with the Class of 2006 obtaining a BA in International Studies. He went on to work at the National Cooperative Insurance company for one year and later transferred to the banking sector for another year. Mr. Al Bakri later rejoined the insurance sector with the aforementioned company and remained for one year. He joined as a Sales Manager and later relocated to the Claims Department as General Claims Manager until August 2008. Mr. Al Bakri is currently working with Royal and Sun Alliance (RSA) where he was chosen for the Future Leaders Program and is now a part of the Fast Track Training Program. as of July 08.

BP DELEGATION VISITS AUS



As part of a continuous effort to enhance the University's ties with industry, Chancellor Peter Heath visited with a senior delegation from BP, which included Mr. AbdulKarim Al Mazmi, Vice President of BP for the Middle East, Mr. Bill Jack, President and General Manager of BP Sharjah, and Mr. Abdulrahim Mohamed, Communication and External Affairs Manager of BP. Chancellor Heath and the high level BP delegation explored avenues of mutual collaboration. During the visit, Dr. Heath emphasized the significance of the BP Research Award that has been presented to student researchers in a number of areas representing BP values. The visitors also spoke to the importance of partnership between academia and the business community. Also present at the meeting were Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Assistant to the Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, and Dr. Ibrahim Deiab, Coordinator of Research.

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Chancellor Heath Meets TANMIA Officials



At a recent meeting in the Main Building, Chancellor Peter Heath met with a delegation from TANMIA, a federal organization. TANMIA has been established for the purpose of developing and seeking employment for UAE nationals.

The TANMIA delegation was comprised of several senior officials and included Noora Al-Bedur, Head of the Employment and Development Center; Ahmed Al-Ahmedi, Dubai TANMIA Office Manager; Abdul

Rahim Sultan, Employer Relation Manager; Wedad Al-Shamlan, Training Manager; and Fatima Al-Hashmi, Employer Relation Manager.

The main discussion revolved around issues of mutual cooperation. Chancellor Heath also gave the visitors a briefing about the university's academic programs as well as its on-campus facilities, including the state-of-the-art teaching aids and laboratories. The meeting was also attended by senior university officials.

AUS Alumni Kuwait Chapter To Be Launched

Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of AUS, and Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Assistant to the Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, hosted a reception for AUS alumni residing in Kuwait on February 10. This marked the first of a number of planned visits that the AUS leadership will make throughout the GCC to organize AUS alumni.

The visit was intended to lay the foundations for launching a Kuwait chapter of the Alumni Association, as the first of chapters to be initiated throughout the Gulf. The forum allowed the alumni in Kuwait to connect to one another and in many cases, to reconnect with their alma mater for the first time since graduation. Drs. Heath and Mourtada-Sabbah briefed them on recent developments of the Alumni Association, and heard feedback and suggestions from the alumni. AUS alumni Ali Bukhamseen, Hassan Fakih and Zaeed Al Sanae stepped forward to spearhead the organization in launching a Kuwaiti chapter of the Alumni Association in the near future.

The trip to Kuwait was also intended to reach out to the business community and government leaders of Kuwait in an attempt for AUS to better serve the educational needs of the Gulf region. To explore avenues of possible collaboration, Dr. Heath and Dr. Sabbah met with His Excellency Sheikh Nasser Sabah Salem Al Sabah, Minister of the Al Diwan Al Amiri Affairs, H.E. Dr. Rasha Al Sabah, Undersecretary of Education, Dr. Ali Al Shamlan, Director General of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, Dr. Hassan Al Ebrahim, KFAS Board Member, Mr. Samer Younis, Vice Chairman of Al Khurafi National, Mr. Nader Al Awadhi, Deputy Director of the Kuwait Institute for Sciences, Dr. Adel Khaled Al Sabeeh, Chairman of National Industries Company, Mr. Elie Hani, Deputy Managing Director of Al Ahmadiyah, Mr. Nabil Qaddoumi, Chairman of the Board of Projacs International, and Mr. Ali H. Khalil, Executive Vice President of Markaz, Kuwait Financial Center, Mr. Samir Hermez, CEO of HEISCO, Mr. Walid Mounir Ramadan, CEO of SETCO, as well as Professor Najem Al Najem Vice President of Kuwait University and Dr. Fouad Al Ali, Acting President of Kuwait University.



News and Views from our Alumni - Saud Al Nuwais



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Raised by an Egyptian mother, I spent my childhood in Egypt where I developed my obsession for playing football, which I later played at AUS. My interest in political issues also emerged while I was in Egypt. In fact, it was only upon my return to the UAE that I started to develop other interests such as financial investment, economic policy, and business development. During my free time I enjoy working out and staying fit. Thursdays are devoted to friends, while Fridays are strictly oriented towards time with family members. Saturday is usually the day I spend reading and keeping up to date with world issues. I have developed a habit in the past two years, to conclude my weekends with spiritual endeavors that include reading verses from the holy Quran.

I joined the Executive Affairs Authority of Abu Dhabi (EAA) two years ago as a research analyst with the role of providing information to senior level colleagues in order for them to formulate policy decisions. I was later promoted to an associate level and worked on various projects concerning inflation, the UAE's carbon footprint, and alternative sources of energy with MASDAR. My most recent appointment will become effective February 2, 2009 as the new UAE Commercial Attaché to the United States of America. In my new role, I will be establishing and managing the new UAE commercial office located in Washington, DC.

AUS has contributed tremendous value in helping me accomplish my goals in my previous and upcoming

positions. The courses I took such as public international law, global political economy, globalization, US history, and economics have all assisted me in handling my assignments at the EAA, since most of the issues I deal with are directly related to these courses. Therefore I can say that these courses helped form the foundation of my knowledge in order to complete tasks at the EAA. Any developing country can not experience growth and prosperity without developing a strong educational base. AUS has effectively and efficiently contributed to such an equation by supplying the UAE with qualified graduates in various fields. The power of AUS resides within its offerings of a variety of degrees and programs while other universities within the country lack this trait.

"All is as God wills it, yet human beings are the consequence of their own decisions."

Recently I completed reading *The World is Flat* by Thomas L. Friedman, which is a great book that explains the evolution and distribution of power along with the competition in our globalized world. With regard to the most recent movie that I have seen, I usually spend time with my nephews and we recently watched a cartoon called *Happy Feet*. The core message of the film was directed at how humans are inefficiently consuming the earth's resources and how this behavior is directly impacting the ecological habitats of most animals. This issue should be a key concern that people need to become aware of.

Our University years didn't end when we graduated. Graduation should always be the beginning of our new lives wherein we take what AUS has provided us and share our new knowledge with the world.

Picture yourself today and where you would like to be ten years from now. Then work backwards starting with university. My advice to current students is to make sure that they choose the program that best aligns with their personal interests and reflects upon their future objectives.

Since AUS has a continuous vision that is always modified and updated to assure further development in standards and excelling beyond expectations and best practices by other universities then I can strongly recommend it to future generations.

Delegation from Dubai School of Government visits AUS

Dr. Tarik Yousef, Dean, Dubai School of Government met with Dr. Peter Heath, Chancellor of American University of Sharjah (AUS), during a visit to the university recently. Dr. Yousef was accompanied by Asma Siddiki, Associate Dean for Development; Mohammad Hedi Lahouel, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; and Khaled El Gohary, Director of Executive Education.



Chancellor Heath briefed the visitors on the university's undergraduate and graduate programs as well as on the on-campus facilities, state-of-the-art teaching aids and laboratories. He also briefed the delegation on the tremendous success achieved by the university since its inception on 1997 and updated them on its current and future plans. Dr. Malcolm Richards, Dean of the School of Business and Management, and Dr. Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Assistant to the Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, were also present during the meeting.

Athletic Scholarships Awarded to Six Student-Athletes



At a special luncheon ceremony held at AUS in October, six outstanding student-athletes were named as the recipients of the AUS Athletic Scholarships for fall 2008. Two female and four male students received these awards. They included: Rola Awad, women's volleyball; Jaidaa Adel Khouga, women's basketball; Ausama Azeez, men's soccer; Jadallah Chehade, men's soccer; Mohamed Farouk Ismail, men's basketball; and Ahmed Bassam Saymeh, men's volleyball.

The scholarships give students a fifty percent tuition remission and are renewable on a semester by semester basis. The aim of the scholarship program is to encourage, improve, and develop sports at AUS as well as support student-athletes with limited financial resources who demonstrate athletic excellence and outstanding sports qualities. Dr. Moza Al Shehhi, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs noted, "We are really thankful for this scholarship as it encourages us to be involved in athletic activities and to do our best to win for AUS."

News and Views from our Alumni - Eisa Al Ali



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1. Would you please introduce yourself in a few lines (this is a free “space” including hobbies and anything else you would like to share about yourself)?

I am Eisa Khalid Mohamad Eisa Al Ali, but was known in AUS as Eisa Eisa because when I registered in AUS I didn't put my family name in the admission form, so they used my last name as my first name and was accordingly called Eisa Eisa in my classes. Then I liked it especially when I was running for the presidency of the student council which made my name sound weird and very memorable. I got engaged in my last year at AUS and planned my wedding ceremony to match my graduation. Luckily, I managed to graduate, get a job offer from Schlumberger, and got married at the last week of July 2005. By now, I am 27 years old with two kids; Sarah and Sultan. I like playing soccer and watching the local soccer tournament only. Aside from work, I do act in short movies, travel quite often, and some voluntary work as well. For the past 2 years, I have been heavily involved with Toastmasters, which is a club for developing communication and leadership skills and also help mentoring others. And last year, I became Abu Dhabi Champion in the prepared speeches and was also the first emirati to compete on GCC level on this contest.

2. What is the title of your current position in the AlDar Properties PJSC and what are your current responsibilities? A little more broadly, what does a typical work week schedule look like?

I work as a development manager for Al Khubeira project in Al Raha beach project in Abu Dhabi. It is more than 400 million USD worth of project. I don't like routine kind of jobs and luckily my job is very dynamic. So if I speak about a typical week I would have to say that I hold some progress meetings –design/construction-, site wide meeting, site visits, correspondence to inquiries from the colleagues from the Head Office, meet with VIP visitors –if any-, meet with suppliers, mentor a trainee, and prepare progress report and cost report. It sounds too much but when you work on a beach with a multi national and multi disciplined team, it is a different experience!

3. In a few words, how would you describe the value that your AUS education has brought you in general and to accomplishing the goals in your current position? What role do you see AUS playing in the UAE as the University adds more graduate programs?

When someone asks me about where did I graduate from, I proudly, and I guess all AUS graduates, say that I graduate from AUS. AUS is not an institute; it is an environment that prepares you to your future career. The education and knowledge that I acquired from AUS was not much different from other academic institutes in this region, but it was the way that knowledge transferred to me. AUS got its own style which made its graduates more mature than other graduates in the way they think and react. And that was obviously reflected in the way I moved so quickly in my career path.

4. What is your motto in life?

The true formula for success & happiness is the development of an intelligent mind surrender to an intelligent heart.

5. What was the most memorable book that you recently read? And what film has made the most lasting impression on you?

The film I cannot forget and I wish I was the actor of that film was "Cast Away" for Tom Hanks who is my favorite actor. "Bye Bye London" written by Dr. Ghazy Al Qusaibi is the last book I read, which is basically a novel that talks about his challenges and experience throughout some periods of his life and he started his life from scratch by taking caps in London to go to school, until he had driven is Limousine car as the KSA ambassador and many other stories of his life.

6. As an AUS alumnus, what advice you would like to give to fellow AUS alumni?

Invest in your time properly, because time is running so fast. You may make more money, but you cannot make more time.

7. What advice would you give to current AUS undergraduate and/or graduate students?

I would say: live your AUS life to the fullest; enjoy it and have fun. You as an alumni student have a privilege to many things that many other students, not only from this region, but also across the globe, may envy you for that. Once you graduate, there is no time to go back.

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

It's different in terms of life style, well reputed as a curriculum, & it has a secret that no body could describe unless if s/he lives AUS.

9. What education do you foresee for your two children?

I prefer to let my children choose the education they want without interfering in their choice and there desire. But if I have to advice, I would absolutely recommend to them AUS as I promised myself when I was delivery my speech as the student body representative in the parents orientation day.

10. Any special mention you would like to add?

If there is someone at AUS whom I would always love to serve for free for the rest of my life, it would be the chairman of the university, HH Dr. Sultan Bin Mohamad Al Qasimi for his endless support to me as a local from Sharjah, as an AUS student & as the Student Council President.

Middle East International Film Festival Honors AUS Mass Communication Student

One of the top award winners at the festival was Mohammad Mamdouh Salaheldin, a Mass Communication major at AUS. A new category entitled the Emirates Film Competition gave his film "The Fallen" the Best Film-Special Jury Prize Award. Salaheldin won the award while competing as a professional filmmaker.

His short film has been screened in Abu Dhabi four times. The film is about graduation day at a university in the Middle East and follows several interesting characters on that day. It was filmed on the AUS campus.

Salaheldin was quite surprised by his win as he was up against professionals in the field. He noted that "I really didn't expect to win any awards in this competition because it is truly international and all the participants were professionals; I was the only student. This win came as a big surprise and I'm very proud if it."

Where Are You Now?

Muntaha Al Zarafy, graduated with the Class of June 2004 with a BA in Public Administration and a minor in International Relations. She went on to graduate from the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia, in 2006 with an MA in Development Planning from the School of Planning and Architecture/ School of Engineering. She later worked with Mr. Kono Taro, the Japanese Parliamentarian Representative for Middle East and North Africa Relations. Ms. Al Zarafy married fellow AUS Alumnus Ahmed Al Balushi in the summer of 2007. The couple was blessed with their first child, Faris Ahmed Al Balushi, six months ago. She is currently working in the Ministry of Higher Education, Department of Planning and Development in Oman's capital.

AUS Faculty Receive AED 1.6 Million from Emirates Foundation for Research

The American University of Sharjah recently received several Emirates Foundation research grants that went to faculty members in various departments. Nine research proposals received AED 1.6 million in funding from the Abu Dhabi based foundation..

Six of the projects received AED 1 million in the 'Science and Technology' category while the other three were given AED 600,000 under the 'Applied Science Education' and 'Emirati Youth' category.

"We place a lot of emphasis on research at AUS and are, therefore, very pleased and grateful for this generous support by Emirates Foundation," said Dr. John Mosbo, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs.

"Emirates Foundation, under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, and the chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Presidential Affairs, is delighted to support outstanding research proposals by distinguished faculty

members at American University of Sharjah," said Dr. Abdul Aziz Al Fahim, Senior Executive Advisor, Science and Technology, speaking on behalf of the foundation. "These selected research proposals were favorably reviewed by the peer review committee for their scientific merit and originality" he added.

The following faculty members received grants in the 'Science and Technology' category: Dr. Mohammed Jarrah, Dr. Ibrahim Deiab, Dr. Nidhal Guessoum as principal investigator with Dr. Lutfi Albasha, Dr. Morad Barakat, and Dr. Abdelhaq Hamza, and Dr. Tarek Majeed as co-investigators; Dr. Hassan Al Nashash, Dr. Ghaleb Hussein, Dr. Kinda Khalaf, and Dr. Nasser Qaddoumi as principal investigators; Dr. Khalid Assaleh as principal investigator with Dr. Tamer Shanableh as co-investigator; and Dr. Sofian Kanan as principal investigator with Dr. Imad Abu Yousef and Dr. Ali Alnaser as co-investigators.

In the 'Emirati Youth' category; Dr. Tim Walters, Dr. Mahboub Hashem, and Ms. Tina Richardson received grants.

UNESCO Training in Paris Selects AUS Graduate



Fatemah Mohammed Al Buloshi, who graduated with an MA in Translation and Interpreting from AUS in the summer of 2008, has been selected to participate in an in-house training program in translation and intercultural communication at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France. The ten month program seeks to develop the presence of Arabic at UNESCO through various means including: interpretation, communication, and online and printed publications. The program is supported by Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud.

Al Buloshi wrote her MA thesis on the topic of linguistic and cultural issues inherent in business translations from English into Arabic. Her thesis director was Dr. Said Faiq, Professor of Translation and Intercultural Studies!

An Emirates Foundation grant was awarded to four AUS faculty members in the COE. The recipients included Dr. Hasan Al-Nashash, Dr. Ghaleb Hussein, Dr. Kinda Khalaf, and Dr. Nasser Qaddoumi. Also included in the grant was Dr. Marc Sinclair, an orthopedic surgeon from MedCare Hospital in Dubai.

Memorandum of Understanding Establishes Connection Between AUS and Sharjah Chamber of Commerce



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On November 2nd an important Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed at the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce (SCCI) office. The MOU established a collaborative relationship between AUS and SCCI and was signed by Chancellor Peter Heath on behalf of the university, while Mr. Hussain Mohammed Al Mahmoudi the Director General of SCCI, represented the SCCI.

The importance of this agreement lies in the desire of both institutions to work together and cooperate on a number of issues that will be beneficial to both. Some of the cooperative work will include: conducting economic analyses and research, providing educational programs for the benefit of the emirate of Sharjah, and promoting their common objective of increasing administrative efficiency in the emirate. Both parties have agreed to cooperate in order to promote research and provide expert advice and educational opportunities for SCCI members through seminars, lectures and workshops which will benefit Sharjah's business community.

Dr. Heath noted, "We are pleased to work alongside the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry and explore avenues and areas that benefit not only our two institutions but also prove beneficial to the emirate of Sharjah."

A joint committee will be established in order to meet the requirements of the MOU and to coordinate the activities of the agreement. The committee will be comprised of three AUS faculty members in addition to SCCI representatives.

Where Are You Now?

Maitha Al Fardan Following my graduation from AUS, I worked for Citibank for two years. I started out there as an executive trainee in their Finance department. Later on I moved to their Business Banking department. I was then offered a better position at Dubai Ports International, which is now known as Dubai International, in Jebel Ali. I worked there for quite some time before resigning due to what I consider a better offer, a marriage proposal. I now live in Kuwait with my husband and have a baby daughter named Nada.

News and Views from our Alumni - Salam Sobhi Abdallah



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Once Albert Einstein said “Bear in mind that the wonderful things you learn in your schools are the work of many generations. All this is put in your hands as your inheritance in order that you may receive it, honor it, add to it, and one day faithfully hand it on to your children.”

AUS gave me a solid education foundation and enhanced my skills to face the world and be prepared to the uncertainty in my life. AUS didn't just give me a degree in science, but it gave me the keys to life in how to live it with happiness and success.

Salam Abdallah was born on the 28th of December, 1978 in Beirut. Four months old, he migrated to UAE with his family in April 1979 and was raised in Abu Dhabi. He received his elementary education in The Rosary School in Abu Dhabi and went back to his home country, Lebanon, in 1992 to join the intermediate school there and earned

the Brevet certificate in 1994. The situations weren't stable in Lebanon so he returned back to Abu Dhabi to continue his secondary education in Al Nahda National School and graduated with honor in 1997.

Salam Abdallah was among the first candidates who applied to the newly established university, The American University of Sharjah, and was accepted in the School of Engineering in fall 1997 majoring in Computer Engineering. He found his passion later in the civil education so he changed his major to Civil Engineering in spring 1998. He was named to the honor list in fall 1998.

Salam Abdallah was one of the active students at AUS which he had respectable and strong relations with his colleagues and the office of student affairs. He founded the Lebanese Cultural Club in 2000 and was the president of the club in the year 2001 and 2002 which he did a significant work in the Lebanese corner in the yearly event of AUS, the Global Day, and a notable Lebanese folklore sketch on the AUS stage.

In his senior year, his graduation project entitled “Potential Use of Recycled Concrete in the UAE” received the first prize in the National Bank of Sharjah Student Research Award in 2002 and was honored in a ceremony held by the University.

Salam Abdallah graduated as a Civil Engineer in fall 2002 and was elected as the President of the Alumni Association of AUS in 2003.

Salam Abdallah started working as a civil engineer in June 2002, upon graduation, at the American University of Sharjah in the Physical Plant Department, and held the position of a facility auditor. After 6 months, he was transferred to the Campus Development Office and held the position of construction engineer which he was supervising several constructions at AUS such as the new women dormitories and the new chemistry building at the main campus, in addition to the new infrastructure within and surrounding AUS.

In 2004, Salam Abdallah joined one of the leading architecture and consultant firm in the region, W. S. Atkins, as an Infrastructure Engineer and worked on

various land marks project such as Dubai Flower Center, Dubai Land, Falcon City, and Durrat Al Bahrain (Bahrain).

In June 2005, Salam Abdallah decided to switch from the designing field to the construction field and applied to one of the leading construction companies in UAE and the Gulf, Al Habtoor Engineering Enterprises, and joined this reputable company as a Site Engineer.

He was involved in two large projects so far, the JBR project (Jumeirah Beach Resident) and the Business Bay – Eleven Executive Towers project since September 2005 up to date for almost three years.

At the beginning of his career with Al Habtoor Engineering he worked as a Senior Production Engineer which he was responsible for the productivity of manpower and site activities (Form work, Steel work, Concrete, and Finishing Activities) and auditing the forward labor cost control with a detailed report for the balance resource chart. After that he worked as a Site Engineer dealing with site activities and handling the finishing activities of the standard apartments in Tower “M” at the Business Bay project.

In 2007 he got promoted to a Senior Site Engineer and has been working since that with the construction team of the podium and the special villas at the Business Bay project.

Recently, Salam Abdallah got engaged to Miss Hala Abdallah in the 16th of August, 2008 in Lebanon and planning to have the wedding next year in the summer.

Where Are You Now?

Muhammad Saad Ahmed, graduated in December 2007 with a BA in International Studies. He is currently working with the Middle East Institute in Washington, DC as a Financial Assistant.

ODAA Partners with Bayt.com to Offer Alumni and Senior Students Valuable Career Opportunities

The Office of Development and Alumni Affairs is pleased to announce the launch of an AUS alumni branded career channel powered by Bayt.com. This channel will offer AUS alumni a valuable opportunity to avail themselves of nearly 6,000 job offers across 94 industries in the Middle East region, made available by some 30,000 companies that rely on Bayt.com to assist them in seeking out top talent. This powerful job search tool will be used to further empower successive generations of AUS graduates. The link to this career channel, which will be found on the alumni section of the AUS website, will be branded with the AUS identity in addition to fully integrating the AUS website's look and feel. The collaboration between Bayt.com and AUS is offered to graduates at no cost. Bayt.com views its collaboration with AUS in offering extensive and diverse job opportunities to be an inherent part of its corporate social responsibility. AUS graduates may register voluntarily for this service. Graduates may choose to receive the synopsis of career opportunities or unsubscribe from this option. In addition to the wide number of career opportunities, this portal could also be expanded to include relevant job articles made available to graduates, optional psychometric tests, and other services which will enhance job searching skills.

The services available to AUS alumni through this dedicated site are numerous and will definitely be useful to graduates and senior students. Students will have access to the following:

- The opportunity to enhance and register their CVs directly on the “AUS Careers” site
- The largest network of positions in the region
- Information on the “hottest” jobs each week, delivered to their inbox
- An electronic “saved search” which continues to search while students are off-line and then emails them when appropriate jobs appear
- A personal workspace on the “AUS Careers” site where they can keep track of all jobs applied for and all CVs and cover letters they send out

Dr. Judith Caesar, Professor of English Literature

Dr. Judith Caesar has been at AUS since 1998, but what keeps her here is the students. She says, "I feel I've been lucky to be able to work with AUS students for a number of reasons. They're interesting people, for one thing, because they are bilingual and aware of other cultures. This tends to make them more open-minded, I think. I also enjoy the fact that our literature courses seem to attract so many intelligent, intellectually curious students. It isn't just our majors. The sort of person here who takes a course in Shakespeare, for instance, or in American novel is someone who knows that a person really isn't educated until he knows the best that has been thought and felt in other places, other times. And by the way, that phrase, "the best that has been thought and felt" isn't mine. It's from a wonderful essay by the English poet Mathew Arnold who was defending the importance of the study of literature for all people."

She has also enjoyed working with the student literary magazine, *Realms*, because of the talent and dedication of a series of remarkable student editors. "But it isn't just the top students that make AUS an exciting place to teach," she adds. "Even students who don't do particularly well in my classes, whether because of language problems or a bit of laziness, are usually still friendly, interesting people. When I go away to conferences and tell other teachers about our students here, they are envious."

Caesar herself is an active scholar and writer. She has written two books, both published by Syracuse University Press, about teaching and living in the

Middle East as an American, discussing the ways in which the cultures in which we are raised affects what we notice and respond to in other cultures. She has also published short stories in leading North American literary quarterlies such as *The Antioch Review*, *The Dalhousie Review*, and *The Kansas Quarterly*. Before coming here, she frequently contributed opinion articles and personal essays to major American newspapers and opinion magazines, particularly *The Progressive* and *The Christian Science Monitor*. She also had articles published in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. "I tell journalism students that if I could get a piece in *The New York Times* writing from Carbondale, Illinois, they have a chance of getting something published from Sharjah. It's just a question of having something important to say and the nerve to send out what you write."

She continues to publish scholarly articles, averaging two a year, in venues such as *The Explicator*, *Critiques: Studies in Contemporary Literature*, and *English Studies in Canada*. Her most recent piece concerns the Japanese writer Haruki Murakami, whom, she says, was originally recommended to her by her students here. "They were particularly excited by *Norwegian Wood*, a love story about college students in Japan in the 1960's, but I then went on to read the rest of his work, which is extremely thought-provoking and technically innovative." She adds, "The amount of teaching we do doesn't give me as much time to write as I would like, but it does have the advantage of bringing me in contact with a lot of bright young minds."

Accolades

Akram Bin Sediq, a 2005 graduate in electrical engineering, has been awarded the Carleton University Senate Medal for outstanding academic achievement in the pursuit of a Master's Degree. The medal was awarded at the Fall 2008 Convocation of Carleton University, a campus of more than 20,000 students in Ottawa, Canada. Mr. Bin Sediq is currently pursuing doctoral studies at Carleton University.

Where Are You Now?

Nitin Gogia, graduated with the Class of June 2005 receiving a BA in Computer Science with a minor in International Relations. He recently graduated from George Washington University, in Washington, DC with an MA in International Affairs and currently resides in Arlington, VA.

News and Views from our Alumni - Rashid Al Tenaiji



Rashid Al Tenaiji graduated from the College of Engineering in fall 2004. After working for a few years, he then went on to obtain his Masters in International Business from the University of Wollongong Dubai in spring 2008.

Rashid first joined AUS in 1998 and did one year in the IEP. Following that he entered the COE as an electrical engineering major. Rashid took the time to be active, not only academically, but also in student

events. He was a member of several clubs; however, he was mainly involved with the Emirati Club. He became a board member of the club in 2003 and was also elected as Media Coordinator and Vice President at various times. During two consecutive academic years, Rashid was chosen by AUS Student Affairs as one of the “most active Emirati students” on campus. Following graduation Rashid continued his support of his alma mater by becoming part of the “advisory council” of the AUS Alumni Association (2006-07) and then joined the Board of the Alumni Association as the Director of External Affairs.

Rashid’s first position after graduating from AUS was with Thuraya Satellite Telecommunications, where he was employed as a Satellite Engineer for two years. He then moved into the marketing area of the company for one year managing exhibitions both in the UAE and abroad. Rashid is currently operating his family’s business, Al Jawahir Engineering Company, in several key areas including: internal affairs, outreach, finance, and human resources. Rashid is married and has one daughter.

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Interior Design Students Win Top Design Awards

Two SA&D interior design students, Shant Krichelian and Nazaneen Azarbaijani, won first place at the Al Habtoor ISG Young Designers Award, 2008. Both winners were further recognized during the competition by also receiving top honors in the Most Creative Concept category.

Two other interior design students in SA&D, Sidrah Saleem Shaikh and Naba Muzaffar, won the Most Feasible Design category for their presentation.

The purpose of the contest was for challengers to design the interior of a hotel room. The rules maintained there was a fixed budget and all materials had to be available locally. This trial was a great chance for third and fourth year interior design students to source materials and practice budgeting for their designs.

The first place award consisted of an AED 15,000 to the Department of Architecture at AUS, a mock-up of the winners’ design at INDEX 2008, and finally an internship for the two winners at Al Habtoor ISG.

Assistant Professor of Architecture, Michelle Grant, guided the students through their projects during their design studio course.

News and Views from our Alumni - Ibrahim El Sanjak

1. Would you please introduce yourself in a few lines (this is a free “space” including hobbies and anything else you would like to share about yourself)?

My name is Ibrahim El Sanjak, I graduated from AUS in 2005 with a B.S. in Business Administration and have since had the opportunity to work for a range of marketing and consulting firms in the UAE. Prior to joining AUS in 2001, I spent two years completing high school in Dubai after having lived 15 years in Cairo, where I was born and raised.

2. What is the title of your current position and what are your current responsibilities? A little more broadly, what does a typical work day schedule look like?

I am currently a Consultant with IBM's Global Business Services (GBS) unit - formerly PWC Consulting - and I am primarily focused on the field of Strategy and Change. As a consultant, a typical work day usually means working from a client's office on a project, problem-solving day-to-day project challenges, maintaining strong relationships with the client, and ensuring project milestones and objectives are actively being achieved. On the other hand, I may be required to dedicate some of my time preparing proposals for new and existing clients in an effort towards expanding the business' range of activities and projects.

3. In a few words, how would you describe the value that your AUS education has brought you in general and to accomplishing the goals in your current position? You might describe how you would have looked at a particular topic before and after study at AUS. What role do you see AUS playing in the UAE as the university adds more graduate programs?

My AUS education has supported my development and contributed directly to my career selection. Initially, the marketing courses I took tempted me towards marketing and advertising; however, over time the courses in project management and strategy directed me towards my final chosen career in consulting.

4. What is your motto in life?

Many people run their lives with mottos, which I commend. I however have never felt close to any of

the often clichéd slogans. I believe in the simplicity of life, honesty and directness, accompanied by the minimal contribution of logic as sufficient ingredients for a successful and prosperous life. If one maintains awareness of who they are and who they want to be - constantly working towards their vision- then everything else falls into place.

5. What was the most memorable book that you recently read?

I am currently in the midst of reading a descriptive, analytical book entitled Inside Egypt by John Bradley, which explores the ongoing socio-political conditions of Egypt and their implications for the country's future. Despite the negative aura that the book portrays, the manner in which it is written does not fail to incite feelings of patriotism and express the need for action.

6. What advice you would like to give to fellow AUS alumni?

If there were any 'advice' per se, which I would like to give to other AUS alumni, then it would be to stay in touch. Time naturally plays a role in bringing people together and pulling people apart. It's up to us to ensure that our relationships and friendships are not completely lost - or else so might our memories.

7. What advice would you give to current AUS undergraduate and/or graduate students?

Cherish the moment, make the most of it, and try as hard as possible to have a career direction in mind upon graduation.

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

AUS, in my biased opinion, provides the best education in the Gulf and is definitely one of the top five ranking universities in the greater Middle East. Considering the fact that the university was established just over 10 years ago, it would be a safe bet to see AUS rise through the ranks over the coming years and continue to exceed its current standards. This fact, combined with its multicultural environment and the liberal education inherent in the American system, makes AUS an ideal educational institution in the region.

Sheikh Khalifa Scholarship Awarded to Four AUS Students

Four outstanding AUS students won the prestigious Sheikh Khalifa Scholarship for the academic year 2008-2009. These scholarships are awarded to undergraduate juniors and seniors based on several criteria. Students are judged on their academic excellence, leadership potential, community service, demonstrated talent in their field of study, and participation in extracurricular and university activities. The scholarship funds are from a donation by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahya, President of the UAE.

The students were congratulated by Chancellor Peter Heath and praised for their hard work and continued perseverance. Dr. Heath added that AUS is grateful to His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan for his continued support of the university and its students. The 2008-2009 Sheikh Khalifa Scholarships were presented to: Shirin Sheikh, SBM; Nour Wael Merza, CAS; Hichem Zakaria Aichour, COE; and Ahmed Hosny, SA&D.

Each of the recipients expressed their gratitude and appreciation to His Highness, AUS, and their families. Sheikh indicated that she is honored to be an AUS student. "To be appreciated by my college and to have the officials there bestow their trust and confidence in me is

overwhelming. I just to want to say thank you," she said. Merza also offered her appreciation to the Department of International Studies and CAS for their support. "I believe that our college helps us gain the knowledge and experience that prepare us for the real world to become leaders and experts in our fields," she said. Aichour communicated his appreciation of his parents and family, noting that without their support he would not have attained his current academic standing. And finally, Hosny, was pleased to see his hard work appreciated by his college.



International Competition Honors AUS Visual Communication Major

Lujain Aboulfaraj, a third-year AUS visual communication student, received an honorable mention for her work at an international design competition held in Australia. Memefest 2008: The International Festival of Radical Communication was the name of the competition and its theme was "Radical Beauty."

Aboulfaraj's artwork comprised an image of the Ka'bbah. Her choice for this was based on the fact that the competition was international and "all religions are in favor of peace." She further noted that today "people sometimes link Islam to terrorism, so I want to change this picture about Islam and Muslims."

When asked to elaborate about the theme of the competition, Aboulfaraj spoke of the differences inherent in how people perceive beauty, some focusing on physical appearance while others on the beauty inside. She, however, believes, "Radical beauty is serene. It is a deep spiritual connotation that is felt, not touched."

According to Aboulfaraj, the competition taught her several things. Perhaps most important, she expressed, was the need to "believe in your work and do the best you can, despite what other people may tell you."



1. Would you please introduce yourself in a few lines (this is a free “space” including hobbies and anything else you would like to share about yourself)?

34 | I am a PhD researcher in Design Computing at the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) in Atlanta. I received a Master of Science in 2007 (Summa Cum Laude), in Computational Design specializing in Generative Design Systems, from the Department of Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston; and a Bachelor of Architecture (2004) from the American University of Sharjah. I taught undergraduate Design Computing classes and workshops at MIT and currently teach graduate Design Computing classes at Georgia Tech.

2. What is the title of your current position and what are your current responsibilities? A little more broadly, what does a typical work day schedule look like?

As a researcher and a class instructor at Georgia Tech, I teach parametric and algorithmic design classes. I also collaborate with architectural design firms, whenever possible, to develop computational design processes for problems such as geometry rationalization, and automation of design rules and algorithms. I am also the Design Computing consultant for SHAPE Architecture Practice and Research (www.shape.ae) working on developing computational solutions for unique design problems. My area of expertise is in developing synthesis design systems. I am currently working on the development of computational and formalized analysis

algorithms to evaluate spatial qualities of architectural designs. I hope to develop performance analysis tools to aid architects in making well-informed judgments about the design alternatives they develop.

3. In a few words, how would you describe the value that your AUS Bachelor Degree has brought you in general and to accomplishing the goals in your current position? You might describe how you would have looked at a particular topic before and after study at AUS. What role do you see AUS playing in the UAE as the University adds more graduate programs and possibly some doctoral level degree courses of study?

Architectural education is based on apprenticeship more than it is on science. The training I received at AUS was of a high standard wherein my instructors played a major role in presenting various architectural schools of thought, stemming from their impressive work experience and academic qualifications. My thesis graduation project was my point of departure in architectural research. The nature of architectural design studios nourished my curiosity about research. Having attended a number of architectural design schools (AUS, Columbia in NYC, Harvard graduate school of design (GSD), MIT and Georgia Tech), I believe that architectural education is evolving to acquire a scientific basis. I also believe that the architectural design field is witnessing a paradigm shift, one that is highly influenced by computing. I am glad to see that AUS's School of Architecture and Design (SA&D) is catching up with the worldwide development by acquiring up-to-date software and hardware, and by

hiring new faculty members who embrace research and technology.

SA&D is currently offering a Masters in Urban Design, an area that concerns developers, government officials, and the general population. I hope to see more Master programs offered at the school to accommodate those other evolving areas in the architectural design field such as computing, building technology, maintenance and building life-cycle management, cultural and social impact of built form, to name just a few. AUS has demonstrated leadership, not only in the UAE, but also in the Middle East, in providing a high quality education. I am aware of a number of my colleagues who joined reputable design schools for graduate studies including Columbia NYC, GSD at Harvard, the Architectural Association (AA), Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania. This fact proves that the educational environment available at AUS is highly competitive.

4. What is your motto in life?

I would like to quote my mentor at MIT, Anas Alfaris, who once told me, "Nothing is hard, or scary. If you don't know it, you can learn it." I also would like to quote my friend from AUS, Professor Tarik Al Gussein, who said to me once, "you only learn things when you're ready to, not when you want, and not when you need to." My motto is a combination of both opinions: persistence and patience.

5. What was the most memorable book that you recently read? And what film has made the most lasting impression on you?

The book that got me interested in computational design is Pattern Language by Christopher Alexander (a book I found in the AUS library). Some urban designers believe that it is a naive view on urban design; however, Alexander demonstrates an interesting design approach where problems are broken down into components, contexts, objectives and strategies. I think it's enough to say that Pattern Language had a major impact on the field of computer science. The movie(s) that left an impact on me is the Matrix (all three movies). It presented a number of computing concepts such as Object Oriented Programming, where the character "Mr. Smith" reproduced himself based on a blueprint, a class designed by the "Matrix Architect," who in turn, built various iterations of the Matrix trying to "debug" human weakness. In the Matrix emergence of life (design solutions) comes about by the collision of conflicts, which is synonymous with the architectural design field.

6. What advice would you like to give to fellow AUS alumni?

I believe it is our duty to connect with AUS, not because it was or is a leading educational institute in the region, but rather it is our duty to inform current students about potential graduate programs and field experiences awaiting them. After all, it is a good deed in this life and the next.

7. What advice would you give to current AUS undergraduate and/or graduate students?

I am in no position to give advice, but if I must, then I would say: Work hard, persistently, to define who you are or who you want to be. Many doors may seem closed, or slammed shut, but you will be amazed at how things work out.

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

I would recommend AUS to others for six reasons. First: the evolving educational curricula in all schools, which is a sign of constant revision, enhancement, and progress. Second: the highly qualified faculty being recruited at AUS. Third: the type of students being admitted, which is a major factor in building a competitive environment such as the one available at AUS. Fourth: the facilities including the library, student and sports center, computer and engineering labs are all comparable to the ones available at MIT, Columbia NY, GSD and Georgia Tech. Fifth: AUS is sensitive to students' financial needs, and attentive to those who work hard to reach and maintain an excellent academic record. I was lucky to have received an academic scholarship throughout my years of study at AUS, and the same opportunity can be provided to others. Sixth: the students' activities and clubs that offer various opportunities for students to develop their social, athletic,

Where Are You Now?

Amber El Taieb, graduated in June 2006 with a dual degree in the fields of International Studies and Public Administration, and minored in Mass Communications. She spent six months coordinating business development and charity initiatives for the Dubai property firm Al Fajer Properties. Ms. El Taieb later went on to spend two years working as a liaison for the Board of Trustees at the Dubai International Arbitration Centre at the Dubai Chamber of Commerce where she received Commercial Arbitration Training in coordination with Kings College London and the Dubai International Arbitration Centre. She is currently relocating back to her hometown of New York City to lend a hand in the non-profit sector and has plans to pursue an MA in Culture and Public Policy in the near future.

News and Views from our Alumni - Shireen Chaya

I am excited to share the story of my AUS experience not because I believe it's a "success" story (far from it; the road to success has just begun) but because I always felt that my particular story exemplifies all that is wonderful about academia!

I began my first semester as an Environmental Science major. This was a major I chose in order to fulfill my parent's dream of me becoming a doctor. I spent the entire semester skipping class and having fun with my friends. Unfortunately, it wasn't until the end of that first semester when the reality of what I had done actually registered. My GPA was 1.5 and I was officially on academic probation.

Everyone I spoke to about probation said that it was "impossible" to get out of it and that I was doomed to a perpetual cycle of getting on and off probation. One student actually laughed when I asked, "if I study really hard I could end up on the Dean's list right?" The following semester I made the decision that I would not go through college without learning something! At that point, I never missed a class, even when I was ill. I truly believed (and still do) that my classes were the only opportunity I would ever get to not only express my opinions but also be exposed to the opinions (and sometimes guidance) of others. AUS was my opportunity to learn about anything and everything and perhaps (if I was lucky) to discover my "destiny."

That second semester my GPA increased to 2.99, and every semester after that I raised my GPA a little more.

I got on the Dean's List and eventually the Chancellor's list many times. I changed my major to Economics out of pure passion for the subject, and I found the courage to express that to my family with the support and guidance of my professors.

Eventually I became the president of the Economics Club and won the Economics Leadership Award in 2008. However, I would not have been able to achieve any of this if it weren't for the wonderful professors at AUS. Each of my professors inspired me to push myself further and seek knowledge (not grades). Each time a professor returned one of my papers filled with comments I knew that he/she took the time to read what I had to say and had an interest in my learning; I was grateful.

I began working two days after my last final exam and am now an analyst at the second largest consultancy firm in the world. In January I will be moving to the Dubai Economic Council as a researcher. I love sharing my story because it's not really about me but about the people at AUS; the faculty and staff who helped me through. What saddens me is the prevalent attitude amongst students that it's impossible to improve or get off probation and their years at AUS are often wasted. I am an example of how this not the case and we can all succeed when we apply ourselves.

My experience at AUS was so wonderful that I hope to return one day for my masters. It not only gave me an education but it is also where I met my husband to be.

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.