Dear AUK Faculty and Staff:

We are now five weeks into the Spring 2008 semester, with about 295 newly admitted students, bringing our total enrollment to 1670. This number includes 117 IEP students and 178 undergraduate transfer students. Increased numbers are good for the University, but also mean more work for everybody on this campus. We are recruiting new faculty and staff, from the Library Director to Admissions Counselors (all vacancies are posted on the AUK website). US-based interviews will be conducted in Washington, DC in early April. This semester we welcome several new English faculty, including our Fulbright Fellow, Dr. Amal Mahmoud. We also had a short course on Journalism taught by the Fulbright Senior Specialist Peter Spielmann, editor of the North America desk at the Associated Press. In the course of this semester we also receive a number of visitors from Dartmouth, our “collaborating partner” institution in the United States (Dr. Dale Eickelman in February, Mr. John James in March, Provost Scherr and Dr. Eickelman again in June). In turn, Dartmouth College hosted Dr. Carol Ross in early March, while Dartmouth consultants are currently evaluating short-listed candidates for faculty and library vacancies.

The year 2008 is a very special year for AUK in several ways. In June, we will have our first Commencement and graduate the Class of 2008. This means that in academic affairs, we are completing the four-year cycle of academic programs started in 2004 when AUK first opened its doors. We also are resuming the strategic planning process which will involve all of us in thinking through our mission, goals, and implementation plans. We have grown, expanded, and gained sufficient experience to bring clarity of purpose to the process of planning, to identify our priorities and to establish the timelines so as best to direct our energies to accomplish the plans and designs we develop. We need to make sure that our planning both aspires to ambitious goals and remains grounded in the reality of the demographic, administrative, and business environment of Kuwait. The plans we develop should lead to the accomplishment of concrete and specific goals within a realistic time-span. They also need to strengthen the foundation we have built and help raise AUK to the level of a reputable and academically strong teaching institution recognized regionally and internationally. Please plan to attend the General Meeting on Tuesday, March 25 at 3 p.m., which will follow the Undergraduate Faculty meeting immediately preceding it (2-3 p.m.) for a general discussion of the strategic goals of AUK and the planning process.

Clearly, academic planning is at the core of any planning the University undertakes. The challenge is to integrate the academic planning with all the other planning processes that are taking place at AUK – and we do conduct a great deal of planning even if we do not always have planning documents on hand. We need to align the planning with our goals, and this means that our goals should be clear, achievable, and make sense at this stage in AUK development. To be truly strategic, planning requires not only clear goals but also clear priorities. To be successful, planning must be an integrated process that will align academic planning with a hiring plan and budget planning, with enrollment goals and recruitment plans, with facilities development...
AUK Chronicle

The Council for Private Universities has proposed a Master Plan for the future AUK campus (see their sketch of the Ardhiya campus below). Ms. Amal Al-Binali (Director, PR and Marketing) coordinates AUK efforts toward Kuwaiti re-accreditation. International institutional accreditation process was slowed down in 2007 when gender segregation became an obstacle to AUK application for US accreditation by the Northeast Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). This year, Dr. Patricia Read-Hunter, Senior Assistant to the President, is coordinating the submission of the updated AUK application to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). If NWCCU agrees to review AUK for candidacy, a multi-year cycle of self-study and accreditation review will be launched which will require extensive additional documentation. Dr. Patricia will also coordinate the development of strategic-plan documents for the University. Please help her if and when, at various points in the planning process she asks for your support, advice or information. Rest assured that the actual planning will be done with your input, the plans will be reviewed and updated with your participation, and of course the plan implementation will be done in the units and by you – the talented and dedicated individuals who work in the various parts of the University. I am asking for your support and look forward to joining our efforts in this important endeavor.

With your participation, in your respective units, we will be able to determine what goals and sub-goals get priority, what benchmarks and timelines will be appropriate, what steps are needed toward implementation, and how we will measure progress toward our goals.

As many of you know, some steps forward have been taken in all of the above areas. Recent government emphasis on increased gender segregation has complicated many of our tasks, and that in turn affects our planning, both short-term and long-term. The budget planning process for 2008-09 was launched earlier this month and is being coordinated by Mr. Ernest “Ernie” Conklin (Executive Director of Finance and Administration). Ernie also is the senior AUK administrator for the Ardhiya Master Plan development. After thorough consultation with all the major units on campus, Option 1, a Kuwaiti project management company, has prepared for submission to the Council for Private Universities a Master Plan proposal for the future AUK campus (see their sketch of the Ardhiya campus below). Ms. Amal Al-Binali (Director, PR and Marketing) coordinates AUK efforts toward Kuwaiti re-accreditation. International institutional accreditation process was slowed down in 2007 when gender segregation became an obstacle to AUK application for US accreditation by the Northeast Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). This year, Dr. Patricia Read-Hunter, Senior Assistant to the President, is coordinating the submission of the updated AUK application to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). If NWCCU agrees to review AUK for candidacy, a multi-year cycle of self-study and accreditation review will be launched which will require extensive additional documentation. Dr. Patricia will also coordinate the development of strategic-plan documents for the University. Please help her if and when, at various points in the planning process she asks for your support, advice or information. Rest assured that the actual planning will be done with your input, the plans will be reviewed and updated with your participation, and of course the plan implementation will be done in the units and by you – the talented and dedicated individuals who work in the various parts of the University. I am asking for your support and look forward to joining our efforts in this important endeavor.

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AUK Recognized as a "Superbrand"

Last month the American University of Kuwait was voted as one of the Superbrands in Kuwait for 2008.

Superbrands is an organization based in the United Kingdom that promotes the discipline of branding and pays tribute to exceptional brands in over 40 countries. The organization grants “Superbrand” status to companies whose brand recognition is considered exceptional in the market. A Middle East headquarters of the organization has been established in Dubai, with a representative agency in Kuwait.

According to the organization “A Superbrand has established the finest reputation in its field. It offers consumers significant emotional and/or tangible advantages over its competitors which consumers want to recognize.”

AUK was awarded based on its strong and consistent branding identity, its name recognition within the local market, its distinct quality of service, promotional and media coverage, as well as the Selection Committee’s own perceptions of AUK.

This is first time that Superbrands takes place in Kuwait, and AUK was selected and qualified as one of strongest brands in Kuwait. No other educational institution in Kuwait was awarded.

Faculty News

Published Work


Professor Shoma Munshi’s article ‘Yeh Dil Maange More … in a Global City: Television and Consumer Choices in a Global City’ has been published in Christophe Jaffrelot and Peter van der Veer (eds) Patterns of Middle Class Consumption in India and China (New Delhi: Sage Publications, February 2008).

The edited volume is the result of an international conference convened and organized by Professor Shoma Munshi at the India International Centre in November 2005, for the International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS), in the Netherlands. At the time, Professor Munshi was a Senior Fellow and International Representative of the IIAS in India, and also a Consultant with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Professor Munshi was also instrumental in getting Sage, India, to publish the volume.

Patterns of Middle Class Consumption in India and China explores the complex history and sociology of the middle class from a comparative perspective. It has papers written by anthropologists, sociologists, and political scientists rather than economists, so the emphasis is on cultural shifts rather than economic statistics. The major contribution of this volume is that these two emerging powers of Asia are not, as is usual, compared to the West, but with each other.

Considering that these two societies have so much in common in scale, civilization history and as emerging economies, the book is timely. With its fresh insights
Dr. Juliet Dinkha, Psychology Program Lead and her student, Safaa Abdulhamid were invited to speak at Ejial Bilingual School on "Kuwaiti Cultural Norms" on Thursday February 14th, 2008. Dr. Dinkha discussed misunderstanding normal behavior, and culture shock. Her presentation highlighted the following points:

a. When an individual enters a strange culture, all or most of the familiar cues are removed.

b. Individuals differ greatly in the degree in which culture shock affects them.

c. The use of stereotypes may salve the ego of someone with a severe case of culture shock but it certainly does not lead to any genuine understanding of the host country and its people.

d. Teachers' stereotypes and the effect of those on their students.

e. Kuwait is made up of different ethnic groups, it is stratified into classes, it is differentiated into regions, and it is separated into rural and urban settlements, each having its own distinctive cultural characteristics. Yet superimposed upon these differences are the common elements of official language, institutions, and customs which knit it together to form a nation.

f. Most troubles that may occur in a classroom (i.e. misdiagnosing a child) are due to a lack of understanding of a student's cultural background and means of communication.

The workshop was attended by over 90 administrative staff and teachers.

Dr. Mutlaq Almutairi attended The National Education Development Conference in Kuwait on February 17.

The three-day conference was held to discuss the development of education in the country, as well as highlight challenges, plans, and technological means to raise the standard of education.

Under the slogan "Education is the way to development" the conference focused on the private sector's role in development.

Dr Almutairi was nominated by the Ministry of Higher Education as a member of the Information and Communications Technology Committee.

Local, regional, and international education experts were divided into 19 groups to tackle the conference’s main parameters. Officials from Harvard University, UNESCO, and the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS) were present.

Professor Shoma Munshi, Division Head of Social Sciences, and Coordinator International Academic Outreach, represented AUK at the Annual Meeting of the University Grants Commission of India at a book release launch on February 12, 2008, at the India International Centre in New Delhi.

Patterns of Middle Class Consumption in India and China is being reviewed in academic journals and the press. In their book review in the English language daily The Indian Express on March 9, 2008, the following was the comment on Professor Munshi's paper “Shoma Munshi's [article examines] why the celebration of consumerism by private television channels in India is a tool for empowerment. Munshi argues that Indian lower middle class women find small but significant means to challenge the status quo when they make television-driven lifestyle choices. Bombarded as we are with indignant arguments about consumerism’s soul-destroying regressiveness, it is refreshing to find an academic thesis that eschews (middle-class intelligentsia) snobbery and looks at how “ordinary” people find hope. Hope sometimes, as Munshi demonstrates, can be found in New Delhi's Lajpat Nagar shoe shops.”

Papers and Conferences

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Professor Shoma Munshi, Division Head of Social Sciences, and Coordinator International Academic Outreach, represented AUK at the Annual Meeting
of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) from January 23-27, in Washington, D.C.

AAC&U is the leading association in the U.S. dealing with the quality and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. Its members are committed to extending the advantage of a liberal education to all students, regardless of their academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915 by college presidents, AAC&U now represents the entire spectrum of American colleges and universities. AAC&U comprises more than 1,150 accredited colleges and universities that collectively educate more than five million students every year. Through its publications, meetings and programs, AAC&U provides a powerful voice for liberal education.

Professor Munshi’s attendance at this meeting was to participate in learning about innovative strategies and structures for college learning; how to apply intellectual and practical skills; and the role of assessment in measuring achievement of essential outcomes. This is very important as AUK moves towards international accreditation.

AUK is now one of the few universities in the Middle East who is an institutional member of the AAC&U.

In December, Professor Charles Mitchell invited PR expert, Lowell Hall to give a guest lecture in interviewing and handling media to COMM240 students in Dr. Ashakanani’s class.

Professor Mitchell held a mock press conference during the academic showcase. Students in his COMM 360 PR Writing class formed two groups dealing with a crisis. One group represented the GAP retail chain and their recent child labor crisis in India. The second group represented Blackwater Security and their crisis of the killing of civilians in Iraq by some of their employees.

The mock press conference was held to discuss and address the media on their respective crises, for which the students were expected to prepare proper press kits. Professor Mitchell’s COMM 201 class, along with Margaret Combs, Chris Gottschalk and Craig Loomis represented the media.

Also in attendance were Lowell Hall and Donatella Donatelli, PR Director of BatesPanGulf in Kuwait and Kholoud Al Harami, also of BatesPanGulf.
First Kuwait Chapter of Pi Gamma Mu Established at AUK

The Kuwait Alpha chapter of Pi Gamma Mu is the first academic honor society to be organized at the American University of Kuwait. Membership is open to qualified undergraduate and graduate students and faculty in the social sciences—economics, history, political science, sociology, anthropology, psychology and international relations.

Pi Gamma Mu seeks to recognize accomplished social science students and encourage others to emulate their dedicated classmates. It provides the opportunity for professors and students from various disciplines to interact by sponsoring academic workshops, conferences and triennial conventions so that students can present their research. Both students and faculty can publish in the Society’s journal, International Social Science Review. Undergraduate members can also take advantage of the Society’s competitive scholarships for funding graduate study.

To qualify for membership in the honor society, students must meet the following criteria for membership: an overall GPA of at least 3.4 and have at least 20 semester hours in social science classes. Faculty and administrators may also accept the privileges and responsibilities of membership in the chapter. Pi Gamma Mu not only provides recognition for scholastic achievements, but also offers enrichment opportunities through service projects, publications, scholarships and lectureship grants.

Pi Gamma Mu granted permission for AUK to charter a chapter this past summer. On 11 December this new “Kuwait Alpha” chapter will initiate 11 students and 7 faculty into membership. Christopher Ohan and Mourad Dakhli will serve as faculty sponsors.

Student members:
Ahmad Adi
Nada A. Al Hudaid
Noaf Hussien
Patty Marotte
Fahad Mohammad
Abdulaziz Al Mossalem
Fatmah Al Qadfan
Fatmah Al Qattan
Farah Al Shamali
Jawaher Ali Redha (Alumni)
Noura Al Aleiwi (Alumni)

Faculty members:
Shareefa Al Adwani
Hesham Al Awadi
Conerly Casey
Mourad Dakhli (faculty sponsor)
Juliet Dinkha
Ankur Madan
Gholam Vatandoust

Founded in 1924, Pi Gamma Mu now has over 200,000 members at 170 chapters located at colleges and universities in the United States and abroad. As the name implies, Kuwait Alpha is the first chapter to be formed in the Arabian Gulf region. The purpose of the Society is to encourage academic excellence in the social sciences, promote social service, and develop leadership skills among its members. For those students going on to graduate studies, membership in Pi Gamma Mu serves as a mark of distinction and proven scholarship.

Pi Gamma Mu is a member of the Association of College Honor Societies, on whose council it has a representative. It is affiliated with the American Association for the Advancement of Science which classifies Pi Gamma Mu as a constituent organization of Section K-Social, Economic and Political Sciences.
Updates from The Gulf Studies Center

The Gulf Studies Center is pleased to introduce our two new Fulbright Scholars for Spring 2008, Dr. Amal Mahmoud and Professor Peter Spielmann.

Dr. Amal Mahmoud is an ESL/EFL/Linguistics professor with more than thirty years experience in teaching graduate and undergraduate classes. He is currently an ESL Instructor at Highline Community College in Des Moines, Washington. Dr. Mahmoud received his PhD in Applied Linguistics at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. and his MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from the American University in Cairo. During his Fulbright grant at AUK, Dr. Mahmoud will be drawing on his extensive expertise in the field of ESL to teach courses in the Intensive English Program.

Professor Peter Spielmann currently serves as editor of the North America Desk at the Associated Press, having spent more than twenty years with the Associated Press covering domestic and international stories. His body of work includes reporting on the United Nations, the European Union, NATO, and the Gulf War. Prof. Spielmann has also served as adjunct professor of journalism at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism for over a decade, supervising graduate students and teaching courses in the field of International Journalism. During his time at AUK, Prof. Spielmann will be teaching a course on International Journalism to journalism and international studies students, in addition to advising the Media and Communications Program on enhancing its journalism curriculum.

Recent Lectures:

The Gulf Studies Center recently hosted “A Conversation with Sara Akbar on Gender, Culture, and Oil.” The capacity audience of students, faculty and staff listened intently as Ms. Akbar discussed the challenging path she forged as the first female petroleum engineer in Kuwait, describing the many obstacles she overcame to serve her country and become an authority in the petroleum industry. Ms. Akbar also spoke of her experience in fighting the oil fires ignited by withdrawing Iraqi troops in 1991, and what the resulting recognition has meant to her and her endeavors. Today Ms. Akbar owns her own company, Kuwait Energy, with operations in seven countries. Ms. Akbar currently serves as Deputy Chairperson and Managing Director of Kuwait Energy.

On Wednesday, March 12, the Gulf Studies Center hosted a lecture featuring Dr. Michael Kraig, Director of Policy Analysis and Dialogue at the Stanley Foundation in Muscatine, Iowa. In his lecture, Dr. Kraig addressed the topic of “The Emerging Global Multi-polar Order and its Impact on the Gulf,” providing original recommendations for an approach that “fuses the interests, concerns, and capabilities of Gulf countries with all external powers who have an increasing stake in the globalized world system - a security order that blends hard geopolitical interests with equally important notions of fairness and justice.”
HR Report

An open letter from Director of HR, Cecil Hill:

I am very happy to have joined AUK and thank everyone for welcoming me into the family. I have found the AUK community to be a family dedicated to providing students with a liberal arts education of which they can be proud. The happiness and enthusiasm that I see in the faces of students are evidence enough for me to know that we are having a positive impact in this endeavor. The liberal arts are known as a broad range of disciplines enabling persons to exercise the full professional potential and responsibilities of a modern citizen. Therefore, I must say that it is very exciting to be part of this effort for the State of Kuwait. To be a part of helping the Kuwaiti society deal with and prepare itself for the global economy and regional marketplace is a privilege that cannot be taken lightly. To be of service to mankind is a true blessing and reminds me of the saying “the heart is happiest when it beats for others.”

In HR, we feel this way about our AUK duty as well, and look forward to helping the AUK community become all that it can become. We are in the midst of re-engineering ourselves and will be designing programs in the areas of employee training, compensation, benefits, recruitment, employee relations, and organizational development. Presently, we are updating our records and databases and redefining our roles. Near future products will include HR policies and procedures, an employee handbook, job description creation and revision, salary administration modifications, and increased communication. We will also be challenged by the increased demand for university level education and will strive to maintain the staffing levels and organizational infrastructure necessary for growth.

Consequently, we are committed to the maintenance of quality human capital that is customer service driven. Moreover, I believe when individuals feel good about themselves and about the environment in which they find themselves, productivity levels will be high, and the quality of work life will be good.

I want to thank everyone again for their kind welcome. And, I look forward to helping AUK achieve its objectives and goals. Insha-Allah.

NEW EMPLOYEES, JANUARY 2008:

Farah Yousif, Administrative Assistant, Division of Humanities & Arts
Vanessa Breslin, Career Counselor, Student Success Center
Gretta Al-Sawah, HR Specialist-Administration & Compensation, Human Resources
Cecil Hill, Director-Human Resources
Maher Dabbousch, Director-Admissions, Division of Student Affairs
Dana Taqi, Alumni Program Coordinator, Division of Student Affairs
Walid Naamani, Assistant Director-CCE
Ibrahim Merza, Assistant Professor-Economics, Division of Business & Economics
Kathy Nixon, Assistant Professor-English, Division of Humanities & Arts

NEW EMPLOYEES, FEBRUARY 2008:

Suhair Al-Hamalawi, Arabic Instructor, CCE
Nadeem Rehman, Driver/Services Assistant, Campus Services
Steven Urbano, Instructor, CCE
Jabran Butt, Lab Assistant, Intensive English Program

PROMOTIONS, JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2008:

Amna Al-Omare, assigned as Interim Director-Library, Academic Affairs
Majeda Najaa, Assistant to the Director, Intensive English Program
Dalal Al-Hubail, HR Specialist-Benefits & HR Logistics, Human Resources
Fatema Hayat, Senior Coordinator of Campus Life, Division of Student Affairs
Annie Arabian, Executive Assistant-IP&R, Office of the President
Lalitha Varadarajan, Financial Controller, Finance
Employee Population:

AUK has a very diverse employee population. It is composed of 34 different nationalities. The top seven are listed below and represent 66 percent.

- American: 28%
- Kuwaiti: 17%
- Indian: 10%
- Lebanese: 7%
- Canadian: 5%
- Syrian: 4.5%
- Egyptian: 4.5%

The other nationalities represented are as follows:

- Jordanian
- Austrian
- German
- Pakistani
- French
- Filipino
- Palestinian
- Bangladeshi
- Sri Lankan
- Trinidadian
- Emirati
- Yugoslavian
- Tobagan
- Australian
- Tobagonian

Employee population by gender:

- Females: 50.5%
- Males: 49.5%

Achievements:

- Intensive English Program – Margaret Combs completed the Operations Manual for IEP.
- Finance Department – Completed the Operations Manual for Finance.
- Finance & Information Technology – Online Payment Gateway Installation. Students can now pay tuition and other charges via the internet.
- Information Technology – The IT team has established a smooth and successful transition of AUK’s ERP from Banner 6.2 to Banner 7.3. Additionally, IT has implemented an automation configuration (Oracle 10g, Real Application Cluster) that ensures high availability and response time. AUK is among the first institutions in the region to implement such a configuration. Our email mailbox space and allocated drive space capacity has been increased almost three-fold, and AUK now has increased bandwidth and internet filtering capability. Moreover, older model PCs are being replaced via IT’s evergreening process.

Announcement:

HR is conducting an “Open Day” event on 15 March 2008. Applications will be accepted on campus from job applicants. If you have friends, associates, or relatives that would like to work for AUK, invite them to come.

AN IMPORTANT PERSON TO KNOW ON CAMPUS

Nawaf Al-Banai is AUK’s Safety and Security Coordinator and a very important person to know. Nawaf has been with AUK for a year after spending five years with the Kuwait Fire Brigade where he was responsible for evacuation procedures and emergency training.

When you see him on campus say “hello” or “marhaba” just to let him know you a little bit better. AUK is still a small family and a friendly relationship with a someone like Nawaf may come in handy sometimes.

If you happen to notice anything on campus that seems suspicious or out of the ordinary, let Nawaf know about it.

Things to report: Unattended bags, people on campus that are not wearing ID tags or who you don’t recognize as part of our AUK community, lights that are not working or doors that should be locked but are not.

Nawaf can be reached on AUK extension 333 or mobile number 6107010.
MUNAUK Goes to Harvard

Under the generous patronage of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah, six students and two faculty advisors took off to Boston, Massachusetts on 11 February 2008 to participate in the 54th Harvard National Model United Nations Conference (HNMUN) from 14 – 17 February.

HNMUN is the oldest and most prestigious MUN conference and has participants from all over the world. This year, over 3,000 participants, from 170 different participating universities from over 35 countries took part representing 192 countries in 24 committees over four days. The American University of Kuwait was the first university from Kuwait to participate in the history of American Model United Nations conferences. AUK was one of three Arab delegations to take part this year; the other two being from Morocco and Iraq.

Model United Nations is a simulation of the functional dynamics of the well-known international organization, the United Nations. Each student represents the foreign policy of an assigned state and applies this towards various topics in certain committees.

For this conference, the Model United Nations at the American University of Kuwait team was assigned by the Harvard conference administration to represent the countries of Namibia and Grenada in four committees.

The following students participated in the conference: Fahad Mohammad (President and Head Delegate), Fahad Al-Tukhaim (Vice President), Yusuf Al-Rashed, Norah Al-Hilaly, Dana Shamlawi, and Farah Al-Shamali.

All MUNAUK members emerged from those four days with stronger negotiating skills and increased diplomatic experience as well as a greater belief in their abilities to make a change for the future. Through compromise and collaboration, students had to put aside their preconceived notions and instead listened earnestly to others while still holding on to the assigned state’s principles and interests in order to come up with feasible resolutions, clauses and agreements.

The MUNAUK members would like to thank their professors for allowing the students to travel during the semester.

At the conference, the students took part in rigorous debating and negotiating on numerous topics including trade and development, women’s empowerment in African societies through education, drugs and terrorism in Columbia and the humanitarian situation of Iraqi refugees following the 2003 Iraq War. All the students passed important clauses in the final resolutions in their committees, with Fahad Mohammad, representing Namibia, winning Best Delegate in the World Trade Organization, the first for a Kuwaiti at the Harvard National Model United Nations.

The students were accompanied by their Faculty Advisor, Ms. Shareefa Al-Adwani, and Assistant Professor of History, Dr. Christopher Ohan. Prior to the HNMUN conference, MUNAUK met up with Kuwait’s Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salim Al-Jabir Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah in Washington, D.C., as well as with Kuwait’s Ambassador to the United Nations Abdullah Al-Murad in New York.

Founders of MUNAUK, Shareefa Al-Adwani, Fahad Mohammad, and Fahad Al-Tukhaim meeting the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah in his office prior to traveling to Boston.
AUK benefits from Dartmouth technical expertise

As part of the American University of Kuwait’s ongoing relationship with Dartmouth College - within the context of the memorandum of understanding negotiated in 2003 between Dartmouth and AUK - two members of Dartmouth’s information technology team, Technical Services Director David Bucciero and Voice Network Engineer Peter Ejmont, traveled to Kuwait on December 12th, 2008, for a 5-days visit to share their technological expertise.

Ms. Maha Khlat – Director of the Information Technology department at AUK began communicating with Dartmouth technological staff through conference calls in April 2007, in anticipation of a more extensive on-site consultancy. She discussed with various Dartmouth IT staff many issues related to network expansion, SAN storage and Banner 7.3 upgrade given that the two institutions face similar challenges in those areas.

During their visit, Bucciero and Ejmont conducted a thorough assessment of the current network infrastructure and of the future planning at AUK. They addressed both task-specific goals and a broader, long-term mission.

Projects such as implementing an additional internet link by a second internet provider were underway and David and Peter had a first-hand exposure to some technology challenges that are specific to Kuwait (bandwidth costs, availability of technical expertise, etc.)

During the on-site assessment, Bucciero and Ejmont made approximately 40 different recommendations based on best practices. They also supported some recommendations that had been previously submitted by the IT team such as implementing a second core router to allow for total network redundancy and high availability, in addition to reviewing the location and the adequacy of the data center. Bucciero and Ejmont commended the network closets clean-up project but stressed on the importance of having UPS in each closet. They were highly supportive of upgrading the PIX firewalls and of implementing IPS (Intrusion Prevention Systems) and VPN (Virtual Private Network).

They reviewed the network security and advised AUK to conduct a regular comprehensive security assessment. They highlighted the importance of IT communications to the community and of keeping metrics to baseline network and systems usage.

The President of AUK, Marina Tolmacheva, took particular interest in Bucciero and Ejmont’s visit. Towards the end of their stay, Bucciero and Ejmont gave a presentation on the status of AUK’s current network environment and future IT planning to President Tolmacheva and her cabinet.

Bucciero will continue communicating with the AUK team as it implements future plans and recommendations.

David and Peter both enjoyed their visit to Kuwait. They were particularly impressed with the hospitality of everyone they met, and appreciated the exposure to a different culture and the opportunity to learn more about the Middle East. They visited the souks and sampled the local cuisine.

A heartfelt thanks goes out to David and Peter from Maha Khlat and the entire IT Team!

IEP Accreditation

Margaret Combs, Director of the Intensive English Program, and Stephen Jacques, English Instructor and Self Study Coordinator, attended an accreditation workshop in October 2008 hosted by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA), located in Alexandria, Virginia. The purpose of this workshop was to familiarize accreditation candidates on CEA standards and procedures. Following this workshop, Ms. Combs and Mr. Jacques appointed a CEA steering committee. The CEA steering Committee consists of Ms. Combs, Mr. Jacques, Rebecca Sanchez Loomis, IEP Coordinator, Kym Al-Sufi, English Instructor, and Michael McMurray, ENGL 099 Coordinator and Senior English Instructor.

All steering committee members are CEA sub-committee chairs who are responsible for ensuring different CEA standards are met and documented for IEP. Dr. Carol Ross-Black, Dean of Student Affairs, and Ernest Conklin, Executive Director of Finance and Administration, are also chairs for CEA sub-committees. Sub-committee chairs have
enlisted the necessary committee members to start work on accreditation with CEA.

Ms. Combs and Mr. Jacques with the help of Mr. Conklin compiled a self study plan to provide CEA with sufficient evidence that AUK has the structure, personnel, resources and time to complete its self study. In January 2008, CEA accepted the self study plan of American University of Kuwait Intensive English Program. This means that AUK can continue to pursue accreditation with CEA. Sub-committees are presently working on gathering information and writing their appropriate standards. The compilation and submission of the final self study report is planned for October 2008.

Calendar of Events

MARCH 2008
20 Thurs Prophet’s birthday. University closed.

APRIL 2008
6 Sun Spring Break begins.
13 Sun Spring Break ends. Classes resume.
26 Sat Taste of AUK/Open Day
28 Mon Water Conference - Day 1
29 Tues Water Conference - Day 2

MAY 2008
10 Sat Liberal Arts Conference - Day 1
11 Sun Liberal Arts Conference - Day 2

Dear colleagues,

Please email all future submissions for subsequent issues of the AUKChronicle to rsamerai@auk.edu.kw. An archive of past issues of the AUKChronicle is available on the university-wide shared drive.

While every effort was made to ensure that all content is accurate and up-to-date, some information may have changed between the content submissions and the publishing of this issue.