

CSIS Students Imagine Their Way to Victory

By Dina El-Zohairy

A group of five CSIS students and their faculty mentor proudly returned with a trophy from the Gulf Imagine Cup Regional Finals competition, which was held in Dubai on 19th April. Their innovative creation, ElectReduce, had won them first place in the Mobile Development category that was specifically introduced by Microsoft for teams in the Gulf region in association with du, a UAE telecommunications service provider.

The AUK team consists of Computer Science and/or Information Systems majors Abdullah Al-Shaikh, Salman Al-Saffar, Ahmad Ashour, Abdelwahab Al-Atiqi, and Ali Dashti. Dr. Amir Zeid, Program Lead of Computer Science, served as their mentor and coach. Five other Gulf universities participated in this category, including Kuwait University. The AUK team found Bits-Pilani (Dubai) and UAE University to be their strongest competitors.

The team of five willingly took on the challenge when Dr. Amir proposed the idea of partaking in the competition to his CSIS 490 capstone class last semester. Their aim was to develop a mobile phone application that would somehow contribute to long-term environmental sustainability in the region. Ensuring environmental sustainability is one of the United Nation's eight Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) for world development and a major area of focus for Microsoft.

The basic idea behind ElectReduce is to keep track of the electricity consumption level of individual users via live feeds. If it is below the national average, the person would earn points which he/she could then redeem for some reward. Another feature of the application would make it possible to control household lighting remotely, thus saving electricity. The students believe that by constantly being reminded of how much electricity they

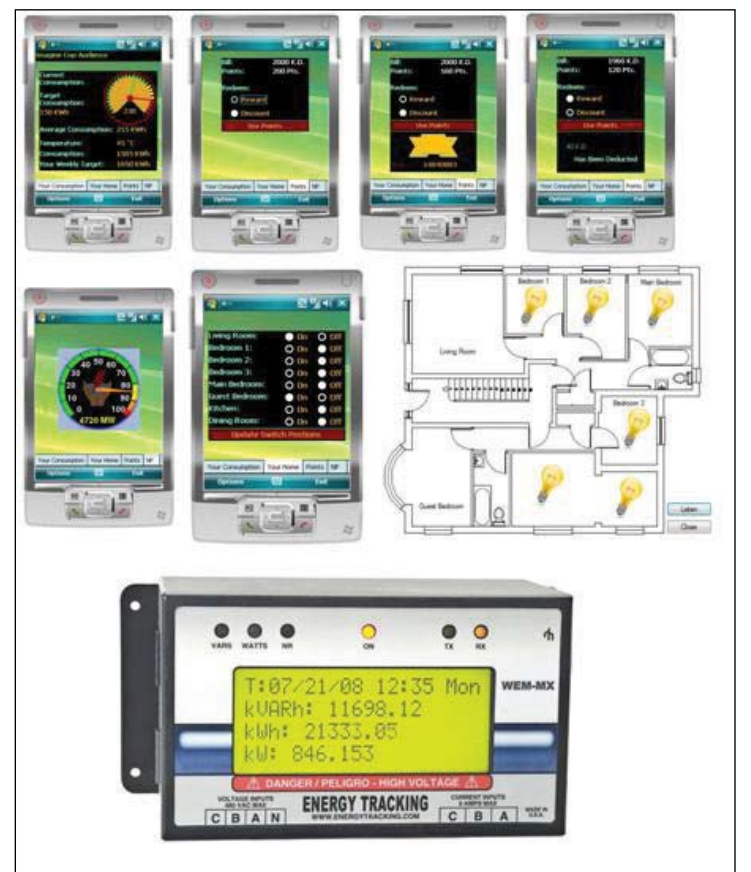
are using and being offered the potential of earning points, individual consumers would be motivated to reduce their electricity consumption. In the long run, this is expected to lead to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere.

The deliverables for this competition included submitting a written paper describing the technical aspects of the application in addition to developing a prototype of the software and testing it. The project was finally presented to a panel of judges. Some of the main challenges they faced involved interfacing software and hardware, finding the correct gauge, and using a new programming language. Nevertheless, the combination of excellent teamwork skills, individual talent, creativity and dedication, and guidance provided by Dr. Amir led them to success.

Even though the Mobile Development category winners may not be invited to take part in the Imagine Cup World-wide Finals in Egypt in July

2009, the learning experience gained from the regional competition alone was, according to the students, "worth a lot";

"what a software developer ever wants"; and "equivalent to what [they] learned in the past two years."



MC Hosts Women in Business Forum



By Dina El-Zohairy and Nada Bedir

After the Municipality raided the Marketing Club's second Car Boot Sale last month, its members were keen to make it up to their target customers. Following weeks of advertising, the much-awaited Women in Business Conference finally took place on 30th April and 2nd May, featuring a series of workshops—all but one presented by women—and prominent female guest speakers at the opening and closing ceremonies.

According to the Marketing Club, which prides itself on organizing the first student-run conference, the purpose behind this conference was to celebrate women's success by bringing to light Kuwaiti women who de-

fied the odds by reaching once-unperceivable goals in a male-dominated society, such as Dr. Ma'souma Al-Mubarak, who was appointed as Kuwait's first female Cabinet Minister in 2005. Other exemplary female figures and entrepreneurs who participated in the opening ceremony of the conference included the founder of Optimal Solutions, a Kuwait-based human resources consulting and development firm and PR Manager at KNPC who also owns a legal arbitration consultancy firm.

A variety of practical topics were presented at the workshops, teaching primarily female students how to manage stress through art, deal with cultural challenges facing female leaders, build confidence and self-

esteem, and strike a balance between multiple duties and tasks.

Even more successful women were invited to the closing ceremony, which comprised of a panel discussion and a lecture by Dr. Salwa Al-Jassar, Chief of the Center for Women Empowerment.

The discussion topic was the "glass ceiling," which can be defined as an imaginary barrier to further promotion or progression for members of specific groups of people. The speakers were Dr. Salwa Al-Sharqawi, Dr. Mohsen Bagnied, Ms. Fatma Al-Hamad, and Mahdi Al-Own, President of the Marketing Club.

Dr. Salwa firmly believes that no one can control your am-

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What's Next for Departing President?

By Farah Al-Shamali

While back, Sheikha Dana Al-Sabah, Chair of the Board of Trustees at the American University of Kuwait, announced that President Marina Tolmacheva would be resigning by the end of this year. There is much about President Tolmacheva that we know: her selflessness, drive, passion for learning and the academic establishment, professionalism, poise; the list can never be exhausted. However, what is the story behind this dynamic woman who has been able to steer AUK in a direction of continual progress? What are her motivations and takes on certain issues at AUK and in the Kuwaiti community? To answer these questions and much more, the *Voice* conducted an interview with President Tolmacheva on Tuesday 5th May.

It takes a chronological approach by going back to the interviewee's very humble beginnings and then delving into her educational/occupational careers and how she ended up at AUK.

President Tolmacheva stated that she is a historian and "you grow into the profession." She began to find fault with historical fiction and her perspectives changed as she developed her own method of teaching. In the classroom, she taught culture and civilization courses.



When asked of the importance of these respective topics, she stated that it "called upon one to be intellectually disciplinary" seeing that one deals with "human society and expressions of culture." It also "brings the realizations of what distinguishes civilizations."

President Tolmacheva praised the Russian model of higher education when asked about her educational career. "In the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation being the largest republic in it, higher education was great." It included "very rigorous, thorough, and disciplinary training" which she also considers to be the hallmark of AUK. When she was an American consultant teaching Russian, President Tolmacheva was able to inform

her fellow Russian academics what makes American education important. In the United States, "only 20% of institutions qualify themselves as belonging to the liberal arts." An important feature to keep in mind is that "most research is done at universities while it has always been done at the academies of sciences in Europe." "This is why," President Tolmacheva continued, "80% of institutions are not deemed as belonging to the liberal arts."

Moving into more local territory, the *Voice* asked President Tolmacheva what attracted her to AUK, and she smiled as she recollected that particular story. Around the time she was look-

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Al-Awadhi: Use Time Productively



By Dina El-Zohairy

While driving around Kuwait, you may have noticed the billboards showing a faceless young man clinging to a clock. This is none but the marketing symbol for *Rekaaz's* tenth regional campaign (*fāz man hayātah injāz*), which stresses the importance of living a life full of accomplishments. The campaign was promoted at schools, universities and shopping malls during the period between 5th March and 20th May.

The idea for this campaign arose from the widely held perception that many youth waste their free time on pointless activities. In fact, a study by an Arab Foundation that studies social values revealed that free time represents a problem for 43% of youth. Therefore, the *Fāz* (Arabic: 'won') campaign was created to help solve this problem by stressing the importance of time and of using it to channel the skills and energy of youth into positive accomplishments.

In an effort to bring to light the values called for by this campaign, the Cooperation Club at AUK invited Dr. Mohammed Al-Awa-

dhi to give a lecture next to the soccer field after sunset prayer on Wednesday, 6th May. This marked the club's final event of their first year in operation, and in recognition of their hard work and contribution, the club's founders and members were presented with certificates. Al-Awadhi was also awarded a plaque.

A person's accomplishments are inseparable from his morals and sincere intention for goodness, as Al-Awadhi first noted. These could include anything from acts of worship and self-development techniques to community projects and and scientific breakthroughs.

A real-life embodiment of perseverance, willpower and achievement is the Egyptian-American chemistry professor Mustafa El-Sayyed, who sought to find a more effective treatment for cancer after losing his wife to it around 20 years ago. In 2007, he was awarded the U.S. National Medal of Science for his phenomenal contribution in the field of nanotherapy as a molecular targeting approach to overcome side effects of conventional cancer therapy. In specific, he is working on developing cylindrical gold

nanorods that can bind to cancer cells. Once the cells are bound to the gold, they light up like bulbs, making them easy to detect. Using a laser, they can selectively destroy the cancer cells without harming the healthy cells.

As outlined in the *Fāz* guide, which was being distributed in addition to other promotional materials, some of the ingredients of success include entrusting one's soul to Allah, utilizing one's skills and abilities only in what satisfies Allah, having a clear vision of what you want, considering what is beneficial in this world and the hereafter in goal-setting, doing your part to the best you could, and thanking Allah for any desired outcomes.

It is rather challenging to enumerate the diverse values and pieces of advice that the audience left with that night because they were neatly packaged in the speaker's unique combination of an unrivaled sense of humor, candidness, and use of vivid anecdotes that captivated the audience for the whole two hours. Following a short Q&A session, members of the audience were encouraged to share individual or group accomplishments with everyone else.

Oil and Political Mobilization

By Walah Al-Sabah

On 22nd April, 2009, in a lecture hosted by the Gulf Studies Center, visiting Fulbright scholar Gregory Gause spoke about "Oil price and political mobilization in Kuwait." Moderated by Professor Hesham Al-Awadhi, the lecture commenced when Dr. Marina Tolmacheva introduced professor Gause to the audience.

Professor Gause, a senior Fulbright scholar and fan of liberal arts, is an expert on the politics of the Gulf and the Middle East in general. He is currently an associate professor of political science at the University of Vermont, and is the director of the university's Middle East Studies program. He has published two books by the titles of *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States* and *Saudi-Yemeni Relations: Domestic Structures and Foreign Influence*. His third book, on international relations of the Gulf, will be published by Cambridge University Press and is scheduled to be released in the end of 2009. Gause received his PhD in political science from Harvard University in 1987. He is a fluent Arabic speaker, having studied the language at the American University of Cairo. Professor Gause is currently teaching, PLSC 207: *International Relations of Arab States* at AUK for one semester and will be returning to the U.S. after the Spring semester.

In his presentation, Kuwait was used as an example of how the oil of a country affects its political system. The issue is between oil wealth and political outcomes. He referred to Michael Ross, whose theory was that oil discourages democracy because the state provides free services without taxing its citizens, and therefore, the idea of "no representation without taxation" comes along. But the recurrent question throughout the presentation was, "What is it about oil that discourages democracy?" According to Thomas Freedman's first law of petropolitics, oil depoliticizes the citizens because they have everything they want. However, Gause explained that countries such as Iran, Venezuela, Indonesia and Algeria all have oil but are certainly not depoliticized. Terry Karl, another professor of political science whom Gause referred to in his lecture, wrote a book by the name of *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro states*. The test case of her book is Venezuela, and she argues



that oil builds patronage networks, and then price declines put pressure on those networks, which in turn leads to mobilization and regime crises. Although her test case is Venezuela, she argues that this situation is applicable everywhere, not only that country.

Gause goes on to explain that Kuwait is a pure oil rentier state and that over 90% of its government revenues come from oil. However, it has a long history of activism. But Kuwait still does not follow the pattern because there is no significant mobilization during oil downturns. In fact, important political mobilization occurs when the oil prices are up. He defined political mobilization as being, "activity beyond the ordinary and outside established channels" and identified two indicators of political mobilization: public demonstrations and petition movements. He mentioned Kuwait's economic downturns which include the Souk Al-Manakh crisis of the early 1980's, the Iraqi invasion when oil prices went up but were a complete disaster, and the early 1990's when there was a downturn oil price but with a positive GDP. Therefore, periods of Kuwaiti economic decline were not periods of intense political mobilization.

But Gause asks, what can we learn about Kuwait's mobilization and oil declines? Well, first, Kuwait uses counter-cyclical spending to lessen the effects of oil price declines and other crises. Second, Kuwait can deficit spend but avoid fiscal crises that can lead to political crises. Fiscal

crises occur when a state cannot pay its bills, but the state of Kuwait *can* pay its bills due to its oil wealth whereas countries such as Algeria, Venezuela and Indonesia sometimes cannot. And lastly, fiscal crises lead to political change. Hence, Gause reasons that Kuwait's situation confirms the logic of Terry Karl's theory. But, her theory cannot explain why the periods of political mobilization in Kuwait have taken place when they have; the Diwaniya movement, and the Nabiha 5 movement of 2006 which changed Kuwait's electoral system both took place when the economic situation was positive.

Gause's presentation poses the question of why there is political mobilization in Kuwait. The answer is that these political mobilizations do not take place due to economics. But movements arise when the ruling elite seeks to expand its power, or when it appears to be in crisis. So, political crises, not economic crises, mobilize Kuwaitis. Towards the end of the lecture, Gause concluded that Kuwait indirectly confirms part of Terry Karl's theory, but deviates from it in that the government could reduce economic hardships without fiscal crises. Kuwait also challenges the logic of the theory because its political mobilization is unrelated to economic crises. In this, Kuwait is a unique case.

Sincere thanks goes to Professor Gause for this informative lecture, as well as to the Gulf Studies Center and its director, Professor Hesham Al-Awadhi for organizing this lecture for both students and staff to benefit from.

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SGA Unveils General Assembly Plan at Town Hall Meeting

By Student Government Association

As the 2008 – 2009 SGA's term comes to a close, there is enough time for one more Town Hall Meeting. The 3rd Town Hall Meeting was a perfect opportunity for SGA to present the newly devised structure for the student government including the addition of the General Assembly. This was the first topic of discussion which coincided with the SGA/ GA elections.

Dalal, Vice President of the SGA, moderated the event and began by introducing the General Assembly: a body representative of the various constituencies of the AUK community (Intensive English Program, Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, SGA Alumni, Clubs and Organizations, Sports, Division of Social Sciences, Division of Sciences and Engineering, Division of Business and Economics, and Division of Humanities and Arts). If a students feel that their concerns are not being addressed, they can approach their representative, informed of the concerns, and it would be the representative's responsibility to communicate them in the General Assembly.

Representatives of the Intensive English Program, Freshmen, Clubs and Organizations, and Sports are elected in the Fall. The representative for the Intensive English Program must be enrolled in the program during his or her tenure. The same goes for the Freshmen, Clubs and Organizations, and Sports representatives. Clubs and organizations always change at the beginning of every academic year as do sports teams. That is the logic behind having elections for these two groups in the fall. The SGA Alumni representative serves as an advisory, non-voting member.

A visual representation of the new SGA structure was displayed for the audience to view: the SGA Board and the General Assembly both fall under the SGA. In other words, they both constitute the Student Government Association and are both referred to as such. However, they carry out different roles that ultimately go back to serving the AUK student population. Thus, it is not a hierarchy—the SGA Board and the GA are somewhat equal. The SGA Board is mere-



ly the body of individuals that steers the SGA; the GA representatives have voting power and can freely voice student concerns. The President serves as the Chair and the Vice President as the Parliamentarian during GA meetings; the Secretary is given the task of keeping accurate meeting minutes. What is important to note is that the Parliamentarian would enforce Robert's Rules of Order or parliamentary procedure, as is implemented in such bodies as the United Nations. It ensures that meetings are conducted with fairness and impartiality with reference to speaking lists, speaking time, and what not. Finally, the SGA election timetable was displayed to illustrate the electoral process to the audience.

When the floor was opened to questions, Dr. Nizar Hamzeh asked why the President of the SGA would be the Chair of the GA. Dalal explained that the President is not a voting member and is there to chair GA meetings. Mahdi Al-Own, President of the Marketing Club, asked how much voting power the GA has and whether its say was equal to that of the SGA Board. Dalal responded that all the students are allowed

to vote for the SGA Board; with the GA, they vote for their representatives. A series of questions, answers, and explanations ensued. A conclusive statement was given by Dean of Student Affairs Carol Ross: the SGA constitution is available to students to review and propose changes or additions; if students fail to exercise that right, it will continue to stand as is. Norah, the President of the SGA, has confirmed that ample time was given to AUK students to provide feedback on the SGA Constitution before it was ratified and made effective. Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Theodore Kruse stated that the development of this GA had been discussed for years with regards to quorums, voting regulations, two-thirds majority, and what not. It must not be forgotten that there can be an evolution of it but it must be given a chance to work.

After the topic had been exhausted, the audience was free to address other concerns to the AUK administration. One student wondered why some parents get VIP and VVIP seats at the graduation while others are not given such priority. Dr. Carol explained to him that in Kuwait, certain individ-

uals are treated specially, but that this should be not taken as demeaning to parents who are not treated specially. Ms. Amal Al-Benali added it is protocol in Kuwait to observe such hierarchies, regardless of how students and parents receive it.

A student then brought up how he believes that

accreditation is blocked and that professors are not academically protected; in other words, whatever they say in class may be used against them. President Marina Tolmacheva chose to respond to this question stating that accreditation had not been blocked and no student activities

had been questioned. The Northwest Commission had questions that focused on gender equity and academic freedom in Kuwait and information was provided based on Kuwaiti constitution and existing regulations. The application for international accreditation will be looked into again in July of this year—AUK has been informed that they are not expected to provide additional information. There may be a perception that they are not coming because of academic freedom. AUK hopes that, with constitutional guarantee of intellectual freedom in Kuwait, AUK will stand a chance of acquiring international accreditation. What will be decided in July will determine if AUK can proceed in that process.

When it comes to academic freedom granted to professors, President Tolmacheva stated that there may be confusion as to what academic freedom means. Academic freedom of speech according to the American model is guided by guidelines written by the American Association of University Professors. This is where the parallel is drawn for AUK: it functions as a religiously affiliated institution restricted by Kuwaiti law; for instance, if a professor wishes to teach Islam, there are limitations that Kuwaiti law imposes; therefore, only Sharia-trained faculty can teach a course on Islam.

Spring 08 Student Government Election Results

2009 – 2010 SGA Board

President	Abdullah Al-Sharrad
Vice President	Mohammad Al-Mutairi
Treasurer	Essa Al-Matar
Secretary	To be filled as per the SGA Constitution
Programming Officer	Mohammad Al-Shuraij
Media Officer	Omar Al-Hussainan
Public Relations Officer	Essa Al-Boloshy

General Assembly

Business and Economics Division Representative: Noha Aoun

SGA Board voting percentage: 42 %

GA voting percentage: 38 %

SGA Visits Minister of Education, Ms. Nouriya Al-Subeeh

By Farah Al-Shamali

On 21st April 2009, the Student Government Association paid a visit to the Minister of Higher Education, Ms. Nouriya Al-Subeeh, to discuss a range of issues related to private universities. Her modesty was shown throughout the visit and how her devout love for her country has caused her to give much. The first topic was opening Magistrate and Doctorate programs in private universities: the ministry has no barriers for having these programs but the problem arises with being dedicated to the task. The most important element is the quality of the professors that are provided for these programs—this is what the ministry is concerned about. Furthermore, most private universities are of a relatively young age and will need time to develop the capabilities needed to create this endeavor.

Another important issue was opening faculties of medicine in private universities: there are certain qualifications that a university should meet in order to open such a program; however, there are no specific restrictions against private universities opening a medical program. Private universities are relatively new and are still developing; hence, some time is needed before they become qualified or able to supply such a program. Moving on to an issue that is of grave concern to students—the question of monthly allowances—resulted in the following: there is an inefficient system at the Ministry of Higher Education. Elements that cause this inefficient system are the fact that they have a lot of students from all universities in Kuwait and abroad which causes it to function rather slowly, and the lack of managerial staff to oversee all transactions and ensure that the students meet the qualifications for receiving the monthly allowance. They have just recently employed a representative from the Private Universities Council within the Ministry of Higher Education to handle student allowances. This should hopefully facilitate the process. It should also promote better communication.

When it came to better advertisements for academic events, the Minister requested AUK to sup-

ply the Ministry of Information with their events in advance so that it would be able to advertise them. However, coverage is not guaranteed because there is a shortage of resources (e.g. staff and equipment). Students can attempt to correspond directly with TV networks such as Al-Rai or Al-Watan TV to cover their events.

Another contentious issue for students is receiving a bi-annual allowance for purchasing books from the AUK Bookstore: the Minister showed strong support for the exchange and re-selling of used books. She mentioned that the university



should cooperate with the students because it is the students' budget in the end. The request for 100 KD for Kuwaiti scholarship students to buy course textbooks has been submitted and is awaiting approval and implementation. The Minister showed the SGA tangible evidence to support this. Hopefully this will be implemented in the Fall semester. In fact, this was made official by the Office of Registrar which emailed Kuwaiti students and students of Kuwaiti mothers who will be granted 100 KD to buy course textbooks at the beginning of every semester.

Next was the discussion of the lack of support for Bachelor's programs related to the liberal arts such as the Fine Arts, Law, etc. The issue is that new universities, which are private universities, are reluctant to invest in such programs because there is not much demand and hence no profit. The Ministry is trying to promote the creation of such programs with the help of the government. She stated that there are no real obstacles when it comes to opening these kinds of programs. Business administration has strong representation because there is high demand for it. The Minister mentioned that

such a law. However, it should be to the private university's discretion as to whether or not they wish to implement a system of gender segregation. The Minister was wise enough to state that although she is greatly defiant of gender segregation, it remains a law that must be followed. She has had many discussions with parliamentarians who are pro-segregation; even when she is gaining headway, proving a point, and discrediting their assumption about co-education, they always find the same scapegoat: it is a law and must be implemented. Along with Ali Al-Rashed, the Minister has attempted to draft a proposal to eradicate the law but opposition is always very high from the conservative faction in the Kuwaiti parliament. Kuwait University already provides students with the option of studying in a segregated environment, so it is not necessary for other universities to be segregated. She mentioned that private universities should appeal to the constitutional court in order to change the law, and stated that the segregation law contradicts the Kuwaiti constitution.

Instructor qualification in Kuwait was also brought up. The Minister stated that there are guidelines in place for selecting qualified teaching staff in Kuwait and records of private university professors are documented at the PUC. With respect to setting up councils to ensure the provision of qualified professors, the Minister mentioned that it is up to the private universities to interview potential professors and give in their resumes to the PUC.

The Minister mentioned that private universities are growing in number in Kuwait—presently, there are three more that have acquired licenses and are now in the process of building campuses. Opening foreign universities in Kuwait requires a meeting between a delegation of that university and the Ministry of Higher Education.

To end the visit, the SGA asked the Minister if she would be able to come to AUK in the near future. She showed interest in coming to AUK, but indicated that a formal invitation from the President's Office would be required.



Finance Students Explore Financial Crisis in Iceland

By Salma Tayeh

Professor John Rutland and Professor Patricia Read-Hunter organized a study abroad trip to Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland in fulfillment of the requirements of the cross-listed International Finance (FINC 389) or Cross-Cultural Management (MGMT 332) course. The course gives students the opportunity to write a research paper on an international topic based on a real-life research methodology.

Iceland is counted as one of the countries most hardly hit by the current financial crisis. Three of the country's banks were forced into bankruptcy and nationalized as a result of the financial crisis. The main research topic of the course was to investigate how the financial crisis had affected certain businesses, services, and industrial factors in Iceland. Students chose different topics and different sectors: banks, supermarkets, an insurance company, a horse-riding service, high class restaurants, tourism, and clinical psychology.

The group started their trip on Friday 10th April. They departed Kuwait at 9:45am, and after a stop-over in Qatar, headed off to London and then finally on to Iceland. After the long, sixteen-hour

journey, they were taken by bus to their hotel.

On the first day, they started their program along with a tour guide called Elizabeth. Their first experience of Iceland was a horse riding trip in a place called Laxves. On the way to Laxves, Elizabeth told the professors and students about the history, geography, environment, and geology of Iceland. According to Elizabeth, Iceland's population is only about 300,000 and the area of Iceland is 1300 km². They speak Icelandic with English widely spoken as a second language in the country. Most villages are close to the sea side because of the importance of fishing. Iceland imports wheat, fruits and, vegetables except for tomatoes, cucumbers, and green pepper. She also pointed out that Iceland is known for its volcanoes, adding that four of them are ready to erupt. Geologists come from all around the world to research in Iceland; as geology is the most common and interesting field study in Iceland. Glaciers are also common in the country. The students were lucky to observe, visit, and experience most of these places. After enjoying the fun part of horse riding, their next visit was to check out a huge mountain that has split and is continuously drift-

ing apart. Lunch was after that, and then their next journey was under an ice cave. Exploring real life glaciers was next and was extremely interesting and fun to experience. At the end of the day, the professors took the students to a fancy dinner to end a thoroughly enjoyable day.

The second day, Elizabeth exposed the whole crew to the very unique experience of dog sledding. Some of the students and Professor Patricia as well experienced the snowmobile while other students were taking their turn at dog sledding. Although the weather was terribly cold, we all enjoying the new activities. We had fun building a snowman, playing in the snow, and enjoying the amazing scenery of the huge snowy mountains surrounding the place. They then all went for lunch. After that, snow hiking was their next activity on the schedule. Then they explored Iceland's Black Sea. After the organized activities, we were free to go our own way and explore the country. The professors and students had dinner separately.

On the third day, the students were divided according to their interests to go along with the professors. Students who wanted to ski accompanied

Professor Rutland Professor Patricia took some others to a flea market for some shopping. Others, who wanted to relax for the day went along with Professor Rutland's wife, Ms. Frances, to one of Iceland's famous tourist spots, the Blue Lagoon spa.

From that point, students were free to start working on their research, taking appointments, interviewing people, investigating, and at the same time exploring the country on their own way. For safety reasons, students were not allowed to conduct research interviews on their own. As a result, most of the interviews were attended by other students or professors; this was also beneficial to students who were working on similar or related research topics. Several students took appointments with Banks such as the Kamphing Bank and the Central Bank in Iceland, clinical psychologists, businessmen, restaurant managers, super market managers, business managers, etc.

On the last day of the trip, all the students thanked the professors for their great effort in arranging this trip. Most of them agreed that the professors were very supportive and considerate throughout the trip, and that the trip had been very fun, enjoyable, and exciting.

4th Annual Liberal Arts Conference: Higher Ed in the GCC

By Nur Soliman

The 4th annual AUK Liberal Arts Conference kicked off to a good start with the ceremonial opening at 10:00am, 26th April^h, 2009. The theme for this year's conference was "Higher Education in the GCC: Emerging Trends and Models," coordinated by Division Head of the Social Sciences, Prof. Shoma Munshi.

In her speech, Prof. Munshi introduced the Liberal Arts Conference by briefly going over its history, explaining that it is "growing in scope and audience," as well as inviting greater participation from colleagues in both local and international universities. This was also the first year where Dartmouth College, AUK's institutional partner, participated in the conference, namely with keynote speaker Prof. Dale Eickelman, "one of the most respected scholars in the region." Dr. Munshi thanked the members of the AUK community who supported and assisted her, from faculty and staff to the student assistants.

AUK's president, Dr. Marina Tolmacheva, also took the podium, detailing how she found great pleasure in welcoming all the various members of the audience. She emphasized continuing the liberal arts tradition of continuing the tradition of dialogue in AUK. She suggested an increasing acceptance of the "skills and habits of mind" that a broad Arts & Sciences education provides its students in order to lead in their society and prove able, adaptive community members.

The president of Dartmouth College, Dr. James Wright, then spoke to the audience through a special video greeting, emphasizing how proud the college was of its affiliation with AUK, its founder Sheikh Dana Al-Sabah, and its esteemed body of faculty, staff, and students who all seek to keep alive "and shape ... as well as be shaped by" the institution that is still in its earlier years.

Dr. Nizar Hamzeh, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, also spoke, detailing three brief, insightful remarks on the institutionalization of liberal arts educational institutions in the region, among these being that with the introduction of a new educational system to a culture or a region, in place of an older, more established one, there is sure to be cultural tension of sorts, all of which comes with the discussion of many new, interesting models of introducing new educational systems into a region which he hoped would be discussed during the two days of the conference.

Prof. Dale Eickelman, the Ralph and Richard Lazarus Professor of Anthropology and Human Relations took to the stage for his keynote speech. Dr. Eickelman's speech, entitled *The Liberal Arts Are Local: The Arabian Peninsula*, was both thought-provoking, stimulating, and entertaining, drawing on real and interesting anecdotes from experiences in countries like Oman, Qatar, the UAE, and even briefly in Kuwait. He began by suggesting that liberal arts educational systems in and of themselves are a relatively new concept, even in the United States, where the dramatic changes in the early 19th century brought forth

interesting discussions on education. Many that Prof. Eickelman quoted often supported a more professional, vocational education that was ultimately more business-oriented, while gradually, others began advocating a more diverse, liberal arts education. He also discussed the concept of liberal arts education within the region, where more and more branch—or satellite—campuses as well as privately owned for-profit universities are being established, far newer than the established Gulf state universi-

tion – Constructing, Measuring, and Assessing Curricula

Jyoti Grewal, Dean of Interdisciplinary Studies at Zayed University, UAE:

Professor Grewal was a confident speaker, making the audience smile with her humour. As Dean of Interdisciplinary Programs at UAE's Zayed University, Grewal strongly believes in the importance of the general education (gen-ed) system in a liberal arts education. For Grewal, "to construct well-educated, polished, cultured per-

Egypt, Ms. Cinali attempted to define liberal arts education and what happens when it is introduced. Defining it is important in the GCC/MENA, where it is not too well understood, by students, parents, and even professors, according to Ms. Cinali. The perception is that it encourages "'free-for-all' chat and exchange, flexible disciplines, and so on," "but these do not accurately define the system's ethos. AUC devotes a year of orientation for its students and faculty, while the administration undergoes introspec-

not a watered-down version of the education in the U.S.; they also get to connect and feel familiar with American students, where they can all freely discuss important, pressing issues that are of interest to them.

Facilitation of Self-Learning by Students in a course on Career Perspective

Farouk al-Sabban, Professor of Nutrition and Biology at the Women's College, Kuwait University, Kuwait

In a more practice-oriented pa-

and Dr. Dinkha, assisted by AUK freshman Monica Matta, discussed the classic discussion of gender and its influence on job opportunities, this time bringing it back to the Gulf region, more specifically Kuwait. What made it interesting was the incorporation of education levels as a factor. While most studies to focus on whether men/women are happy in their positions, or whether personal attributes play a role in this, this research team decided that educational attainment and cultural expectations played major factors in Kuwait. Using survey methodology to gather data, the team found that despite the growing number of successful women in the "educational and labor" spheres in the region, as well as their increased university enrollment, this doesn't help with upward mobility in careers.

Privatization of Higher Education in the Middle East—the Case of Iran and Kuwait

Gholamreza Vatandoust, Visiting Associate Professor of History and International Studies, AUK, Kuwait

Prof. Vatandoust spoke from a unique perspective, presenting in a clear, concise lecture, comparing private universities in Iran and Kuwait. In comparing the steadily growing numbers of private (non-governmental) universities in the GCC and Iran, there is a similarity; however, both the purpose and function of these private universities greatly differs between the two (Kuwait and Iran being the prime example). The growth in Iran's population has caused a pressing need for educational facilities to accommodate all. In 1984, Ayatollah Khomeini declared that private universities would be introduced all over Iran, under the strict supervision of the government who would ensure that the material taught in the universities was in accordance with accepted doctrine. This starkly contrasts with private universities in Kuwait, where they provide more liberal education to students who no longer place confidence in the more out-dated systems of the state-run universities.

Mourad Dakhli, Assistant Professor of Business and Economics and Dina El-Zohairy ('09), AUK, Kuwait

Comparing Public and Private Education—A Student-Centered Perspective

The final paper for the first day was also by Dr. Dakhli, this time co-authored by senior Management student Dina El-Zohairy. Starting with information from the World Bank's famous 2007 MENA Report *The Road Not Traveled*, and an important study by the McKinsey report on the GCC's new approach to education, the pair presented research on the role that both private and public universities play in Kuwait. They examined what factored a student's evaluation of their university. KU students had different expectations and priorities to say, AUK and GUST students. Both speakers acknowledged that primary and higher education has many weaknesses in the Gulf, sticking to conventional methods that no longer have positive effects, but at the same time, there were changes made. They also made recommendations for solutions based on their findings.



ties of Kuwait, UAE, Oman, and so on in the 60s, 70s, and 80s.

Prof. Eickelman then brought up many of the real problems that people face when trying to incorporate a new system—namely, the liberal arts—into an established culture: society, government, language, as well as religious beliefs, all factor into changes or tensions with the introduction of the system. Prof. Eickelman drew on the case of AUK and the imposition of segregation, for instance. He discussed the possible implications, or at least the potential effects of governmental laws on the university environment, and so on. He also proceeded to discuss how a

sons," the foundation for this is to be made of constant assessment, self-assessment (of the whole community), and the student's immersion gen-ed courses. She pointed out that during the accreditation process, their program was so successful that it "received the best accreditation" among the university's programs. Educators need to be conscious of the implications, risks, or opportunities in their programs and curricula, re-evaluating these for improvement. This, Grewal concluded, leads to "a knowledge-based society," one where there is both the "dissemination and generation" of knowledge circulating a community.

At the same time, however, there are occasional clashes between the traditional "respecting, rote-learning, and conventional cultural" boundaries that AUC's community has to learn to either let go of or reconcile with if the liberal arts are to flourish.

Globalizing the Classroom – Lessons Learned from EC Teleclasses

Benjamin Reilly, Visiting Assistant Professor, Carnegie Mellon University of Qatar Foundation

Prof. Reilly, an enthusiastic speaker, delivered a lecture on the great advantages that Teleclasses—classes using Digital Video Equipment (DVC, also used be-

per, Professor Al-Sabban spoke of turning the learning process back on students. His simple technique involved students taking charge in their "Career Perspectives" class, taught by Al-Sabban at least 6 times. Al-Sabban has established an emailing system through which he distributes coming material. Students, individually or in groups, are responsible for presenting the material in class using a variety of techniques. All of these are left up to the students, where Al-Sabban provides only support, but minimal instruction or guidance. In addition, the students regularly visit a variety of work-places relevant to their focus, and write up re-



liberal arts education has a real and positive effect on the students who engage in it, where liberal arts and critical thinking are ways in which the community is finally able to engage in a "real, vigorous public dialogue" about their own environment as well as textbook theory, and finally "translate this into action."

The remainder of this article provides brief synopsis of the papers presented at the panel sessions on the first day of the conference.

The University and Accredita-

Liberal Arts Education in the GCC

Gina E. Cinali, Executive Director of Institutional Planning, Assessment, Research & Testing at American University in Cairo, Egypt

Ms. Cinali began by saying that there is a "liberal arts proliferation" in the world, bringing with it "labels, values, ethos." The question still remains as to "how well is it understood? What about the liberal arts education system?" Drawing on her experiences in

tween Dartmouth and AUK, facilitated by IT Dept). He divided these benefits into two main branches: gaining knowledge through lectures, and connecting with students 6,000 miles away. Reilly discussed the technological facilities of Education City, housing the "cherry-picked" U.S. programs. Comparing the use of DVC among campuses, Reilly discussed which universities used DVC more often than others. He pointed out that DVCs allows students to feel that the education they receive is

ports on these visits. Midterms are short, take-home research papers, new for most students. Upon the retroactive evaluation conducted by Al-Sabban, 66% preferred this relatively new way of teaching to the traditional approaches.

Educational Attainment and Career Success in the GCC – does Gender Matter?

Mourad Dakhli, Juliet Dinkha, Assistant Professors, and Monica Matta ('12), student, AUK, Kuwait

In this joint paper, Dr. Dakhli



Halim Choueiry conducts 3-day GDES Workshop

By Nur Soliman

Over the course of three days, from May 7 to 9, Halim Choueiry conducted a workshop for junior and senior GDES students, entitled Latin into Arabic. Invited by Prof. Maryam Hosseinnia, who first met him two years ago, Halim made a real difference into the experiences of these students who had done Typography I and II. A famous graphic designer, Assistant Professor of Graphic Design, and Vice-President of Icograda (International Council of Graphic Design Associations), Halim has a tremendous energy and passion for the work he does, and very effectively—almost magically—transmitted that excitement on to the students involved, helping them through every painstaking step of the process.

The first day of the workshop was more of a lecture and orientation for the students to understand the purpose of the

assignment they were going to be given the next day. Through what can only be called passionate, mesmerizing delivery, before telling the students that before thinking about the Latin and Arabic scripts, Halim began by saying that we all “live by narrative, by stories, by the semiotics of things,” by the way things are transformed, changed, and magnified, manifesting themselves “typographically, as the symbols of the story.” It’s not just the narrative of the artistic product, however, that Halim is talking about: it is the act of writing in and of itself. Like the chalky handprints of Neanderthal settlers in the caves of Lascaux, or the rocky desert of the Libyan Sahara, the act of epigraphy and making one’s mark in the world is what Halim finds so fascinating. “When designing something,” Halim pointed out, “you need to guide your viewer to find a relationship between the words, the

images, if they’re there, and the meaning, and give all of these good readability.

All of this means much to Halim, who has spent years exploring various techniques of harmonizing the Latin and Arabic scripts so as to make both harmonious and meaningful. Born in Beirut, Halim has had over 16 years of professional experience and teaching of graphic design. With two Masters degrees in Typographical and Graphic Design Studies from London and Brighton, as well as a Post-Graduate Diploma in 3D/Furniture Design from the Notre Dame University of Lebanon, Halim has had even further extensive experiences and academic knowledge of his work, infusing all of this into his conversation and lecture.

The lecture detailed the history of the Arabic script, script of lughat a-Dad, or the language of a-Dad detailing briefly the evolution of the Arabic script

since the ninth century, from the addition of diacritical marks to the development of the different scripts, from Kufic to Naskhi, Thuluth to Diwani, and so on. He also mentioned the inter-connectedness of the various Semitic languages, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Syriac, also mentioning as the turning point in the synthesis of scripts, Keshuni, Arabic written in Aramaic letters. From this, Halim said, the students would create their own synthesized creations of script that flowed well together.

The discussion moved on to language and type, as Halim began to relate the intriguing discussion to the GDES assignment, where there are two challenges to traditionally designed Arabic typefaces, or even typefaces in general. Halim maintained that the crudely painted sign by a young worker in Beirut is ultimately more “honest” and “human” than the image printed onto vinyl. Halim also discussed

the famous Thomas Milo and his development of tasmeem, whereby the Arabic script was perfectly assimilated into computer typeface programs, and is now used as artistic decoration in various mosques, and so on. That said, he also asserted that what they were doing was consciously immersing their typographic work into something that was human, spontaneous, and ultimately more personal, harmonious with its context.

For the remaining two days of the workshop, the students worked very hard on their own small projects. Every student brought parts of their portfolios for one-on-one sessions with Halim before starting on their Latin to Arabic project. Each student chose their own brand name and logo in English. After typing out all the different symbols in English, students investigated how these could be manipulated and altered to fit the Arabic translation of the

word. After a rough draft, the remainder of the day was spent in painstaking tweaking and reformulating the whole new draft in order that the two words were visually intimate, or harmonious, and didn’t seem disjointed in any way. On the third day, they made some final refinements and adjustments to their work before printing and mounting it on black board for presentation to the class. Also, Mark, the creator and founder of the famous Kuwaiti blog, 2.48 am, was present to view and judge their work alongside Halim.

In discussing the real art and progress that one achieves in experimenting with different forms of expression, Halim quoted from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s beloved fable of The Little Prince, speaking to what was by now an enchanted audience that “you can always see things clearly with your heart; what is essential is invisible to the eyes.”

SGA hosts the Kuwait Multiple Sclerosis Association

By Farah Al-Shamali

On Monday 6th April, the Student Government Association hosted the Kuwait Multiple Sclerosis Association who gave a lecture about their purpose and the nature of their work. The lecture, delivered in Arabic and English, was held in AUK’s Liberal Arts Auditorium and was open to the public. Members of the Multiple Sclerosis Association, including the director, Mona Al-Mosairi and other members, Ameera Al-Mashhood, Bazighah Al-Sulaiman, and Fahd Al-Sulaiman, spoke about the possibilities of preventing this disease from persisting in Kuwaiti society.

Founded in 2005, KMSA thrives on the goal of providing lectures, symposia, and group psychological treatment that has greatly assisted many in overcoming the disease. Surprisingly enough, multiple sclerosis affects women more than it does men; those between the age of 20 and 45 are the most affected by the disease.

What is multiple sclerosis? It is a neurological disease that causes the patient to lose control of his or her nerves. It must be under-



stood that it is not diagnosed as a mental illness and symptoms vary from one patient to another. Generally, symptoms include the following: problems with vision, imbalance and inconsistency of movement, changes in the nerves, speech impediments, dif-

ficulty in swallowing, recurrent fatigue, problems with urination and excretion, sexual dysfunction, and emotional instability. On the whole, it is difficult for multiple sclerosis patients to lead normal, productive lives. The way their body functions

does not allow for the enjoyment of some pleasures. Although they are mentally aware of their surroundings, self-expression is a strenuous task.

KMSA has set the following short- as well as long-term goals in sight: raising societal aware-

ness about the nature of the disease, its symptoms, the importance of getting early treatment, assisting patients and helping to facilitate their daily lives, the creation of channels of communication between patients of this diseases so that they each discern

that they are not alone, international cooperation with international organizations dedicated to the cause to achieve objectives, and the establishment of a specialized center to provide rapid treatment to patients.

A lot of hope, love, and dedication go into the work done by the marvelous personnel at KMSA. Besides the specialized treatment that is designated for patients, affection is what will help them to surpass the physical pain that they are experiencing. It may sound tacky but it could not be more true. In hosting KMSA at AUK, the SGA hoped to present a model of what Kuwaiti men and women are doing to give back to their community and which is not always given much appreciation. We must not forget the misfortunate of Kuwaiti society, and they must not be shunned. We might be lucky enough to retain full health but we must not forget those who are lacking it. On behalf of the SGA, I would like to thank Abdulla Aziz Al-Anezi for linking us to KMSA, Mona Al-Mosairi, Ameera Al-Mashhood, Bazighah Al-Sulaiman, and Fahd Al-Sulaiman for representing KMSA at AUK.



Student Anti-Drug Forum

By Dina El-Zohairy

The Anti-Drug Student Forum that was scheduled to take place in the Multipurpose Room on Tuesday 21st April at 1:30pm started 45 minutes late, even though the two guest lecturers arrived and were ready to begin on time. It seems that argument arose between the guest lecturers and representatives of the Student Success Center over the banners they had set up, nearly leading to the cancellation of the lecture. Displayed on each of the five or so pull-up banners were images that are occasionally printed in local papers of various ingenious methods used by drug smugglers to bring their cargo into Kuwait.

As a student, those images showed me just how creative and smart those people are, carefully planting calculated quantities of drugs in items ranging from carpets, neon candles, electric heaters, and water pumps, to watermelons, almonds, and grenadines, but most grossly the human body! However, SSC Director Joanne Hands held a completely different view. She was worried that AUK students, upon being exposed to these images, would learn how to hide drugs, to the disbelief and amusement of those present. The guest lecturers, employees at the Ministry of Interior, refused to abide by the wishes of Ms. Hands, arguing that this was part of the presentation they had prepared and the awareness campaign. Following a series of conversations with various staff members, it was decided that the lecture could begin and the banners could stay up, and the students who had been waiting outside were finally invited in.

First Lieutenant Thamer Al-Hajri started off the discussion with a presentation on different types of drugs—what they look like, where they come from, and how they are administered. This would equip students with crucial knowledge to help them identify and thus protect themselves against illegal drugs. Hashish, for example, the most popular in Kuwait, comes in black fingerlike packages and is usually combined with tobacco and smoked as a cigarette. Heroin, which is responsi-

ble for many deaths by overdose, takes the form of a white or beige powder which can be sniffed, or dissolved and injected intravenously. Opium is another illegal drug that is derived from the milky liquid found in the unripe seeds of the poppy plant. Morphine, a very powerful pain reliever and sedative, and codeine, a cough suppressant, are examples of highly addictive medicinal drugs that are derived from the same plant.

The effects of recreational drugs like ecstasy and Captagon were also explained. They appeal to youth because they are often misleadingly marketed as drugs that boost concentration and help enhance academic performance, when in reality they do not and are very dangerous. Consuming Captagon pills, which is especially popular among Arab youth, leads to a temporary loss of memory, brain cell damage, paralysis, and possibly death due to the drug's devastating effects on the nervous system.

Al-Hajri then moved on to listing some common behavioral and physiological signs and symptoms that result from habitual drug use. A drug addict may not necessarily exhibit all of the symptoms. According to his list, drug addicts usually avoid making eye-to-eye contact with family members; experience mood swings; have impaired speech and spatial perception; show no respect for the law or social norms and traditions; and may have burnt fingers and/or discolored fingertips from the handling of drugs, as well as visible marks on their arms and legs from the use of needles.

Dr. Ayed Al-Hamidani, an expert on drugs and psychotropic substances, addressed the audience next, also in a Kuwaiti dialect to build rapport with the students. He relied mainly on illustrations to describe the nasty effects of illegal drugs on the body, both internally and externally. For example, drug use may lead to life-threatening conditions like AIDS, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and lung cancer.

He concluded his equally informative presentation with several pieces of advice for the attending students and reassured them that

Kuwait's security system is well-equipped to detect smuggling attempts, and severely punish the individuals involved. Nevertheless, he called on students to stay alert, and use the knowledge they have gained to assist them in combating the distribution of illegal drugs by reporting any individuals or incidents to Kuwait's Center for Combating Drugs or the General Attorney.

The third and final speaker was SSC Counselor Ms. Cheryl Bunzenmeyer, whose presentation focused on the psychological aspects of addiction, occasionally drawing on her professional experience with alcoholics and drug addicts.

To begin with, once the addiction starts, a person's emotional and psychological development are diverted to the addiction, hence hindering normal psychological development. Additionally, studies show that those who suffer from anxiety disorder, OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder), depression, or ADHD (Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), among other disorders, are more prone to resort to addiction to escape their problems and any unwanted feelings or actions their condition may trigger. For example, one study showed that 75% of alcoholics were depressed.

Another interesting topic surrounds addictive personalities, which presumably put a person at a higher risk of resorting to some form of addiction. These include being antisocial, having low stress tolerance, feeling insecure, and suffering from traumatic stress as a result of childhood abuse and exposure to war or violence, among other factors.

According to Ms. Cheryl, patients being treated for addiction tend to switch to other enjoyable activities to substitute their addiction, which they eventually become addicted to. This may be due to the build-up of a protein called Delta FosB in neurons in the brain's pleasure centers, ultimately causing irreversible damage to the dopamine system. In short, the statement "Once an addict, always an addict" appears to be true.



Iranian Presidential Elections

By Farah Al-Shamali, Sarah El-Rifaai, Kawther Sadeq, Fatemah Boukhadour, Patty Marotte, Amnah Ibraheem, Hala Al-Sahab, Dr. Gholam Vatandoust

On Thursday 7th May, the INST 389 (Iran and the International Community since WWII), participated in AUK's 6th Annual Showcase, presenting the Iranian Electoral Process to the AUK community. The presentation began with the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, one of the more dramatic events in Iran that managed to limit and transform the power of the absolute monarchy into a constitutional system where the Shah was accountable to the Majlis (elected parliament) and an independent judiciary. However the hopes for a constitutional monarchy was short lived for soon followed the ravages of World War I, the famine and the pandemic flu of 1918, and the coup d'état of 1921 that brought a strong military man, Reza Khan, to power. By 1925 Reza Khan had strengthened his position, seized the throne and established himself as the founder of the Pahlavi Dynasty, which was to rule Iran until 1979.

Once on the throne Reza Shah turned into a dictator, and was eventually removed by the Allies in 1941 and replaced by his young son Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. Until the coup of 1953 the young Shah allowed freedom of expression and political parties to prevail. When Dr. Mohammad Mussadeq became Prime Minister and nationalized the Iranian oil in 1951, events turned sour. The British and Americans masterminded a coup that resulted in the overthrow of Dr. Mussadeq and his nationalist party. The Shah, who had fled the country returned in triumph and he hence decided to rule Iran with an iron fist, fully supported by the United States.

The Shah's confrontation with Ayatollah Khomeini dates back to the White Revolution of 1963, where certain measures of the six point program were declared as non-Islamic by Ayatollah Khomeini who was then arrested, imprisoned and exiled for 15 years. Mr. Khomeini returned to Iran on 1st February 1979 following the flight of the Shah and in March 1979 a nationwide referendum was conducted and the Islamic Republic was declared on April 1st 1979. A constitution was then drawn up and Ayatollah Khomeini thus emerged as the Supreme Leader (*The Vali-e Faqih*).

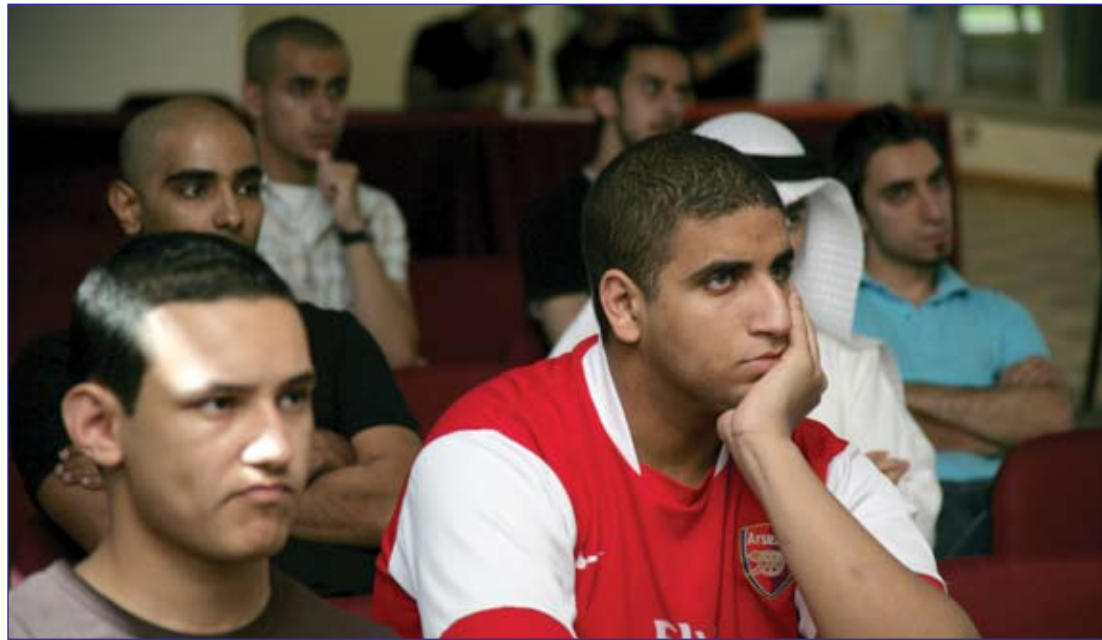
According to the constitution the Supreme Leader and his representatives exert direct or indirect control over nearly all branches of government: the executive, legislative, judiciary, foreign policy, military, Revolutionary Guards Corp, Basij Militia, Friday Imams and the radio and television networks.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution and its electoral system is a complex one, tightly controlled by various governing bodies, including the Supreme Leader. The Majlis is the national legislative body of Iran consisting of 290 members elected by popular vote. The deputies are overseen by the Guardian Council which has the authority of vetting candidates and the legislation passed by the Majlis. The Guardian Council is a controversial, non-elected body which consists of 12 members, six appointed by the Supreme leader and six introduced by the Majlis. They are tasked with interpreting the constitution, approving candidates and supervising elections of the Assembly of Experts, the President, and the Majlis. If a problem develops between the Majlis and the Guardian Council, it is the Expediency Council that intervenes and reports directly to the Supreme Leader. The Assembly of Experts is a body of 86 Mujtahids (religious scholars) who elect the Supreme Leader and supervise his activities. The assembly is currently headed by Ayatollah Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani. The Expediency Council is an administrative body appointed by the Supreme Leader to resolve differences between the Guardian Council and the Majlis, and is also headed by Ayatollah Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani. The chief executive, the President, is voted in by the electorate, and must be approved by the Guardian Council prior to becoming a candidate.

For lack of political parties in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the electoral process concerning presidential candidates has met numerous obstacles, challenges and setbacks within the past two decades, particularly since the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989. For the presidential elections of 2005, out of a total of over 1,014 candidates all but eight were disqualified by the Guardian Council. For the forthcoming elections there are a total of 475 candidates currently registered (433 men and 42 women). The oldest is 86 while the youngest is 19, and most have no particular platform. Strange

looking characters, dressed up in bow ties and young men with punkish hairdo are there for the fun of it, knowing full well that it would be impossible to get past the ultra conservative Guardian Council. However, there are four candidates that stand out among the rest; all four are dedicated to the Islamic Republic and have served it faithfully. They are Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, Mohsen Rezaee, Mir-Hossein Mousavi, and Mehdi Karroubi. Mohsen Rezaee was the head of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps from 1981 to 1997 while Mir-Hossein Mousavi served as Iran's Premier during the Iran-Iraq War, and is remembered for effectively managing the country during eight years of war and economic hardship. Mehdi Karroubi, a cleric and close associate of Ayatollah Khomeini, has served in different capacities, including being a member of the Majlis and speaker of the house during Khatami's first term in office. He is regarded a reformer. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, president since 2005, has been criticized for his isolationist policies abroad and his populist policies at home. He is held accountable for the present economic woes of Iran. While it is difficult to clearly identify the platform for each, Ahmadinejad and Mohsen Rezaee are viewed as conservatives. However, Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi are associated with the reformist camps who advocate change.

Who becomes the future president of Iran is significant not only to the GCC members but to the entire region. For the past 30 years Iran has been marginalized, particularly by the U.S., but has remained a power in the region. The Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the issue of nuclear proliferation, the Israel-Palestine conflict, the price of oil, the question of Hamas and Hezbollah, the dispute over the three islands: all are issues in which Iran has a major role to play; a role that it cannot play as long as it continues to be marginalized. A moderate and understanding President of the Islamic Republic could change Iran's international image and pave the way for future negotiations. When AUK students and faculty were asked to cast their votes in a mock election, 12 cast their votes for Mir-Hossein Mousavi, 9 each for Mohsen Rezaee and Mehdi Karroubi, while 4 voted for Ahmadinejad. The election date is set for June 12th. Let's see how the Iranians will vote.





Women in Business, from on page 1

bitions and no one can stop you from achieving them, holding that believing in yourself is the key to breaking the glass ceiling.

On the other hand, Dr. Bagnied argued that in order to avoid the glass ceiling one must have his/her own business. He also noted that women face this ceiling in the course of their careers due to the cultural barriers in Arab societies. Although the Arab world is starting to change and move forward, there is still a problem, which can be overcome by breaking cultural barriers.

Ms. Fatma Al-Hamad stated that her work in a male-dominated place encourages her to perform

at maximum levels. She makes positive use of her gender difference in order to prevent this glass ceiling from controlling her. Using her experience as a basketball player in the national team as an example, she talked about the challenges they faced in order to get permission to participate in the Gulf Tournaments. Again, she added that believing in what you want and working hard to get it is the way to break this ceiling.

Finally, Mahdi Al-Own pointed out that having workshops that prepare college students to face life challenges is the ideal way to break these barriers.

Following that, Dr. Jeremy Cripps gave his opinion about the discussion topic. He said that

women are still facing difficulties, indicating the presence of barriers; however, progress is being made. Now, women are going to the parliament. Also, in the accounting profession, more female students are excelling over male students.

In the end, Dr. Salwa Al-Jassar, a parliamentary candidate, gave a lecture about the obstacles women face in the private sector. She also discussed the kind of work women occupy in the economic cycle of the country, highlighting that more than 70% of working women occupy the educational cycle. Reasons why women prefer working in the public sector over the private sector include a secured salary, less working hours, flexible holidays, and good retirement salaries.

Judging from the overall organization of the conference and the number and variety of guests, it was obvious that a lot of time and effort were invested by the Marketing Club members to make this conference possible. However, this effort was generally not met with a corresponding appreciation from the students for whom it was put together. For the most part, attendance rates were a bit disappointing. This kind of outcome tends to dispirit hard-working students and may potentially discourage student organizations from putting on something of value and quality. Regardless of this, the Marketing Club is to be lauded for its genuine attempt to promote development on this front at AUK and in Kuwait.



President Tolmacheva, from on page 1

ing at American universities abroad (and they had to be “American universities and only abroad”), President Tolmacheva had been to Central Asian republics and the Ukraine but had not been to Kuwait. She sent a letter of inquiry (stressing upon it only being a letter) and was called in as a finalist to be interviewed in Washington D.C. to be the Dean of Arts and Sciences of AUK.

When asked about the reason for selecting AUK, she stated that it was because of some AUK students she had met while at Washington D.C. (noting one of them to be Fatmah Al-Qadfan, one of the founders of the *Voice of AUK*, and a 4-year member of the Editorial Board) and she was “very impressed as they were the most vocal and memorable.”

As for the role of President of AUK, President Tolmacheva finds it to be “very enriching” and one that presents the individual with daily challenges. Some of these problems arise from the fact that AUK is a young institution, how higher education is regulated, and, surprisingly enough, Kuwaiti history. President Tolmacheva mentioned that Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah passed away two weeks after her arrival in Kuwait; therefore, she had come to Kuwait in a time of political turmoil and confusion. Furthermore, AUK was not equipped with what it is equipped with now in reference to organization and what not. “Now, Kuwaiti personalities are being invited by AUK students—that is unprecedented.” She has witnessed the development of student maturity at AUK as they are doing things on their own and have acquired valuable experiences. In reference to the Student Government Association, President Tolmacheva celebrated the fact that the AUK community has been able to elect two female Presidents. “It is important,” she stressed, “not to have a politically correct genuine choice.”

Moving on to the most prominent accomplishments that AUK has been able to fulfill since its establishment, President Tolmacheva noted that forming the academic structure is a major achievement, as well as having good people lead it. On a formal level, achieving Kuwaiti accreditation is a major one. AUK has “a proactive, future-oriented step and has to take a farsighted approach.” She mentioned that there are guidelines and policies for an institution to have a written protocol and it is unusual for them to be devel-

oped locally, which is the case with AUK.

Currently, academic representation is very strong with AUK and it is the “faculty in the classrooms and not the President who assures this.” When faculty are selected to teach at AUK, there is a strong attempt to select the very best. Professors are directed to the fact that AUK is a “primarily teaching institution” and “student-centered.” President Tolmacheva revealed that active academics involved their students in their research whom she described as “serious, have language skills, are poised, and prepared.” She referred to an active club/organization to enumerate this, the Model United Nations (MUN) at AUK, stating that “it is the first time that the Middle East is represented so highly and we are proud of their participation.” They have been able to achieve high standards and attract members who are passionate about debating, public speaking, and the global political scene.

AUK has some relations with outside educational institutions apart from Dartmouth College. When the *Voice* posed the question to President Tolmacheva, the word *collaborate* was used. “Collaboration is too strong a word,” President Tolmacheva replied. AUK has Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with a few institutions; they provide mutual benefits. Some institutions have offered to have MOUs but AUK has not responded. AUK’s first MOU was with New Bulgarian University, the first private university in Bulgaria where Arabic and Islamic studies are taught.

At this point in time, AUK is “looking at what specific forms of cooperation can continue with limited resources.” AUK has an articulation agreement with the Australian College of Kuwait—this encourages ACK transfer students to choose AUK above other private universities in Kuwait and represents a unique agreement for Kuwaiti private universities. It must be mentioned that MOUs are reviewed every three years.

Moving on to more personal areas, the *Voice* asked President Tolmacheva what she believes was her greatest achievement at AUK among many. Pointing at a glass-encased document hanging on the wall in her office, she stated that the Proclamation given by Dartmouth College has got to be the most remarkable. During AUK’s inaugural year, only seven students graduated and they were all transfer students – this was in the summer of 2006. “Nobody expected AUK to graduate students before four years of its es-

tablishment; it was a bureaucratic and academic achievement.” There were Dartmouth representatives at the graduation ceremony and the day these students graduated was proclaimed “AUK Day” at Dartmouth College.

President Tolmacheva then went on to make a very important statement regarding her achievements at AUK: “an administrator’s achievements are not his or hers—it is about other people, about AUK people and students.” She seeks momentum and cooperation so great ideas can bear fruit. AUK’s achievements are “a reflection of taking the right course.” AUK has been able to correct its mistakes, work out misunderstandings, and clean up its relations with regulators in Kuwait, namely the Ministry of Higher Education, the Private Universities Council, and the Civil Service Commission. The most important task is to make sure that the degrees AUK underwrites make graduates employable. A serious undertaking was translating the American model onto Kuwaiti ground. It must be remembered that private education is new in Kuwait, where regulators are learning and finding their way. Both sides are evolving and going through a learning process.

When it comes to the American curriculum, it is important to understand that they feel at ease with change and adapt to it as opposed to Kuwait. “Very few cultures are comfortable with change and have different forms of receptivity to changes and preparedness for it.” President Tolmacheva stated that Americans are not afraid of failure and are willing to try again should they fail. Not trying again is a waste of human capital. Developing human capital can be seen as having higher education institutions that students can access whether they are nationals or not. In a way, Kuwaiti is doing things differently: offering government scholarship programs for admission into private institutions is unusual and different.

In the general scheme of things, Gulf countries find other ways and obtain the generous support of local universities. “The national cadre is to receive enough to give momentum to internal dynamics such as entrepreneurship and research.” With AUK, the Board of Trustees is locally situated, which is a different phenomenon since they are usually abroad. An important question to ask is: who else is coming? We do not always know but in the meantime, will the rest of Kuwait recognize academic rigor and this special kind of education? The first universities in the Middle East, the American University of Beirut and the

American University of Cairo for example, are recognized by their societies. The fact remains that not everyone can be educated about the liberal arts. However, it must be discerned that “it is about arts and sciences.”

In the Kuwaiti constitution, intellectual freedom is proclaimed. Academics are not simply about liberty—with freedom of thought, knowledge is taught and developed. People need to “think freely, make mistakes, and ask questions.” After all, the most effective pedagogical approach is to “ask questions to achieve answers.”

Next, the *Voice* asked President Tolmacheva about her future endeavors, assuring her that the entire AUK community is curious to know them. She answered that she will be returning to the United States and to academic life as she will continue teaching and serving as an international consultant in higher education.

The interviewer decided to end off with a message from President Tolmacheva to the AUK community: be confident; be prepared; use knowledge to gain more knowledge; and know thyself—do not spend time doing something you do not enjoy and find things to do that you are good at.

President Tolmacheva told the *Voice* that the reason behind her success is being too prepared and wanting to feel competent. “I have to be prepared for a venture—it opens opportunities.” People must always keep going and find new inspirations and directions to follow. Being an adult institution is a true mark of maturity and AUK is getting there—all documentation is in place and the accreditation calendar is moving forward. Kuwaitis need to be engaged and keep on learning—they must know what runs their society and what creates obstacles.

I have to say that I am very indebted to President Tolmacheva for teaching me so much about the nature of her profession. I enjoyed every moment of interviewing her and, like the rest of the AUK community, cannot bear to see her leave, but am sure that she will always be regarded as a founding member of AUK who has helped it stand on its own two feet and meet impediments with strict professionalism. The *Voice* would like to thank President Tolmacheva for meeting with its representative and wishes her the very best in the future. On behalf of everyone at AUK, please come back and visit us for you are a true hallmark, a role model, and an acquaintance to be proud of.

Men's Volleyball Hammers AOU in Higher Ed! Men's Basketball Handed Second UCC Defeat

By Omar A. Mehdi

AUK's men volleyball team showed their class on Sunday, 26th April, by beating the tough Arab Open University (AOU) with a well-deserved score: two sets to nothing! AUK was given standing ovation in numerous occasions tonight as they gave their heroic performance. This is our second win in the Higher Education Institutions Tournament, after receiving the points of the game against an absent ACK in March. AUK is left with one game against GUST on May 3rd to end the group stage matches. Before the match, AUK appeared to be suffering; our players were carrying two consecutive defeats in their previous games in the University Championship Cup. Moreover, the various injuries had forced four players to sit out the game, leaving AUK with only one substitution! Yet our players put it all behind them and were able to fight for a win tonight. The first set was very tense, and AUK fought tooth and claw to maintain the lead. Following an exciting performance by both sides, our men rose to the challenge and won 26-24! In the second set, the Wolfpack was energized and full of confidence after winning the first set.

Our men hammered AOU in the second set with one of their best performances yet, with a shocking 25-18; with this, they won a sensational match! After watching the game I can honestly say that I cannot recall one of our players shining on their own because tonight our men played as one team and they shone as a whole. AUK players walked out tonight as true champions! AUK has won its ticket to the second round of the Higher Education Institutions Tournament. Also, the players proved that despite having suffered a few defeats, they are still able to play some beautiful volleyball and win! *Mabrook*, guys – let's hope there's more where that came from.



By Omar A. Mehdi

On Monday, 27 April, GUST took over and AUK faced their second loss in the University Championship Cup. AUK's team will undoubtedly admit that they were run ragged during the game as GUST sought to defeat AUK beyond any doubt. Having played half their matches, our men's basketball team found themselves struggling with two losses and a single victory. AUK has to start winning games if they are ever to continue the challenge for the UCC this season! Surprisingly, barely eight players turned up to face GUST that evening and the Wolfpack started the game with nearly half their team absent! AUK seemed rather weak in the first quarter, giving away nearly all rebounds, finding it very difficult to get the ball through the hoop. GUST dominated the first quarter and walked off with a comfortable lead of 18-12. Conversely, our men played a completely unusual second quarter and brought in a new surprising form of play. They played excellent defense and managed to allow GUST to score only six points in the entire second quarter! AUK was determined to get back in the game and had an excellent quarter, scoring 13 points, therefore snatching the lead from GUST. The second quarter finished in favor of the Wolfpack at 25-24! However, AUK failed

to keep up their good performance and lost focus, while GUST got back on their feet and scored a smashing 20 points. Our men's defense began to fall apart and although our team kept on scoring, the lack of concentration in our defense gave it all away. GUST stole back the lead after a very convincing quarter on their half, with the third quarter finishing at 44-38. In the final quarter, our players were expected to repeat the magic of the second quarter and go out there and win the game. However, these were only wishes; GUST thrashed AUK and scored the majority of their points in the game in the final quarter. Our men were not bad upfront, but as always they suffered heavily in defense. Our cover was just pointless and our players practically watched GUST score 23 points and win the game! The final score was 67-54. Even though losing with a difference of 13 points is not that bad, it was very disappointing to watch AUK lose a game that they had the potential to win. GUST's players were definitely fitter than our players that night and they walked off the court looking tireless. On the other hand, our players were exhausted! AUK still has to face ACK on the last day of April, so let's hope this game served as a wakeup call to all our players and that we see a performance similar to tonight's second quarter!

Men's Volleyball Team Suffer First UCC Defeat

By Omar A. Mehdi

On Monday, 20 April, GUST's volleyball court witnessed the Wolfpack's first defeat in the Universities Championship Cup against the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK). In a match we had been expected to dominate following our well-deserved victory earlier this month against GUST, AUK was surprisingly overrun by ACK's feisty team. Although AUK managed to take the lead in the opening minutes of the game with a secure 4-point difference, they did not continue in the same form and quickly found themselves behind. ACK snatched the first set of the game and

managed to shock our men with an appalling 11-25 loss and an early advantage. After losing the first set to a terrible 14-point difference, the Wolfpack finally picked up their pace in the second set and fired back heavily. AUK boldly beat ACK with an impressive 25-13 victory. Then the game was leveled with a set for each team. In the third set, AUK's team looked very confident and very promising, but unfortunately, history repeated itself and the horrible performance of the first set resurfaced. Our players lost focus, lost several unexplainable points and gave away a 5-point advantage. ACK bat-

tled through to a thoroughly deserved 17-15 comeback and won the final set of the evening. In the end, our players walked away with no one to blame but themselves; they simply failed to take advantage of their lead during the game and threw away many easy points. ACK can count themselves lucky and somewhat fortunate to have escaped with a 2-1 win that evening. The Wolfpack will thrive for revenge from ACK when they face them in May. But for now our men's volleyball team is going to play against GUST once more this Thursday at 8:30 pm in GUST, so let's go out there and beat them, shall we?

GUST's Men's Volleyball Team Settles Score!

By Omar A. Mehdi

GUST's volleyball fans sang the praises of their heroes at their home court as GUST ran out with a comfortable win over AUK in their latest University Championship Cup match. GUST were seldom put under any really pressure during the match and easily walked away with a remarkable victory! The final score summed up the action of the match as GUST dominated both sets and paid the debt back to AUK with a comfortable 2-0 triumph! After losing to AUK earlier this month, GUST's team walked in tonight with nothing on their mind but revenge!

Their players were quick, resilient, and tireless for most of, if not the whole game. Unfortunately, our players' performance was nothing like their performance in the previous game. The score in the beginning of the first set was very close; however, our players lacked the focus and the nerves to turn the score around to their advantage. GUST ended the first set with 25-19! In the second set, AUK was looking to settle the score and win the set to stay in the game. Unfortunately, our players couldn't give GUST a tougher set than the first. Although they had the lead in the beginning of

the set, they quickly lost it and GUST managed to reverse the scores. As our players looked helpless, GUST scored the final point of the match and won 25-16! Our players strolled off the court full of frustration as they dragged along their second defeat in a row. AUK will face ACK on May 4 for the second time. If we learnt anything from tonight's game with GUST, it is that we need to figure out how to win against a team we already lost to. So let's put tonight's game and the previous loss behind us to end this losing streak and focus on giving ACK a good match!

Al-Hashem and AbdulRoaf Clean Up Hangout Tournie



By Omar A. Mehdi

The Hangout's Pool/Chess Tournaments took place from 26th April to 3rd May, featuring some intense matches between the participating students. The chess tournament's finalists, Khaled Al-Hashem and Hasan Al-Mansour, displayed excellent skill during the games they played. Hasan's semi-final game against Mohammed Hayat lasted for a whole hour. Mohammed Hayat seemed to have the upper hand during the beginning of the match; however, Hasan managed to turn the game around and snatch the

win. On the other hand, Khaled dominated the chess tournament through all his games, defeating Ahmed Al-Emairi in the semi-final and Hasan Al-Mansour in the final game to win the tournament. In the pool tournament, Mohammed AbdulRaof qualified to the final through the disqualification of another competitor, while Abdulrahman Al-Shaheen qualified by defeating Majid Mahmoud two games to nil in the semi-final. Unfortunately for Al-Shaheen, Mohammed AbdulRaof was able to defeat him in the finals and win the tournament.



April is Jazz Month in Kuwait

By Nur Soliman

It is a rare and real treat to have jazz concerts in Kuwait, aside from the odd Desert Cats Jazz Band or the Kuwait Jazz Collective's premiere concert that I missed, but to have six consecutive performances (four of which I attended, and three of those were great), was more than anyone could imagine. At the same time, it was also bittersweet, as I regretfully left the auditorium for the concert of the 19th, knowing that I'd probably never hear such good jazz perhaps for another year (who knows, perhaps longer). Nonetheless, the experience was memorable, so much so that I wouldn't have traded those nights for anything. Below are a series of short reviews of the four concerts.

Charis Ioannou and His Petsteppers, Radisson SAS, April 16th



Most of us are used to sitting in auditorium or theatre halls for concerts, but this concert was held in the open courtyard of Al-Bustan restaurant of the Radisson SAS Hotel, on a lovely, warm spring night. The trees, the night air, the pleasant noise of conversation, the good dinner sort of added to the magic of the concert experience (not to mention the first rate seats we got, a table right next to the platform, facing Charis and the others). Although conversation during casual concerts can sometimes distract, I later found that it actually led to a more natural, audible appreciation of the performers, as well as helping us connect with others who were enjoying themselves just as much.

Charis Ioannou and the Petsteppers were absolutely phenomenal; they performed with near flawless skill and definite, bursting energy. He, along with Messios (bass) and Vafeas (drums), displayed an intimate familiarity with the be-bop jazz of the 50s, as well as the bossa nova spirit of Latin jazz, even the easy flow of West Coast jazz, all so brilliantly melded into something that was peculiarly Charis. The very spirited, beautiful sounds of Messios' bass really the body of music moving rhythmically (it's what you tap your feet to) while he plucked at the strings with easy brilliance, kind of like Paul Chambers, now 'walking.' And so sensitively in tune with the other two was Vafeas, that during the most heated parts of the performance, he'd be beating the bass and snare, punctuating with soft stride cymbals, then as

soon as he felt a solo coming to a close, would subdue his sound, sweeping his steel brush softly over the drums.

They played pieces by Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins, Bud Powell, even Gershwin's *A Foggy Day in London*, all with ease and a brilliant familiarity. They wound it up with a jazzy take on a classic Cypriot folk song, Messios and Vafeas taking on Afro-Cuban rhythms while Charis played the beautiful melody.

The very pleasant surprise (at least, to most of the audience, perhaps Messios and Vafeas) that was the Chris Byars Quartet only made the night more tremendous. Having just arrived from New York, ready to play on the 18th and 19th, the quartet played with Charis' trio (see more about them in their own review below), overwhelming a delighted audience with one of the most beautiful renditions

sounding something like Django Reinhardt and his bassist put together in quaint, plucking rhythms, perfectly in time with Warren's picturesque piano motifs.

This aside (and that's really just about it), the rhythm section was too loud, the drums taking over like overbearing rock-band percussions, while the bass guitarist didn't help much. It may be said that I'm being somewhat "purist" about my jazz, but still: I'm all for incorporating exotic elements, even rock or punk-rock—however, if you're going to transform the music with "beefy, bottom heavy hip hop breakbeats, trancy house grooves," (as it is described on Saskia's debut album), with a bit of trumpet and piano, then don't say it's "like jazz."

What was even more unfortunate was that the audience simply couldn't get enough of it, and asked for encores and cheered loudly, and so on. Karen Edwards, who came on stage late into the performance, had a charismatic, strong, bright, and slightly husky voice that resounded to the end of the hall, Aretha Franklin style, but the hard drums and bass really set everything off. A Friday evening unfortunately very ill-spent.

Chris Byars Quartet at Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah, April 18th & GUST campus, April 19th

Although Byars shyly said that he and the Quartet could never compare to the likes of the great artist, I feel that we were lucky enough to at least get the spirit of Gillespie, Parker, even Ellington and Gershwin through the magnificent, golden melodies that the Quartet offered, first to an audience at the Dar, second to listeners at GUST. One doesn't get tired of listening to these great artists on CDs and radio, but the experience of listening to it live is ultimately more overwhelming and intense.

This year's MENA group for the Jazz at Lincoln Center's 'Rhythm Road' tour was an absolute hit since they made the surprise appearance with Charis Ioannou's band. One feels that the quartet played jazz for, among other reasons, the resonance it made with them in a real meaningful way.

In his between-number commentaries Byars introduced the basic structure or nature of jazz, and related the fascinating story of a lesser known but brilliant be-bop musician, the saxophonist Gigi Gryce who converted to Islam in the late 50s and became Basheer Qusim. Interspersed

with Byars' eloquent mini-lectures were pieces that adequately illustrated his stories, such as the cheerful and complex tri-partite *Al-Ghashiyah* ('Overwhelming Moment') or the very charming, sweet *Social Call*. Going back to classics such as *Summertime* (unique here with Roland's great bow intro) and *Take the 'A' Train* (even Jazz at Lincoln Center's Orchestra could not have one better with this exquisite rendition).

Drummer Stefan Schatz played with tremendous energy for his breath-taking solos, but at the same time, had a sort of Philly Joe Jones sensitivity and soft steel-brush beats that were always in perfect sync with the quartet. Roland wowed his audience with what Eric Fine called his "arco technique" in All Things Strings magazine. John Mosca, a Juilliard graduate and leader of New York's Vanguard Jazz Orchestra was a magnificent trombonist, sometimes playing sweetly and softly, like the cooling, flower-like voice of Tommy Dorset's trombone, sometimes taking on Dizzy Gillespie's role on the trumpet and delivering absolutely fantastic solos.

Then there is Byars: most times he was a passionate Parker, his fingers racing fluidly across the keys; sometimes, his sound was soft and playful, as though he were playing with Gerry Mulligan. All the time, he was very unique; he had combined cool East coast jazz with the hotness of be-bop, further melded with his own melodious understanding of jazz, to create a peculiarly Byars voice.

The Quartet exemplified a positive direction for jazz in today's world; in no way were they annoyingly propagandist about



American jazz or democracy (Chris never used the word). Instead, they wanted to share beautiful music with people they instinctively felt would have as much fun as they do; and it worked. In demonstrating what a quartet could accomplish, and all the magnificent, novel possibilities in re-discovering be-bop jazz, the Byars Quartet did their



Interview with Charis Ioannou of the Petsteppers

By Nur Soliman

Saxophonist and bandleader Charis (pronounced 'Harris') Ioannou has come a long way from Cyprus. He arrived in Kuwait with The Petsteppers, his band, including Michael Messios on the double-bass and Ioannis Vafeas on the drums. Charis and The Petsteppers were the star performers of the Gulf Jazz Festival's second night along with a surprise attendance from Chris Byars and his Quartet, the NYC group who were playing at the Dar on Saturday.

Unlike what I expected from someone who performs some of the more robust, energetic jazz (contemporary, Latin, Cuban, funky, samba), Charis was very quiet and cool, almost shy about having to talk about himself. When it came to talking about the music, about jazz's survival in countries like the United States, Cyprus, and Kuwait, he was much more voluble. Very pleasant, ever willing to talk of his love for jazz, and interested in making it better appreciated, Charis was a hit on the night of the 16th, drawing long rounds of enthusiastic applause from the nearly-hundred strong audience outside the Bustan Restaurant of the Radisson SAS.

According to his brief bio, Charis was born in 1976, in Nicosia, Cyprus. He tells me he actually started on the piano, and not the saxophone, playing at age eight. Like "his cousins" and all children his age, he began listening to rock and other forms of modern music. He started taking saxophone lessons at the age of thirteen. "My teacher was really into jazz," Charis remarked, "so I started to experiment with jazz, too." Here, Charis waxed eloquent, saying enthusiastically that what he loved about jazz was that it encapsulated "short stories" into the fluid link of notes; "it has a complexity, the more you understand and play it, the more you decode it, and that is satisfying," he explained.

When speaking of his own style, Charis agreed that it inclined towards one sub-genre or the other over the years. He is mainly interested in contemporary jazz, sometimes fusion or funk, but more so Cuban or Latin Jazz (Charis in fact brilliantly melds these two together in some of his arrangements and compositions). This said, Charis pointed out that "the thing I'm trying to rethink and settle is to [start] moving in one direction. With the coming together of the Petsteppers when Charis returned from the US in 2003, he hopes that it will enable him "to set in one style, something specifically for me and my group that reflects my style." Charis has many influences and inspirations, including Bud Powell and Charlie Parker, though he says that he's also been through phases with more contemporary jazz saxophonists, both modern and Latin jazz, among these Chris Byars, who has influenced him greatly in recent years. Chris, Charis told me, visited Nicosia last March, where he was

hosting some "Jazz Features" workshops. Charis helped him while he was there, and since then, they have been playing together. Charis mentioned how they enjoyed playing together, and with other band members too, like Ari Roland. They were going back in May, 2009, to conduct two more sessions of the "Jazz Features" workshops in the U.N. Buffer Zone area of Nicosia.

In the fluid notes of Charis' style that race with a rich, passionate sound there is a little Charlie Parker; yet sometimes it holds a more Latin jazz lilt. There's something too of Max Ionata, that great Italian tenor sax, in his sound, which he develops and stretches to a Lester Young spirit and the elegance of Parker in say, "Old Flame." Nevertheless, Charis has a sound and style that is peculiar to him, no doubt a unique gathering of various influences that give him a brilliant, flowing sound that is sometimes long and smooth, sometimes delightfully chaotic.

In 1997, Charis travelled to Boston, studying jazz saxophone and composition at the Berklee College of Music, then moving on to New York where he played with several bands, among them Chris Byars'. "There is not a lot of difference between bands in the States and bands in Cyprus, except that in the States, there are so many different bands playing in different ways, but in Cyprus, we have around 3 different bands." According to the Cyprus Big Band site, included are his own, Uptown Beat, Kyprogenia, and the Cyprus Big Band itself, all of which Charis has played in.

After Kuwait, Charis' band has much on its plate for future tours. They were travelling to London in a week, then preparing to play at Greece's summer jazz festival, as well as attending the Krakow Jazz Festival where they first impressed the festival director, Witold Wnuk (also the director of Kuwait's festival). "Hopefully next year," they would have a few more dates on their tour calendar, Charis laughed. Although it is difficult to get recording dates in Cyprus, Charis has recorded informally with his friends in New York, as well as completing the Petsteppers' debut album in 2008, featuring compositions by band members.

When asked how he felt about his performance the following night, Charis smiled slightly and remarked that "we're happy just to be performing... if we are satisfied by what we do, then this will come across to the people, too." And he was right; the performers' clear enjoyment and sheer skill overwhelmed some of the audience. Charis is optimistic about jazz, both in Cyprus and Kuwait. He drew an analogy, saying that last he was in Cyprus, about 10 years ago, very few people were interested in or could play any jazz. Now, "I feel maybe this is doubled, maybe even tripled. People feel that connection." He also commented on the caliber of the

Continued on page 11

Waleed Hassannieh's Sketches of Lebanon

By Nur Soliman

Renowned Lebanese artist Waleed Hassannieh opened his exhibition on the night of 3rd May at the Kuwait Formative Arts Association. I usually hesitate before going to art exhibitions on Arab nations, only because I tire so quickly of the typical Arab notions of the mourning of dead pan-Arabism, even nationalism, and that melancholy desire for the revival of a great Arab nation that is now tragically fragmented.

Although at first we attended only because we had been invited, I was pleased that we had come. Of the 50 paintings exhibited, fewer than 10 depicted this tragic fragmentation of the Arab consciousness. These were somewhat creatively done, sketches in pencil and ink of fantastic landscapes torn through with sci-fi type machines and a wildly forked line that appeared to destroy the scene. Others were self-portraits of the artist as a young man (no reference to James Joyce intended), looking at himself in the mirror as he painted. They were very poignantly done as the mirror—and even the realm of the painted artist himself—seemed cracked and fragmented. It was a good thing there weren't too many of these, again, because the lamentation of past Arab nationalism and the disillusionment of many



Arabs in our parents' and perhaps grandparents' generations is something perhaps overworked by contemporary Arab painters.

Hassannieh displayed a fervent love and affection for his home of Lebanon, painting scenes from his home village, such as the scene of Prince Basheer Palace, a huge palace with running arcades and

pointed arches, as well as a huge stone gate, through which (Omar, the artist's son excitedly tells us), one passes under through the smallest wooden door. Another was a very beautiful, very lovingly painted portrait of his wife and son, entitled *Early Motherhood*, so accurately depicted, and yet the light and colour of the paint-



ing, as well as the rather romantic way in which his wife was depicted, somehow suggested more than a beautiful family portrait; it was a portrait of the Lebanese family that he so loved. Behind mother and child, whose bright, rustic colours were bathed in a lovely light, was a roughly painted, simple landscape in rich tones

of thick oil paint, while around both mother and child was a circle, pale blue mingled with other tones and forming a sun like arc (next to bright suns) over his beloved Lebanese landscapes. I originally thought of this as some sort of halo, but the artist eagerly explained to the interested visitors that it represented how he

felt these encompassed his own identity.

What was interesting was Hassannieh's use of technique and colour. His mastery of traditional (traditional European, that is) optically natural painting was very clear in his beautiful paintings of the Lebanese natural landscape in paintings like *Woods* or *Lakes* and so on. Most of his oil paintings used deep, vibrant colors: rich golds, blues, greens, browns, and shades of red (with rather awkward shades of mauve/lavender and pastel pink, which appeared a little incongruous with the other schemes, but seemed to add to the energy of the paintings all the same). The use of masking fluid and a beautiful white spaces in his watercolors, the use of beautiful spectrums of color flowing into one another—certainly not natural colors (blues and purples, greens, yellows, and deep oranges covering a fortress wall, for instance), but in their rendering they came across as more than natural, as colors often flutter and wave over one's memory in such vibrant manners anyhow—all made it more alive. 'Alive,' in fact, is probably what imbued all of Hassannieh's paintings, and that is what drew me to take a second, third, and closer look at some of his work.

Charis Ioannou, from page 10

musicians, young and old, that perform now in Cyprus. "Gradually, you know, the music gets better, and amazingly, when you give real good, world-class jazz to any audience, something, something will happen there, and it's a great experience." He's found audiences in Poland and Cyprus where virtually "the whole city is buzzing with music," unlike events he has been

to in other places, sometimes even in New York City.

Charis predicts a similar opportunity for jazz in Kuwait, where there may soon develop a healthier interest in the music. He hoped that the budding bands of Kuwait, such as the 15-strong Desert Cats Jazz Band and the very new Kuwait Jazz Collective quartet, would begin playing to larger audiences, recruiting younger players, inviting other musicians, and

simply making their great music better known. "Audiences and musicians want to explore this amazing music," Charis smiles gently, confident in his hope for jazz's future. I certainly felt that dynamism and the living energy of his jazz; you could tell from those golden bursts from his saxophone, from Messios, Vafeas, and the Chris Byars' Quartet; that these spectacular sounds were going to make their mark.

Romantic Sonatas for Violin and Piano

By Nur Soliman

When violinist Rashed Jum'a again had to delay his concert at the Dar, the day was saved by a fantastic duo residing in Kuwait, who played the most accurate, emotionally intense sonatas for violin and piano, the beautiful Debussy and Franck sonatas. Kyle Little, a young violinist from Nova Scotia, Canada who currently teaches instrumental music at the American International School, played the very impassioned, very poetic violin. Bartek Rybak, a Polish pianist and young professor of piano in the music department of Kuwait's College for Basic Education, is a graduate of Warsaw's prestigious Chopin Academy of Music, touring the Middle East and Europe.

First they played Claude Debussy's hauntingly beautiful *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, dedicated to the brilliant Belgian violinist and composer Eugene Ysaye, whose astounding music was performed by the talented Guy and Devos in the winter. The composition consisted of three movements, the first two very melancholy and characteristic of some of the more urgent tones of the "musical Impressionist," the violin practically soaring in very high-pitched, urgent tones over the steady piano that rumbled on passionately in magnificent chords. The final movement was done beautifully, really evoking the cheerfulness of the conclusion, at least sunnier than the first two.

The second piece performed, Cesar Franck's passionate, urgent *Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Minor*. This was ultimately more tragic in the romantic

sense, the piano racing fluidly, almost frenetically, now over the rumbling deep chords, now over the very highest notes, thrillingly urgent as the violin's intense, swelling sound kept pace with the resolve of the deepest, most intense feelings played out through the four beautiful movements. Sometimes, it felt like the great, vivid, and feverish feeling that ran through the lyrical, overwhelming melodies completely took possession of the fingers of the two musicians who seemed to completely absorb the sheer energy of the compositions. For some listeners, the sonatas were too modern in the sense that they were hard to hum along to, and were not as coherent or traditional as say, a Baroque or Classical sonata, but for others, the intensity made up for the lack of focus in coherence, perhaps, the passionate energy overwhelming form without ever abandoning it.

All one can say is that we were lucky to hear Rybak and Little play that night, little known performers as they were, real, brilliant talents worthy of recognition. With Rybak playing remarkably close to the spirit of Debussy and Franck but still imbuing the compositions with his own unique voice, a hard, rich sound that was influenced perhaps by rag piano, and Little, whose very poetic and ardent violin with its plaintive high tones and a faithfulness to the spirit of the compositions in a way that would have made Yehudi Menuhin proud, this was a great way for Kuwait's music audiences to be acquainted with these remarkably talented young men.



خمس قوانين لعشقي

بقلم عمرو سرحان

لعشقي يا سيدتي خمس قوانين

أولها :

أن تركبي أمواج العشق دون تفكير

وتنامي في سرير عيوني

وتحبيني كما أنا بحبي وكبرهي لك

ومشاعري التي ذابت فيك ولم تخفتي

أرجوك لاتقارنيني بالسلطين

فأنا رجل رأس ماله قصيدة

قصوره وحساباته البنكية كلمات صغيرة

قد لا أستطيع شراء الثياب والعطور

الباريسية

و لا السفر إلى جزر السيشل أو الجزر

الاسبانية

و لا الأكل في المطاعم الكلاسيكية

ولكني رجل يؤمن بالأحادية

أحادية الله، أحادية الحياة، أحادية الموت

أحاديثك أنت في حياتي البدائية

ثاني القوانين :

أن تحبيني بلا شك

و تسقي قلبك ماء اليقين

و تغاري عليا من الفراشات والزهور

كما أغار عليك حتى من المجاني

و أكون عاصمتك الثقافية

فلا تقرأين كتابا غير كتابي

ولا جريدة وطن ثاني

ولا لغة غير لغة أشعاري

فهمما قرأتني و بحثتي

فلن تجدي أصدق من أنفاس أشعاري

ولا تاريخا أعرق من تاريخ أجدادي

فأنا في بلاد أصبح التاريخ فيها

ثالث القوانين:

أن نلغي الوقت ونمحو التواريخ

فالوقت يذبح الحب بعقابه وثوانيه

فلا تسأليني متى نذهب ومتى نعود

فهذا السؤال يفجر أعصابي

ويجعل الوقت كالإفخوان يتربص بأشعاري

فماذا أساوي أنا؟ وماذا تساوين أنت؟

دون لغة الشعر وكلمات الحنين

فما الحياة إلا بضح قواف وأبيات

يسطرها حبر السنين

فيا حبيبتي تعودي على حائط بيتنا

دون ساعة تحكم وتكبل أيامنا

ولا تسأليني عن الوقت فالوقت يقتل

أحلامنا

رابع القوانين:

أن يكون لنا مدارنا الخاص

وجاذبيتنا الخاصة

فلا يتدخل أحد بقصائدي

وأنت يا حبيبتيأجمل القصائد

لوحه شعريه ينساب العشق من خلال

الألوان

يتخللك عطر الياسمين ورائحة الغابات

والبراري

فدعينا نعاقي غيوم الشتاء

وننصهر مع الأمطار

وأكتب قصيدة تخلص حينا

وأسميها قصيدة الشتاء.....

آخر القوانين :

أنا لا أغلق في وجهك

أبواب الأرض والسما

ولكن الحب في زماني

أصبح مرهونا بالدمع والبكاء

فيا حبيبتي

لنجعل يوما في السنة يوم الحزن

نحزن فيه على زمان مات فيه الوفاء

حتى أصبح مجرد كلمات

لا وزن لها لا مكان لها

لا في الأرض ولا في السما

حبيبتيأنا أسف إذا قسوت عليك

فأنا رجل ذو ماض عميق

ماض محكوم بمنازل القمر

ودوران الأرضدوران مع كبرياء.....

A Young Man of Letters

By *Walah Al-Sabah*

Hamad Al-Zemami, one of AUK's students, recently published his first booklet, *My Love, My Pen, and My Words*. This gentleman possesses an unfamiliar eloquence of speech and writing that is rare today. His calm and reserved speech makes him intellectually appealing, and his opinions and views are very mature and wise for a man of his young age. Through the following interview, we shall understand more about this student (major in Business management, minor in Communications) and writer who also works for *Abwab Magazine*. His next two books are currently in press, and the Voice shall be keen to follow up with his upcoming books and keep the readership apprised of his latest literary endeavors.

When did you discover your talent of writing and what finally made you publish your booklet, *My Love, My Pen, and My Words*?

I have been writing ever since I knew how to use the pen. I wrote from a very young age and no one realized because I didn't used to tell anyone that I had the talent of writing. I used to write about topics that were too mature for my age. My first article was published under my name in Fouad Al-Hashem's corner, but the act of publishing an article under the name of a seventeen year old boy in Fouad Al-Hashem's article was something serious. After that, I started publishing in the newspapers under the name of Hamad Bader, because I never sought fame. It was a way for me to simply express my opinion. In 2005 until 2006, I was one of the first batch of members to work at *Al-Deera* magazine and I was one of the publishers. From 2006, I started writing for *Abwab* magazine.

What made me publish my book was that after my writings turned into a numerous collection, someone had to read them because I write for humankind and society, and my message had to get across. My aim was to change the world.

Give us a general idea about your book? What are the issues it talks about? And what age group do you think it would interest?

The book talks about short stories, but a different genre of short stories. Each collection of stories is different from the others, different characters, ideas. I did something different or tried to be unique for a goal, in that the readers will wonder how this young man perceives a particular issue. Many of the stories in the book are factual, and I've lived and seen them. Each title pertains to the story itself. I write for every person who loves his country, whether old or young, and I



was shocked by the reaction of others. Also, I discovered that elderly people or ones that are of my same age, loved the issue and lived it. I cannot categorize the age groups that my readings have attracted, but whoever loves this topic. We are in a society even children talk about politics, and understand how politics goes because the media brings awareness about politics. There is a lot of awareness about politics.

Do you intend to publish more books? If so, will they be similar to your first one or slightly different?

I started my series as short series, and the next series will be called, *Khawater Ashig*, or literally, 'Reflections Of a Lover.' It will be about love and romance, and will be totally different from my first book, *My Love, My Pen, and My Words*. The third book of the series will be a collection of essays I have written. Each of these essays reflects what I feel about a certain topic, whereas the opinion will appear in the text. If there is any criticism towards the topic, it will be constructive criticism. I finished completing the second and third series, but they are under the process of publishing. The latter will talk about love, society, and other issues such as the country, patriotism. Each book in the series will reflect a different part of my personality.

As a writer, and obviously a reader, do you have ways to advise the youth to read more? Because we know very well that Kuwaiti youth have a severe shortage of interest in reading.

Read, and read, and read. Reading is the best of friends, and books are the best of friends. Whoever reads, becomes enlightened, in him/herself, before being enlightened in his/her own society. One must search and educate him or herself, and this habit must be reborn in people. Read everything. Do not confine yourself to reading one particular thing; just read everything. Because reading, in any case, adds to the person. One must read about every issue, even read things that might not agree with their own convictions, but by reading

the opposing point of view, one is able to shape a viewpoint.

It remains a personal issue, we cannot force people to do something they do not want, but we can facilitate the process of reading. For example, I chose the size of my book to be small. I cannot philosophize and flex my literary muscles if the reader does not benefit. We are in the rapid era, they want something straight to the point and through writing, and we can write something straight to the point. The size of the book also makes it easier to carry at anytime and anywhere. We must realize that the designs of books are impressive. I ask of people to read something that makes them passionate, but at the same time, not neglect the other issues that they are ignorant about. Human is the enemy of that which he is ignorant about. People have to know a little bit about everything.

Finally, who are the people that you would like to thank?

Of course my mother. When I wrote my first book, I went through a state of depression because I see things not changing in terms of the country, the world. I used to see a lot of things in a negative way, but my mother told me to be patient, and my father encouraged me as well. I do not deny the favor of my sister and my family.

From the literary side, I want to mention the person who has always enraptured me with his readings. I met him for a journalistic interview, which made me even more impressed by him. His name is Haytham Boodai, a famous writer, and a person whose friendship is very beautiful. I learned from him a lot of things, and I can never enjoy my time with someone as much as I enjoy with him. Of course, I also thank Hamad Al-Hamad from the league of writers. He wrote the prologue of the book; he read the book, liked it, and wrote its introduction. And undoubtedly, I would like to thank my magazine, my second home, *Abwab* magazine. They have supported and encouraged me a lot. They used to always ask about what I had next. I thank a lot of people.

Student Master of Poetry



By *Nada Al-Hudaid*

AUK is privileged to have a student like Mahdi Baroon, who is an exceptionally talented poet. His passion for this art has been rooted in him since he was a four-year-old. His father and the environment he was raised in gave birth to this talent and encouraged it to further develop.

Although Mahdi majors in marketing, his interest and future dreams revolve around the world of literature that charmed his instincts and made him excel in it. He is an active participant in poetry nights and recitations inside and outside AUK. His last participation was in the 12th May event organized by the Arabic Literature Club.

His excellence in both writing and recitating poems indicates the amount of quality time he spends developing his hobby. Poetry recitation and writing are two different abilities that require some skill to master. Mahdi has developed both skills efficiently as he is a talented writer and his recitation is amazing. Mahdi stated that poetry writing requires talent in order to master while poetry recitation is a technique that anyone can easily learn.

To him, literature, notably poetry, is a remedy that no society should disregard or ignore. When asked about his contribution to Kuwait and how his hobby can help improve the surroundings, his an-

swer was simple and to the point: literature helps to deliver and express anything easily. To his mind, literature is a work that addresses all levels of society regardless of educational, social, or economic status. To create literature—to produce simple wording rich in meaning and understood by the majority—is a challenging activity.

As a child, Mahdi's dream was to become a teacher, and when he grew up, the dream developed to becoming a famous poet. Hopefully he will contribute largely in building Kuwait intellectually as his vision towards life is based on knowledge, literature, and health. If he had the chance to change something in Kuwait, it would be the encouragement of local production and lessening imports in order to make Kuwait a productive country.

Unfortunately, this great poet has not considered publishing his work, but soon, with the amount of experience he has, publishing will be his means to reach out to more people and help realize his dream. Leaving the reader with no evidence of his talent would be frustrating; therefore, the lines below are provided until AUK's master of poetry decides to share his exceptional talent:

تعبت من الوعود وخابت ظنوني ... ومجرى السيل
يجري مدمج عبوني
وإذا عود الورد يذبل بلباه الماي ... أنا عودي ذبل وين
إلى يسقوني ؟

A Senior's Farewell

By *Patty Marotte*

In a day and age where identity counts, a liberal arts program is exactly what is needed for an individual to 'Learn, Think, and Become.' Identity can be a tricky thing because it can represent so many different phases of your life. Sometimes identity can show what you have accomplished. For example, I am an American who has Kuwaiti citizenship, yet I identify myself with both cultures and love them dearly. I was raised Christian and converted to Islam, but I have taken the universal teachings of both religions to live a good decent life. I was a schoolteacher who became the supervisor of an entire Kindergarten department. I am a woman who has chosen to be a wife and mother of four children. With all this on my plate I was also a student at AUK for four years and always carried a GPA of 3.5; now I am an AUK graduate. My point is, we are always changing as individuals. However, the transformation that happened to me during the development of my AUK identity did not come alone.

(Get ready because my list is long!)

It was the encouragement of Andrea Al-Adwani who has been my emotional support since day 1. The wisdom of Prof. Jeremy Cripps who taught me that economics shapes the world. The confirmation and validation from Dean Carol that character change is healthy. The patience of President Marina who always has the time to talk to students. The creativeness of Prof. Hesham Al-Awadi who made history something real. The cosmopolitan woman attitude of Shareefa Al-Adwani with her 'you can do it Patty' when I was over-

whelmed. Professor Rawda Awwad opened the door of literature for me and I learned that I can appreciate any culture through various forms of writing. It was her ability to always make a student feel worthy that helped me have the confidence to apply to graduate school. The self-assurance that Prof. Rasha Jamal and Prof. Mulaq Mutairi always tried to build in me so I could understand Math concepts. I am grateful for the kindness of Magdeline and Micheline that could put a smile on your face. I appreciate the professionalism of Shoma Munshi who works so hard to see us graduate. I will never forget the genius of Prof. Fernand Tessier who made statistics relate to everyday situations. The vision of Prof. Majorie Kelley who always takes time to expose us to the various forms of beauty in this world and appreciate them. Dean Nizar Hamzeh always told me to "Dream Big!" I know everything about Iran from Prof. Gholam Vatandoust in the most interesting techniques. Prof. Gregory Gause it has been such an honor to study with you and I hope to see more Fullbright Scholars come to Kuwait. The knowledge you pass on to us so effortlessly pushes limits of our thought. My great thanks to Prof. Neamat Mosaad that made me realize my ability in Physics and Prof. Ali Charara who knows how to read his students well, and gives them every opportunity to succeed. Prof. Noura Basha, you have made me the 'cool' mom with the experiments/homework I do at home with my children! Mr. Mazen who always answered my questions thoroughly and made me feel involved. Through the Soliya program I now know how

to use video technology and make a blog! This through the superfluous endeavor from Prof. Roman Kulchitsky to 'catch me up' in this new modern world. The daily messages of deep thought from Walah Al-Sabah. The sisterhood of Nada Al-Hudaid that made me feel welcome at AUK. Noura Al-Alewi a fellow student with me and then my own personal registrar helper, but you will always be my friend! Farah Al-Shamali who took leadership and teamwork to a new level. The atmosphere on campus from all the students, staff, and faculty is one of cohesiveness and openness to self-discovery regardless of your background, beliefs, or status.

It was the accumulation of these various personalities at AUK that helped me find out who I am. So when somebody asks me again, "Patty, who are you?" It is with WolfPack pride I will say, "I am an AUK graduate! Where I learned, thought, and became..."

Most of all, I owe everything to something bigger than us, the Creator and Master Planner of this great big universe, who has many names around the world but is the ultimate holder of all our destinies. Lastly, to my husband Othman Al-Abdullahi who supports me so that I can and will fulfill a lifelong dream to always strive and achieve.

I will never forget where I came from and where I want to go... I will never disregard either how far I have come to get where I am now, nor how much further I have in front of me. My advice: Never put behind you the various identities that have evolved you as a person, and always think about the individual that you would like to become.

Communication at its Best

By Nada Al-Hudaid

The communication field at AUK is fortunate to have had Dr. Shaheed Mohammed as Associate Professor of Media and Communication since August 2006. He took the program lead, and has taught courses in areas such as mass media, communications research, and digital image (3D-CGI) production. Unfortunately, Dr. Shaheed will be leaving Kuwait to take a new job in the United States.

Dr. Shaheed was born in the small Caribbean islands of Trinidad and Tobago. He specialized in communication throughout his university levels (bachelor's, master's, and PhD) and received his PhD from the University of New Mexico in 1998.

Dr. Shaheed's experience and knowledge in film and cinema is vast as he has worked in these areas for many years. He has also worked as a TV journalist, where he produced animated short films as well as hundreds of news stories and mini-documentaries. He has published a number of articles and is working on several books at this time. Moreover, he has completed several research



projects, including work on the Kuwaiti elections and the influence of foreign media.

Some of his hobbies are animation, music composition, and traveling. Dr. Shaheed is an active intellectual who interacts with everyone modestly. His wit and intelligence are strong qualities that appear a lot during the conversations and discussions he engages in. His positive attitude and simple style is the reason students easily get used to him.

His interest in mastering research, scholarship, and public speaking skills is what led him to teach communication-related courses. In addition to pos-

sessing excellent communication skills that make his classes a fun environment to learn in, Dr. Shaheed encourages his students to expand their horizons and challenge their intellectual limitations. According to him, family, intellectual freedom, independence, and enlightenment are some of the important things in life. He also stresses the importance of "[being] able to question the things that 'everyone knows'".

Dr. Shaheed is teaching his last semester at AUK, after which he will be leaving for Pennsylvania, USA, where he will stay for the foreseeable future. He will leave a lot of memories at AUK due to his sincere interest in what his students do. Hopefully, someday, Dr. Shaheed will hear the success stories of all those students who worked honestly in his classes.

On a final note, it is a great loss to AUK and especially to students not to have you, Dr. Shaheed, but we wish you all the best wherever you go. You are an asset and any place you go to will be honored to have you, so do not forget your students at AUK because they will never forget you!

Humble, Wise, Headed for Success

By Walah Al Sabah

Often in life, the wise frequently go unheard. They do not seem to be keen for attention; rather, they tend to shy away and prefer to remain low-key. However, and without any exaggeration, wisdom seems to incarnate itself with a certain student. Dear readers, here is first and foremost a person, and a student, who seems to be one of those deeply wise people who like to work behind the scenes. Also, one has to give her the credit for having a brave and courageous soul, for courage and bravery are not measured by physical strength, but by an indomitable will as Ghandi once said, and this student does seem to be the quintessential example of Ghandi's idea of a strong person. She is a sincere human being, not very talkative and reserved (in a good way of course), as well as diligent and quick to weigh the pros and cons of her actions before taking a decision or acting in a certain way. Moreover, despite her seriousness and professionalism at work, she has a great sense of humor outside of the work sphere. Her unquestionable ability to help others and give them a lending hand deserves a standing ovation, and the reputation and name that she has built for herself by herself makes her living proof that despite obstacles, you can be whoever and whatever you want to be. Apart from that, she is an excellent student, and one who has given services to AUK and participates in extracurricular activities. Ladies and gentlemen, I introduce to you Ms. Maryam Al-Bahar.

Al-Bahar is a senior student who double majors in accounting and finance. She was the ori-



entation leader at AUK during her sophomore and junior years. She used to be the head of the social committee for the Patriots club and currently serves as both the public relations officer and vice president of the Entrepreneurship and Business Club, founded and presided over by her colleague and friend, Nasser Al-Jamea. Al-Bahar was voted one of five members—and the only female—to the clubs and organizations council. Apart from her busy schedule, she has been successful in maintaining a high GPA and is an honor student.

This person and student needs to be given the attention she has earned not only because of her colorful professional career, but because of her personality as well. She does not seek to put herself in the center of things even though she might have contributed greatly to work that has been done. Many a person has gone to her for help, and ended up acting reasonably because of her sound advice, morals, and principles, which she never hesitates to share with others. Although she is only twenty-two years old, yet, the way she thinks, speaks and be-

haves displays a person far more advanced in age. Al-Bahar is the kind of person who seems to be respected wherever she goes and she has definitely garnered the respect and admiration of both her professors, colleagues, and friends.

Professor Mourad Dakhli, who has taught Al-Bahar in many of his classes, candidly had this to say about her: **"Maryam is a very committed student, and someone eminently suited for leadership roles. She is a perfectionist whose dedication to excellence is her main drive for success. I am sure that she will give an excellent account of herself no matter where her academic career takes her."** Moreover, her fellow colleague and friend, Nasser Al-Jamea, a senior majoring in finance and marketing, says about Maryam that, "She is kind, easy to deal with, flexible to a certain extent, and work is work to her. It was an honor for me to work with her in the E&B club and I hope her success will continue in her life. She is a good friend."

This article is a humble tribute to a person who seems to be destined to reach the heights of greatness. Maryam clearly has business aspirations, and hopes to be a CEO of a company one day. If there is anyone who truly deserves success, and a professional career full of successful achievements, then it might be a person who works hard behind the scenes, with silence and discretion, and remains friendly and respectful towards her colleagues and friends no matter what, then it surely is Maryam Al-Bahar. She is a valuable asset to this society, and one that should not, and God willing, will not, go to waste.

Beware Shoplifting Birds

By Fatima Ibraheem

Allow me to share with you a small piece of breaking news from the BBC. Despite the fact that I, myself, am a big fan of birds, I discovered lately that these species can turn into shoplifters! The following case has been observed in Scotland, but you never know, this can also spread until it reaches Kuwait, just like the flu!



A cute yet cunning seagull has developed the habit of stealing chips from a neighbourhood shop, and has been perpetrating the crime since the beginning of July 2007. The patient seagull waits until the shopkeeper isn't

looking, and when the coast is clear, he slowly makes his way over to a display of snack foods in the store, and grabs a snack-size bag of cheese Doritos—even birds like cheese Doritos; not only us! Once outside, the

bag gets ripped open and the feast gets shared by other birds as well. What a generous shoplifter, huh?

The seagull's shoplifting began when he first swooped into the store in Aberdeen, Scotland, and helped himself to a bag of chips. Since then, he's become a regular customer. He always takes the same type of chips. He's been nicknamed Sam, and has become a local celebrity. Customers (human customers, I mean) who are entertained by the bird have even started paying for the seagull's stolen bags of chips because they think it's hilarious!

The Price of Vanity

By Sahar H Tanweer

Saucy, sassy and sexy are the first words that come to my mind when I think of the phrase 'glamour shots'. Seeing today's multifaceted, fast-paced society I have known a kaleidoscope of people throughout my life who have a craze for being photographed, be it with a normal digital camera or in a studio with several cameras, integral lighting, and endless hours spent on clothing, hair, and make-up.

Knowing quite a few friends who adore having glamour shots taken, I sat down with one of them and asked about glamour shots. Joana Wells pointed out how she got her glamour shots done for a portfolio she had to submit to a modeling agency while enrolled in Yale's Fashion Designing course. "We had to do an extensive portfolio to sub-

mit as our final, so that's when I first had my photo shoot done, and from then on it just became a passion."

Hearing this really intrigued me I further interrogated. She explained how she went to renowned Harpers Bazaar photographer Peter Lindberg, and how it cost her a fortune. "I wanted my portfolio to be the best ever so of course I opted for the best." Wells later explained how the fashion industry has completely evolved, and has become so competitive and contagious that normal people with a little extra money are willing to pay a hefty amount of money and use glamour shots to put around their house as symbols of status.

When asked about her overall experience, she explained how the photo shoot lasted for more than 8 hours, starting at 5am,

and involving hair and make-up, wardrobe calls, and finally experimenting to find the perfect type of lighting and angles to sit at. I was surprised to hear the length of the photo shoot so I asked Wells about it. "Well, it's because Peter was very intricate about every detail, hence his team involving the fashion editor, the hair and makeup professionals took almost 5 hours deciding the perfect look."

Lastly, I revisited a statement she had made earlier about how she liked getting glamour shots taken despite the long time it takes. Wells responded by saying that it's fun and thrilling, and somewhat relaxing for the soul and body, which helps one appreciate oneself. From that note I realized that fashion—like passion—is driven by all different modes of desire.

The Metaphysics of Gemstones

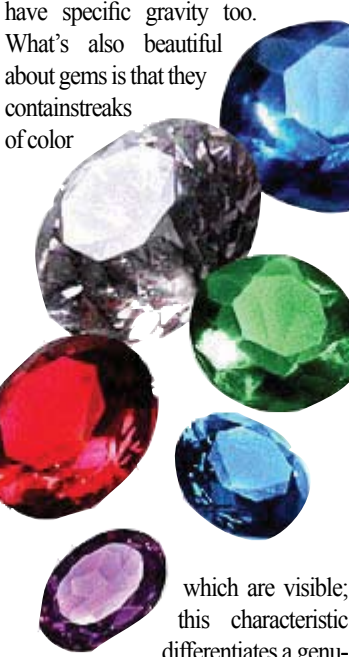
By Fatima Ibraheem

Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy concerned with the study of nature of being. This field, like any other, is a double-edged sword. Most importantly, it has its deep mysteries which leave humans reaching for a solution to unlock the mysterious riddles in several discoveries. A discovery is a chain of answers; after unlocking riddles, remedial secrets appear.

A product of those human discoveries is the discovery of latent energy found in gemstones. There are 3000 different kinds of gems out there in our world today, and believe it or not, only 50 of those are being used in the manufacture of jewelry. The countries that are known to be the source of such gems include Brazil, Russia, South Africa, United States of America, Australia, China and Thailand. This discovery of gems has been advantageous in many ways, such as their utilization in the field of medicine. However, I will only delve into the most common ones: ruby, turquoise, agate, emerald, and diamond.

Before looking at their specific characteristics, I'm going to start with gems' generic characteristics. All gems, including the ones previously mentioned, acquire unique hardness which makes them resistant to scratches against certain substances. All gems

have specific gravity too. What's also beautiful about gems is that they contain streaks of color



which are visible; this characteristic differentiates a genuine gem from a fake. Plus, gems have a special refractive index which creates a pattern of light refraction characteristic of the gem. This gives gems a pleasant and splendid shimmer.

Shall we go into the specific characteristics now? Well, I'm sure that whenever the gem ruby is mentioned, you will think of a blood-red colored stone. Actually, genuine rubies are available in different colors: red, yellow, (dark) blue and, rarely, white. A ruby is considered the hardest gem after diamond; therefore, nothing can break it except diamond. In addition to

that, it has a robust resistance against high temperatures—good news for Kuwaiti women who are interested in wearing rubies!

According to some, red rubies are useful for cardiac diseases and blood cancers. It is a factor for blood purification and moderating hypertension too. If worn in a necklace, ruby is supposed to prevent blood clotting. What if you own a yellow ruby? Well, yellow rubies are said to balance the metabolism and also strengthen the digestive system.

Yellow rubies are also thought to help in removing body toxins and boosting the spiritual capacity of humans. Sapphire, or blue ruby, sparkles like a star when placed under light. A blue ruby, it is claimed, reduces osteoporosis and strengthens the nervous system, so don't wear it a lot because it might make you nervous. For those teenagers in AUK, try using the water of a sapphire to help in removing acne! One more significant claim is that sapphires can aid in fixing vocal cords; therefore, I'm sure you'll become successful singers if you're smothered in blue rubies... just ask Um Kulthoom.

I will continue this discussion of the mystical properties of gemstones in a future issue of the *Voice*.

2008 - 2009 SGA

By The Student Government Association

Over the past year, the 2008 – 2009 SGA has been met with numerous challenges that have pushed it to the limit and have served as a growth experience accompanied by a number of achievements. To begin with, most students do not realize that we all have the self-same hopes for AUK and wish to see the same desires materialize. However, part of being an effective leader is not to constantly defy everyone around you; the primary goal that should be kept in mind and never lost from sight is to always seek compromise. Being in the SGA, myself and my fellow 2008 – 2009 SGA officers have learned much about the nature of professionalism and collaborating with AUK administration, departments, and individuals. It is not an easy task and tests the degree to which we can present ourselves as leaders of the student body. However, it has been an enriching and valuable experience that certainly lends itself very well to our personal enhancement as individuals who will be leading our own respective societies to greatness.

It would be insane of me to state that we did not make mistakes, but it is not something that I or the 2008 – 2009 SGA are ashamed of. Making mistakes and striving to avoid them is part of being human. However, the problem arises when critics choose to focus on mistakes rather than continual efforts to correct them. In fact, I am glad that we were met with challenges as they have given us the opportunity to grow and better understand what the SGA is all about: the strict representation and projection of the voice of AUK students. Hopefully, future SGA's will harbor this necessity and impress it upon themselves.

Regardless, the 2008 – 2009 has been able to achieve much over the past year. I have decided to split them into categories: academic achievements, student concern achievements, cultural/social achievements, SGA enhancement achievements, SGA academic, awareness, and extracurricular events, and SGA initiatives.

Academic achievements are those that promote academic excellence at AUK and assist students with their academics. The



IEP/Freshmen Open Day was hosted and aimed at welcoming new IEP/Freshmen students to AUK – competitions were held to engage them. An important achievement was opening Business classes as there were a scarcity – the SGA assisted the Business and Economics Department with opening new classes as per the requests of students by asking them for their information (names, IDs, and classes they wish to see open) and sending it to the Business and Economics Department. The SGA, represented by the President, Treasurer, and IEP/Freshmen Officer, participated in the *International Student Government Conference* in Rome, Italy, at which they attended workshops and presented their SGA constitution, which was celebrated by other participant universities. Finally, the SGA attended the opening ceremony of the *Conference on University Development* and a few sessions that took place. In addition, SGA addressed the interest of inviting the Vice President of Sorbonne University in Abu Dhabi to AUK to present the university's higher education programs that can solve problems for many graduate students who are looking for quality education and cannot afford going

to the west for any reason.

Without a doubt, the most pressing issues that the 2008 – 2009 SGA focused its attention on were student concerns. Although some were genuine and could be addressed, others extended outside of the realm of AUK and conflicted with local law. However, the fact that the SGA had addressed and followed up on them demonstrates their dedication. When it comes to anti-segregation, an Anti-Segregation song was written and recorded but it was not properly utilized. Anti-Segregation Forms were drafted to have students (and their parents) show support for anti-segregation and be sent to the Ministry of Education. However, at this point in time, segregation is a law that AUK must comply with. However, the SGA attempted to make a chance with regards to this issue. With regards to the parking issue, a parking survey was created and placed on Self-Service to find out what alternatives students wish to see to resolve it. Also related to the parking issue, the SGA proposed parking solutions and were submitted (in writing) to the Municipality. Furthermore, the SGA invited Parliamentarian Ahmad Lari to address the parking issue and

presented him with an official document regarding it (he was visually shown the problem).

Also, the IEP Survey was created to know what IEP students' concerns are; SGA officers also went to IEP classes and administered hard copies of the survey. The SGA held a total of three Town Hall Meetings which discussed student concerns and created a direct channel whereby students could have their questions answered by the AUK administration. The SGA also held one Open Meeting in the soccer field, meant to encourage students to approach the SGA with their concerns outside of an office setting. The SGA also made sure to promote student efforts at creating change, however minimal, like redecorating AUK's prayer rooms and equipping them with several necessary items such as a mirror, slippers for performing ablution, and partitions for the women, etc. Letters were sent to the Kuwaiti government regarding the monthly allowance and difficulties and concerns attached to it. More often than not, there were no responses. The SGA also assisted and collaborated with various AUK departments with advertising and reaching students (food survey,

registrar deadlines for seniors, etc.) A very notable achievement was the visiting of Ms. Nouriya Al-Subeeh, Minister of Education, to discuss student concerns such as the monthly allowance and the parking issue.

When it comes to the high prices of books at the AUK Bookstore, the SGA met with Mr. Shailendra Strivastava to look into possible solutions. What resulted were two alternatives: setting up a bulletin board to have students post flyers to sell their books to other students and establishing a Book Buyback Program to allow students to price their books and place them in the AUK Bookstore for students to view them. Dr. Carol has been contacted to look into the Book Buyback Program. The bulletin board will be taking place first.

SGA was successful in reviving innovative approaches with many initiatives and new ideas in order to represent the different cultures and beliefs that coexist at AUK. The core of the efforts exerted were meant to create, organize, and coordinate events/activities to promote multiculturalism, support diversity, and encourage positive relationships among members of the AUK community. An impor-

tant attempt to ensure representation was the idea of hanging all the country flags of nationalities represented at AUK permanently in the Auditorium. The process and procedures are so lengthy that the next SGA is left with 30% of the work in order to make it happen.

The wisdom quotes found in all the elevators of AUK were based on the idea of focusing on what is said rather than who is saying it. It was a means for representation and inspiration where various authors were chosen from Shiite, Sunni, secular, western, and Christian texts in order to enhance respect of diversity by reading the various inspirations and accepting the fact that there is good everywhere. Unfortunately, many quotes were disrespected by being misplaced, scratched with fanatic notes, thrown to the ground, and some disappeared despite being replaced several times.

Other means used for cultural representation were the idea of having country mini-exhibitions, meant to commemorate the various celebrations (like national/liberation days) and holidays of each nationality at AUK; it was sponsored by the SGA and located next to the elevators of the ground floor of the Sciences and Liberal Arts buildings. Some of the countries that the SGA was able to recognize in this way were Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, and Egypt, an effort which required communicating with respective embassies to provide brochures, pictures, flags, etc. Along with that, flyers were routinely sent to all AUK community recognizing the various national, liberation, and independence days of all nationalities at AUK. The global/religious events and issues were considered as well in the flyer program. These initiatives met the satisfaction of many students and faculty who were never represented before at AUK. They expressed their appreciation regarding this initiative as it is a simple idea yet with a deep meaning that touched them because they were remembered in a land foreign to them.

SGA tried its best to initiate and create a sense of social and cultural cohesion but the efforts exerted did not have direct results due to many factors and obstacles such as support from AUK community and dif-



difficulty of implementing ideas that many refused to consider. Despite that, SGA continued to work endlessly until the end of its term believing that everything good starts with a step; therefore, the work and efforts that is not recognized by many will actually set the first stepping stones upon which future SGAs will build their achievements on. Continuing with this principle (to work for the good of all rather than the personal interests), SGA continued to stretch in every direction possible to ensure that representation is active. The Prophet's Birthday Celebration was commemorated by distributing bags of sweets. A semi-Master Calendar was created and set up outside the SGA office for clubs/organizations to include their on-campus events at AUK which will help in advanced planning and avoiding overlapping events.

Community service recognition is vital to encourage civil participation to enhance Kuwaiti society. The SGA hosted the Kuwait Multiple Sclerosis Association which spoke about the disease to raise awareness and treatment. They also provided informative flyers for students to pick up and make use of. An act that should be undertaken by Kuwaitis is the SGA's visit to the Kuwait Memorial Museum, where its members congratulated Mr. Yousef Al-Omairi, the creator, who is doing much to preserve Kuwaiti history. The SGA also visited the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and awarded Mr. Barjas Al-Barjas for the efforts that are exerted for the benefit of Kuwaiti and global society. Finally, the SGA visited the Orphanage during Eid Al-Adha and distributed gifts to the orphans, the disabled, senior citizens, and volunteers – the Eid festival was organized by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society.

One of the most important aspects that will help the SGA to prosper and grow internally is the existence of a strong constitution to fall back on. The 2008 – 2009 SGA was able to finalize and ratify the SGA Constitution after an entire year of receiving feedback, meeting to discuss



changes/additions, and making sure it is semantically sound. The SGA Constitution has enhanced upon an idea presented by the 2007 – 2008 SGA: the General Assembly. It has been expanded and designed to represent students more fully and have their voices heard by approaching representatives of several constituents at AUK.

The SGA also held a range of academic, awareness, and extra-curricular events over the past year. So as to increase student's awareness in the SGA, the SGA Awareness Day was held at the beginning of the academic year – it sought to familiarize students with the Student Government Association, the services it provides, and how to contact it. In collaboration with the Student Success Center, the SGA held an awareness campaign for Breast Cancer entitled Pink Week during the month of October, sold merchandise, and accepted donations. At the wake of the Israeli attacks of the Gaza Strip on December 27, 2008, the SGA hosted Kuwaiti personalities such as Dr. Mohammad Al-Awadhi, sold merchandise,

and accepted donations to go to the ailing people of Gaza at the Save Gaza event. Continuing on the tradition of the 2007 – 2008 SGA, the 2nd Annual Public Speaking Competition was held to help participants develop public speaking skills. In April, the SGA hosted the Anti-Drug Campaign in collaboration with the Student Success Center, at which representatives from the Drug Control General Department spoke of prevalent drugs in Kuwait, their disadvantages, how to know whether someone is a drug user, and what to do if that is the case. In May, the SGA held the 2nd Annual AUK Wolfpack Soccer Tournament in partnership with the Campus Activities Board (CAB) in which 16 teams participated in a healthy competition.

What will follow is a list of SGA initiatives in which the SGA attempted to create a change and followed up on them. Some have been started by this SGA and will hopefully continue on to future ones. Initially, the SGA attempted to address the issue of having shades for the parking lot but learned that the space is

government property; therefore, nothing could be done. Regarding parking tickets being issued to students for parking in yellow/black areas, the SGA sent a letter to and scheduled a meeting with Mahmoud Al-Dousary, Vice Assistant for Traffic Affairs, but he has not replied to that request. The SGA has also scheduled numerous meetings with Sa'dun Al-Khaldi, Chairman of the Department of Traffic Engineering, to discuss the parking issue but he was never there.

As part of spreading awareness about different societies, cultures and religions that exist at AUK, various kinds of mediums/activities were proposed which were not realized due to the social, cultural, and political challenges that AUK will face.

An attempt to hold an event entitled *Interfaith Dialogue*, which would host a Muslim Sheikh and a Christian Priest, was initiated but time and coordination with all was not easy. However, as long as the idea was put down and serious negotiations occurred with administration regarding the issue,

the future SGA has the ground ready for starting one. As for the representation of the considerable Shiite community at AUK, Sayyed Hussain Al-Qallaf, a well-known Kuwaiti parliamentarian and patriot, was invited to come and speak about his role in parliament and answer students' questions. Unfortunately, he fell ill and left the country before the event occurred. So the idea was to bring a respected Shiite personality that no controversies are known about him/her in order to encourage respect of others and recognize that there are good people everywhere. Similarly, Christian representation was mobilized by the idea of inviting Kuwait's first Priest Emmanuel Ghareeb and Pastor Andy to AUK to engage in an intellectual interfaith dialogue with some chosen Muslim Sheikhs in order for each religion to demonstrate what their religion states about co-existing with people from different faiths and cultures.

In addition to religion, political awareness was one of the concerns SGA tried tackling where some attempts were made

to have a Female Awareness Campaign in order to present different female candidates to AUK students through which students can interact with them and address their concerns.

To assist the Gulf Studies Center with their important program of hosting special Kuwaiti personalities who brought about change, SGA initiated the idea of inviting Mr. Marwan Boodai, the owner of many successful companies in Kuwait, including Al-Jazeera Airways. The aim was to invite him to speak about his success stories and what it took him to be who he is now. Unfortunately, reaching Mr. Marwan on time was difficult so perhaps it can occur again if future SGA reconsiders it.

With regards to providing facilities and services to students, the SGA created a proposal for screens at AUK which was presented to the Office of Student Life to have functioning screens at AUK to display announcements, reminders, and what not for the AUK community. This was halted due to the high expenses involved and enumerated by the Information Technology Department. Moreover, the SGA created a proposal for a PA System/Radio Station at AUK to make verbal announcements to the AUK community and what not. This too was halted due to concerns that the Public Relations and Marketing Department had. Finally, the SGA attempted to open FINC 389 classes in the summer by approaching Dr. Jeremy Cripps to look into the matter after signatures were compiled from students who requested this; however, Dr. Cripps deemed the request not pertinent as these students are not in a hurry to graduate and can take FINC 389 in the Fall semester when it will be offered.

On behalf of the 2008 – 2009 SGA, I would like to thank the AUK community for allowing us to become your student leadership and serve you. We hope we made a difference at AUK and represented you all in the best possible manner.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear AUK Students:

Spring 2009 at AUK has been exceptionally busy: we hosted two international conferences on higher education in the Gulf, celebrated the Al-Kout festival, held several student-initiated events on campus, sent students abroad on a number of academic projects, and received very good coverage in the local press. The U.S. Ambassador in Kuwait Deborah Jones visited AUK in March, April, and May. The candidates who contested elections for the Kuwait Parliament came to AUK at the invitation of different student groups, including the winning female candidates. The Gulf Studies Center, Model United Nations, and Pi Gamma Mu society hosted talks by visiting scholars and political activists, including this semester's Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Gregory Gause of the University of Vermont. Earlier this semester, the Student Government Association visited the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and met with the Minister of Education and Higher Education Nouriya Al-Sabeeh. Since then, they ran a Town Hall meeting and held the SGA elections for 2009-2010. Congratulations to new elected officers who will be working with a larger, more representative student government body next year.

Congratulations also to the many award recipients honored at the May 21, 2009 Student Awards ceremony held in the Auditorium. The students who earned the Dean's List or President's Honor Roll distinction for the Fall 2008 semester will be honored on May 28. Students achieving these high levels of academic performance in the Spring 2009 semester will be honored next Fall. As usual, the Spring semester concludes not only with academic, but also athletic achievements. This year they include: First place in Men's Volleyball tournament in the University Champions' Cup (UCC), First place in Women's Tennis, First place in Men's Tennis and Second place in Men's Table Tennis competitions. Congratulations and "three cheers" to all!

Liberal Arts at AUK

The March 10-12 conference on "University Development and Critical Thinking: Education in the Arabian Peninsula for a Global Future" was held under the patronage of Shaikh Nasser Al Sabah, Minister of the Amiri Diwan, and co-coordinated by Dr. Dale Eickelman of Dartmouth College and Mr. Clifford Chanin, Director of the Heritage Project in New York. After the opening of the conference by Shaikha Dana Nasser Al-Sabah and the keynote speech by Prince El Hassan of Jordan given at the Salwa Sabah Hall, the meeting moved to the Arab Fund building in Shuwaikh for two days of high-level conversation among the leaders (presidents and chancellors) and regulators of higher education in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, as well as several higher-education experts from the United States and Europe. The AUK Fourth Annual Liberal Arts conference this year focused on the theme of "Higher Education in the GCC: Emerging Trends and Mod-

els." The Program Coordinator was Dr. Shoma Munshi, and Dr. Dale Eickelman was the keynote speaker. This conference is building a growing range of local and regional participants who shared their own and their students' research focused on the values, priorities, and practices of liberal education. According to the definition developed by the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AACU),

"Liberal Education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.

The broad goals of liberal education have been enduring even as the courses and requirements that comprise a liberal education have changed over the years. Today, a liberal education usually includes a general education curriculum that provides broad learning in multiple disciplines and ways of knowing, along with more in-depth study in a major."

For more information and definitions of Liberal Arts and Liberal Education please see the AACU website at http://www.aacu.org/leap/What_is_Liberal_Education.cfm

I am very pleased to note that several students participating in the Public Speaking demonstration during the Spring **Showcase** addressed the subject of Liberal Arts education from the academic and applied perspectives and were able to articulate their personal viewpoint on the value of this approach to higher education. The Academic Showcase has become a tradition at AUK, and it often provides faculty and students opportunities to exhibit their class "products," such as artwork, skill demonstration or undergraduate research. This May's sessions were distinguished by good attendance on both days; I congratulate the presenters, their teachers, and the students who turned out to support their classmates and to learn from their presentations. Further project demonstrations by graduating seniors in Computer Science and Information systems are scheduled for May 27 at 5-8 pm in the Auditorium. And if you are looking for "the arts" in Liberal Arts, in addition to the artwork exhibited by our Studio Art and Graphic design students or the outstanding music performances by students of our Music professors during the Showcase, consider taking advantage of the campus production of Shakespear's "Julius Caesar" by the Drama class of Professor Christopher Gottschalk (May 27-30).

Accreditation Update

As some of you know, AUK's Intensive English Program (IEP) recently hosted a visit from the U.S. Commission for English Language Program Accreditation (CEA). The visiting team has since sub-

mitted a visit report to the Commission, which has been shared with IEP. CEA will inform AUK of the review outcome by the end of this academic year. We have reason to believe that their decision will be positive; if granted, IEP accreditation will be effective Fall 2009. Many thanks to all who participated in the IEP self study, assisted in the production of required documentation, and met with the site team during their February visit. **IEP will be the first internationally accredited Intensive English program in the Middle East.**

In March, AUK was visited by the representatives of the American Academy for Liberal Education (AALE), a U.S. organization that accredits Humanities and Social Science programs and has accredited several programs in the College of Arts & Sciences at Kuwait University. The Academy has agreed to accept AUK's application to be considered for accreditation; AUK is now listed among the Affiliate Members at <http://www.aale.org/highered/list.html>. Over the Summer 2009, AUK will develop a timeline for the Self-Study of the major degree programs in the Divisions of Humanities & Arts and of Social Sciences, as well as the General Education program in the Undergraduate curriculum. Dr. Rawda Awwad will coordinate AALE accreditation work for the College of Arts & Sciences. On May 19-20, AUK was also visited by a representative from the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) who will be reviewing our undergraduate Business program. Dr. Gary DeBauche will serve as mentor to the Division of Business & Economics in their preparation for the self-study and other preparatory steps in support of our accreditation application.

You may recall that we anticipated a preliminary site visit in May from the Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities, to whom AUK applied for institutional international accreditation. I regret to inform you that NWCCU has cancelled their May visit to AUK. Executive Director of NWCCU Dr. Sandra Elman wrote to me that the Commission "has determined that our visit in May to the American University of Kuwait is not feasible. Please know that the Commission will, of course, once again consider the University's Application for Consideration at its July 8-10, 2009 meeting. It will not be necessary for institutional representatives to appear before the Commission at that meeting." When we receive further information from the Northwest Commission about our US regional (institutional) accreditation process, it will be shared the University community.

The Dartmouth Connection.

The Dartmouth-AUK Project team visited AUK twice this Spring, for the March conference on University Development and Critical Thinking in March and for the AUK Liberal Arts conference in April. Dr. Dale Eickelman was the initiator and co-planner of the former and the keynote speaker at the latter. We congratulate Dr. Eickelman on winning a rare and prestigious two-year fellowship supported

by the Carnegie Corporation of New York to promote public dialogue on Islam.

Conference participants were treated to a recorded video greeting from Dartmouth College President Dr. James Wright. The conferees were also impressed by the quality of our students' work and their communication and English-language skills. Dr. Rawda Awwad and two of her students made presentations about the impact of using the videolink technology connecting an AUK English class with Professor Eickelman's class at Dartmouth College (see the February 2009 issue of Dartmouth Life (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~dartlife/archives/19-1/auk.html>)). The concluding session of the class was held in the Auditorium on May 19 and was attended by the US Ambassador in Kuwait the Honorable Deborah Jones and the Interim Public Affairs Officer of the Embassy Ms. Pamela Mills.

In early April, Dr. Eickelman and Professor of Engineering at Dartmouth Dr. Ursula Gibson participated in the faculty candidate interviews held in Washington, DC. Currently, AUK is hosting two Dartmouth interns, Dinah Warren (interdisciplinary major) and Laura Cree (intending to major in International Relations and Arabic).

Transitions

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Rawda Awwad on her appointment as Assistant Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences for Accreditation and Curriculum. The Registrar's Office is planning for transition by training Majdoleen Zaitoun to replace Noura Al-Alewi as registration coordinator/graduation specialist. AUK's own Dina El-Zohairy will fill the registration coordinator position. At the President's office, Dr. Patricia Read Hunter will be leaving AUK at the end of this semester for Canada and Ms. Shareefa AL-Adwani, Assistant to the President, will be leaving in July for a Ph.D. Program at the University of California at Davis. Please congratulate Shareefa on winning a generous scholarship package for her studies in Political Science. As you know from the announcement by the Board of Trustees, I will be retiring from AUK at the end of the year to return to academic life in the United States. The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees has met to plan the search for a new president. The next Trustee meeting is planned for November. Also in November, AUK will be interviewing faculty candidates in Washington, DC. On June 18, AUK will hold its Commencement for the Class of 2009. The event will take place in the Mishref Fairgrounds. The keynote speaker for the Graduation will be Shaikh Saud Nasser Al Sabah, the former Minister of Oil, Minister of Information, and Kuwait Ambassador to the United States during the Iraqi invasion. Prior to the Commencement, there will be a series of Senior activities for our graduating seniors and those who completed their degree studies in January. I am looking forward to these wonderful events, crowning our academic year and celebrating your achievements.