

AUK'S STUDENT MAGAZINE

VOICE



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ISSUE ONE

Editor's note

One of many things I admire about The Voice of AUK is that a tremendous amount of effort and thought goes into each edition especially for The Wolfpack. The attention to detail seen in the ideas, articles, and stories we share comes from a collective manifestation of the true AUK spirit and dedication. To every student, staff and faculty member, you continuously inspire us to grow and reach our full potential as a team. For all of your never-ending support, we'd like to extend a big thank you.

On that note, I'd like to introduce myself. A self-proclaimed minimalist, adventurer and future political scientist are the most common characteristics used to describe me, Chloe. However, the characteristic that is dearest to me is "writer." Looking back to days when my grandmother would read The Little Prince at bedtime, in between bursts of ferocious giggles, for some peculiar reason at page 9, I have always appreciated the power of writing. The unspoken words that moved social mountains, and changed the sphere of humanity are still around to this day. With that being said, the power of words and writing entirety, comes with profound responsibility, to the writers themselves, to those around them, and above all, to you, AUK.

The Voice of AUK is what it is today because of the thoughts, ambitions, and commitments of the teams before us. Thanks to their uncountable contributions, we have the privilege to continue the tradition of producing The Voice of AUK. I hope that we can continue paving the road to the future, and one day, pass on the torch to the next generation of writers. I'm confident that they too, will continue delivering editorials in every creative form. It is with great honor and privilege that I have been entrusted with the responsibility to be the Editor and Chief of The Voice of AUK.

Sincerely,
Chloe, Editor and Chief



M e e t T h e T e a m



Rafah Al-Shohaty
Co-editor

The cool breezes and heavy skies we are experiencing here in Kuwait always takes me back to the rainy weathers of Sana'a. My name is Rafah Al-Shohaty and I am from Yemen. Moving to Kuwait five years ago was a drastic change in my life, for it has taken me out of my roots and placed me in a foreign garden. Nevertheless, it did not take me long to settle and find a new home here. Despite the difficult situations I have faced, I learned how to grow through those times and become the person I am today. This is my third semester here at AUK. My pre-major is in Social and Behavioral Sciences, however, I am planning on majoring in English and minoring in Anthropology. Settling on a major was one of my hardest decisions; to say the least, I have various interests. Writing has always been one of my favorite hobbies, along with creating art. I look forward to working with this magazine; I hope to bring a unique sound to

The Voice of AUK.



Mariam Naser
Reporter

Hello, my name is Mariam Naser and I am an English major in my senior year. When writing this biography, I have been reflecting on my academic path as a student in correlation to my creative passions. These reflections reminded me of my grandfather's wise words, "follow your passion, for it will find a way to reach you eventually." His guidance encouraged me to switch majors from Graphic Design to English-ultimately following my passion to pursue a degree in English.

M e e t T h e T e a m



Batoul Alshammari
Graphic Designer

I am a junior who is majoring in International Relations. I have spent 23 years of my life discovering various hobbies ranging from embroidery and reading, to tennis and hiking. Apart from my hobbies, balloons and bubbles are by far my favorite things. I'd like to add, my favorite book, "The Little Prince," has shaped my life's philosophy of trying to connect with people who come from different backgrounds. The connections I've built from talking to others and learning about new perspectives has contributed to my understanding of the world. On that note, if there was ever any talk about traveling, rest assured I would join the conversation. I hope to see the northern lights sometime soon, until then I will explore the outdoors and see how many snails I can manage to find.

This could be
you!

If you can read this, it is a sign for you to join us!
We are looking for a reporter to add to our team.
Send us an email:
voice@auk.edu.kw

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CONGRADUATIONS!



So here we are. The end of the line; the last day of hand-holding; the final meal of grass-fed rotisserie chicken at The Diner. This is it, I guess.

Goodbye friends and enemies; goodbye professors and deans, provosts, too; goodbye sirs and ma'ams and Doctors and instructors. Ma3a Alsalamah, au revoir, auf wiedersehen, bye-bye.

This is the end.
You've graduated.

And the ceremony made one thing very clear: those arguing about the impracticality of solar energy as a sustainable resource have obviously never been in the same hall as the parents of AUK's class of 2018; there's enough wattage in smiles to provide the earth with centuries of power. I don't know Rawan Al-Guindi, never said a word to Kareem Abdal or Lulwa Al-Rabai—at the most, I've only shaken hands with Waleed Al-Aswan—but their families made happy at the call of a name is a happiness so difficult to articulate I've started a sentence I can't end. I am not British theoretical physicist Paul Dirac, I can't put into words this happiness exactly—but I can't help but feel how I feel, which is nice. What we had was a makeshift family gathering at Mishref Fairgrounds. There couldn't have been a better send-off.

And now for a new beginning. And as it is with new beginnings, it's normal to feel a tad anxious. After all, there's only so much a semester-long internship class can really teach you—but have no fear, AUK has slowly been equipping you with exactly what you need to not only survive, but thrive.

Former-students cannonballing from AUK's evergreen campus into Real Life (yes, friends—capital R, capital L) are not just simply university graduates—they're something else entirely. These are electrical engineers who not only solve for x , but also go out of their way to find the vertex of the parabola in standard form. These are civil engineers who understand that the words civilization and civility might both be nouns, but carry completely different meanings. Civilization is “a relatively high level of cultural and technological development; specifically : the stage of cultural development at which writing and the keeping of written records is attained,” while Civility, on the other hand, is “formal politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech.” These are English-majors who can tell you the difference between Alumni and Alumnus, for whom heretofore, therewithal, and hitherto are words as simple as basket, passport, and classic. These are SBSA majors who bravely say, “No more!” to pluralism, and have had quite enough of the ecological fallacies found in Durkheim's sociological monographs.

These are graphic designers who will, one day, design the very textbooks our Bachelors of Science in Information Systems will write and those in business administration will help sell. Perhaps a special edition, signed and personalized with love, is in order? The shipping address is 15 Salem Al Mubarak St, Salmiya. Not that you'd forget. If I didn't mention your particular major, I apologize—there really is an amazing number of fields one can specialize in at AUK—or, to use a word only an English major would: an abundance of fields. I could go on and on.

But impressive as it is, you can find these fields at any university. AUK does something more: it allows you to develop character. It tells us to go above and beyond—so when Ms. Al-Marzouq asks an AUK IR graduate to run to the Mergers & Acquisitions department to bring back a 951 Cyan ink cartridge for her HP Officejet Pro 8710 all-in-one printer, Ms. Al-Marzouq will not only receive the cartridge, but also calculations concerning her company's overall flagrant use of printer ink, handwritten on loose-leaf paper of admiral grammage as to not waste even more of it. At that point, AUK will hand-mail this alumnus not only a “Good job!”, but will also print out two more degrees: one awarded for “Hindsight,” and the other for “Foresight”—both magna cum laude.

When Burmese state chancellor Aung San Suu Kyi decides to publicly atone for her silence as genocidal atrocities were committed against the Rohingya, there is not a doubt in my mind it'll be an AUK Public Relations graduate she'll phone first. When one of our English graduates finally publishes a fantasy novel, I'm sure its wizardry would give Sir Harry Potter a run for his money! And I wouldn't be surprised if it's a former member of AUKars who personally sees to it that homeless people cease to exist by any means necessary.

I think a peer of mine said it best (I won't identify him—but I think you'll know exactly who as you read), “What the world is, without the students and graduates (and by extension, the faculty) of AUK, is a picnic with parmesan cheese but no baguette; freshly-cut grass and a sunny day, but no red polka-dot blanket. In other words, it's a picnic without a picnic—just a couple of random things next to each other and no baguette but there is parmesan.”

And, friend, I'm inclined to agree.

The Valedictorian Speech by Abdulaziz Al-Mahmeed

When I was informed that I will be delivering the valedictory speech for this graduation ceremony, I felt utterly and entirely overwhelmed. I spent days trying to think what would one say on such an occasion, how can such a rich, wonderful four-year experience be reduced to words that lack the capacity to convey, when it is by all means simply ineffable. Above all, a valediction is by definition a farewell, and it is not easy to say goodbye. The past four years have been a dream. I have always been passionate about literature, and I thought pursuing a degree in literature will give me the wide-range exposure and framework that I much craved. Four years ago, I walked through the gates of AUK with a certain set of goals and expectations, and to my constant surprise, my experience at AUK was so much more than that.

At AUK, I learned to see the humanity within and underneath the text, to see the relevance of literature to every aspect of my lived experience. I learned that stories are at the core of our existence, and that without our stories, we cease to be. I was exposed to the framework of life and the corresponding questions and existential anxieties that have always haunted humanity, and therefore had countless sleepless nights. At AUK, I learned to question and challenge authority, a mindset I see manifesting among students, perhaps exemplified best by those who continue to smoke in the main hallway, to the constant dismay of the Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Hanan. But above all, I learned what it means to be human. Four years ago, I walked through the gates of AUK one person, and today I walk out an entirely different person. Everything I learned at AUK, everyone I met, contributed in all kinds of ways to who I am today, and for that, and so much more, I am forever grateful.

Fellow graduates, this has always been my dream, and I'm sure that each and every one of you has their own beautiful dream. And allow me to say that all of us being here today is a testament that dreams do come true. We have all frickin' made it, through every deadline we thought we'd never get past, through all the exams, projects, presentations, and soul-sucking submissions. I know every single day was a new struggle, for you, and for me, but it was worth it, and we have earned this moment in all its glory. I believe we are who we are today because of the little things: all the hard work we put in, because of that professor who inspired us and showed us the way, because of the beautiful people we have come to know and cherish and love, because of the unconditional and never-ending support of our parents, family members, and friends. But I stand here today refusing to think that the dream is over. I refuse to say goodbye. So allow me to say this: neither the journey has started, nor the path has ended. Dear friends, from this point in space and time, you will embark on different journeys. I do hope you find what you look for. And I hope your light continues to shine in every endeavor you undertake. But I also hope that on your path you take the time to look around and find all the life there is in life. And I hope that one day, on some road, our paths will intersect, and I will see you, and you'll tell me about all the wonderful things you've been doing. Because I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each. And guess what, they will damn well sing to me, and to each and every one of you. So let us go then, you and I, and touch the sky, with a strange and a true, and a climbing fall into far near blue. Fellow graduates, dear, dear friends, a million congratulations, and may this not be the end, but a beginning of your next beautiful chapter.

LEAD@AUK WORKSHOPS

By Mariam Nasser

"The Division of Student Affairs is pleased to reveal the long-awaited launch of LEAD@AUK. Designed to enhance leadership skills and to provide you with information and skill sets on how to be effective leaders on campus, in your academic career and in the professional world, the program has been carefully crafted to deliver these objectives, while laying the bricks to a stronger foundation for you to become the best version of yourself in your everyday life and your professional future."-Dr. Hanan Muzaffar. Over the course of six weeks, AUK has hosted six workshop events that are aimed to assist individuals gain the right tools from various experts that would help them become who they aspire to be. I attended the first workshop, which was held by AUK's own drama director, Dr. Yasmine Jahanmird. Her workshop was focused on encouraging leadership skills by being mindful of body language and through stage performance. The workshop was both innovative and entertaining as there was a range of creative activities that we participated in. The activities included meditating exercises, interpreting music by drawing pictures, dramatic games, and finally learning how to story tell.

The story-telling exercise involved coming up with a beginning, middle, and end in a group using other people's pictures and drawings from previous exercises. The stimulating game encouraged group work and interpretation

skills. One of my favorite activities, which I am still using and find extremely helpful in all areas of life, focuses on body presence awareness. Body presence awareness talks about the importance of recognizing your body's posture and how that may affect your mood, confidence, and mindset. I was pleasantly surprised to find it helpful in areas such as running. I usually slouch and that ends up hurting my shoulders, but keeping in mind my body has its own equilibrium, I could adjust accordingly when remembering the lessons from that day. By becoming mindful of how we carry ourselves, we can have more control over our confidence and presence according to others.

These workshops are meant to encourage leadership skills that can be beneficial and helpful in the long term for life. Each workshop specializes in a crucially important area in relation to a specific aspect of life. What is most important is that these workshops develop the skills that are necessary for communication with our community. This is a great tool and skill that will surely help anyone excel in their own life path by how to interact effectively with other people. Learning how to better present and represent yourself not only helps your self-esteem, but also allows you to learn more about yourself. The workshops provide a safe environment to participate, experiment, and share our ideas. This was a great overall experience that exceeded my expectations and I highly recommend attending a workshop or two. I am happy to have been able to participate in it.

Lead@AUK continued with 3 more workshops: Leadership Skills for Life with Dr. Salime Mehtap (Smadi), Leading with Emotional intelligence with Dr. Stavros P. Hadjisolomou, and finally Effective Communications: Using Your Voice to Change the World- with Dr. Candace Dominique. I am looking forward to continuing with Part 2 of Lead@AUK that is advertised to launch in the Spring.

THE 2018 GRAPHIC DESIGN CAPSTONE WAS WONDERFUL AND CAN MAKE YOU MONEY IF YOU HAVE THE MIND FOR IT

By: Omar Al-Nakib

The GDES 2018 Capstone, the one-last-thing our graphic designers must do before given the thumbs-up to graduate, was so good I think I need to call valedictorian Abdulaziz Al-Mahmeed for a list of words better than wow amazing. As our readers may or may not know, we here at VOICE had pretty high expectations, naturally—these are AUKers we're talking about. And on May 6th at the Promenade Culture Centre, deliver these AUKers did.

Take, for example, Sarah Babazadeh's photography studio, SEEMA. What's promised is the perfect middle-ground between a candid photograph and high art. Sharply-dressed men and women in black-and-white simply isn't enough; superimposed over these photos are calligraphic streaks of black, a blend of Western couture and Eastern ink, brought together to create a tour-de-force of near-cinematic composition. Sarah's got the shots to prove it.

And speaking about near-cinematic composition: Khaled Abdullah, under his Hectified Films banner, revealed his much-anticipated The Batman Kills! in a personalized screening-room opposite the main attraction. While an impressive feat in itself, one still might ask: "Hey, wait a minute! Where's the graphic design? La conception graphique!?" Let me assure you, what The Batman Kills! lacks in graphic design it more than makes up for in camera.

Now let's be good businesspeople and see what we can do with all these booths.

Leena El Hawary, to add to her ever-growing list of accomplishments (which includes a George Washington University Summer Scholarship program and an internship in Dartmouth), presented yet another winner: teaching children the finer points of Peruvian cookery with a crash course in Mesoamerican cuisine—Andean gastronomy, in particular. That is one hot tamale!

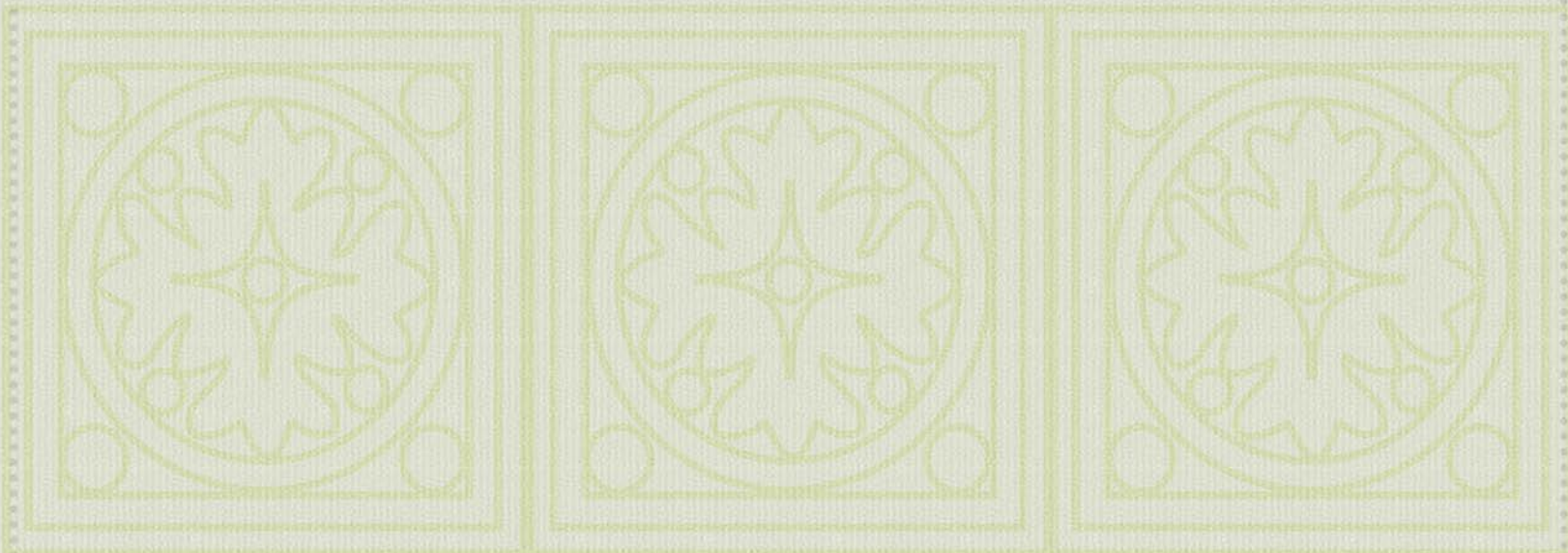
If Leena wants the freshest ingredients, she need not look further than a couple of Capstones to her right; Leqaa Al-Naqi's organic farming methods are just what any aspiring chef needs. With Farah, Leqaa promises vegetables that are delicious, organic, and 100% natural. You're only as good as your ingredients, as any self-respecting chef will tell you, and she'll teach Leena a technique to growing vegetables so fresh it'd make Chef Gordam Romsey cry out, "Cor blimey, guv'! Take the mickey out of this one, m'lud!" I wholeheartedly believe one can enter this year's Capstone not knowing what asparagus is and leave with the skills necessary to become a three-star Michelin chef who cooks a food.

Now that we have grown the food, what we need is packaging. TO WHOM shall we look to? Ah! Make a bee-line to the booth opposite Leqaa, to VOICE's very own Dima Al-Jadayel and her Creativity Box. People have probably told you time and time again to think outside of the box, I'm sure—but what if the box itself was creative? And Dima hands you a day-planner and a calendar the size of a clutch and tells you go with God. Leena's hot tamale is now housed in a box that stimulates its growth, inshallah growing into an one hot tamale tree.

But we can't send this box off so... hmm, what's the word I should use, valedictorian Abdulaziz Al-Mahmeed? —right; unceremoniously. We can't send it off like that. It needs that final touch: a sticker—or, better yet, a patch. Hessa Al-Habbad, and her ZRKSH patch-making operation has us covered. Put a patch on it, and let our customers know they're not getting just any hot tamale, but an hot tamale with attitude. Hessa's patches look you in the eye and tell you "Melaaayyytttt". "I'm bored," for our non-Arab clientele. Because that's what the patches say. Our tamale does not COMPROMISE. It will not NEGOTIATE WITH YOU. You will EAT IT. It does not matter whether you are in FRANCE.

And with Ahmed Kharsa's branding company booth, our little operation will have a corporate identity. I don't know whether Leena, Leqaa, Dima, or Hessa will approve, but Ahmed and I have gone ahead given our tamale company a name: Valedictorian Abdulaziz Al-Mahmeed 2018 AUK.

Readers, we just made and packaged a sellable product within 25 minutes of entering Capstone. And that's nothing compared to the sheer invention and resourcefulness displayed by our graduating class of graphic designers that night. There was even project that merged the wood of Sadu furniture and Italian marble to create luxury items of such quality Hermès would've be put to shame; chairs, tables, boards, but also shelves. There was none on display. I mean, it's physically impossible to make. You can't synthesize wood and marble. But the graphic designer thought it. And I think it was philosopher Henry David Thoreau who said, "This world is but a canvas to our imagination," and John Muir who said, "The power of imagination makes us infinite," leaving us to consider at the frayed ends of human comprehension the unremitting, incessant nature of our own curiosity and its impetus presupposition, namely the meeting and becoming one of nature's two asymptotic peregrinators wood and marble.



Transitions: Life's Turning Points

By: Mariam Naser

A transition by definition is a change for a purpose, intention, or conscious objective. Anything can trigger the need and for a transition to make room for a greater goal and self-improvement. Mind you, the continuous shift that is associated with transitions goes beyond daily changes, and instead challenges our personal perceptions.

Seeking out the changes beyond ourselves also has an affect others around us. In these instances, we are required to make conscious decisions that we can be content with. When in a period of transition, external changes, other people, and our own emotions, play a role in how we choose to react in particular circumstances.

It can be hard to become comfortable with the inevitable changes that are constantly going to push our boundaries, and remove us from our comfort zones. Often times, we are left feeling vulnerable. We all deal with the dynamics of life differently and staying stagnant in a place of comfort is not always the answer. Insight and a good support system is key to getting through a time of transition. Despite the unpredictability that comes with change, one thing that is for certain is that transitions are bound to happen.

Throughout our lives, we all go through a changes that enabled us to grow, develop, transform, and learn. During this process, we are inevitably going to get affected by others who are also transitioning around us. This can be notable seen in the transition from high school to university and it can be scary which is perfectly okay.

Growing up allows us to realize who we are and how make the best choices for ourselves and university is a great place to figured that out. It goes without saying, university is a wonderful chance to expand and discover one's potential, make dreams, and implement goals. Nevertheless, university is an amazing adventure that should be cherished and experienced to the fullest.

In other words, whether you're entering university or recently graduated, enjoying the journey and life lessons along the way are great educational experiences we are privileged to have. Education and the skills of learning, searching, and discovering are life-long crucial necessities for success wherever you go.

If you're not pursuing a change or are perfectly content in comfort, not wanting to go after a change, at some point you're going to find yourself a part of someone else's transition. So completely eliminating chances that come by due to fear limit the opportunities to live out our ambitions, inspirations, dreams, and goals.

Around Campus

The Library

By Chloe Ramey

There is something magical about being between shelves, being immersed in a good book. It's mind blowing to know that you're in the company of knowledge and wisdom that was passed down from generations of authors coming from every culture and corner of the earth. That's why I treasure the library. I appreciate the concept of a large room containing infinite pieces of information, with Google's help, of course.

I understand that the library can be an intimidating place. A place that requires silence, peculiar methods of finding books, and most intimidating thing of all, where to begin? Being a seasoned library employee and long time reader, I have compiled a few tips that I think will make your library experience easier.

1. How to read a call Number

This by far is the most helpful tip I can give because a call number is basically a GPS pin point to where the book is located on the shelf.
Here's how you do it;

Step 1: Check the letter on top, this letter corresponds with a subject. This will send you in the general direction of where your book might be

Step 2: Continue down to the first number, this follows the normal sequence of numbers.

Step 3: Continue to the last set of numbers. Look at each number separately in order to find the accurate location of the book.

For an example, 378 will go after 36785 because the second number "7" in 378 is greater than the second number "6" in 36785.

2. Textbooks

If you forgot your textbook at home, need to copy a few pages for a specific assignment, lost your book or whatever the reason may be, you can check out books inside the library for two hours from References and Reserves

3. Calculators

Similarly to textbooks, you can also check out calculators for a test or homework from References and Reserves. However, unlike a textbook, calculators are permitted to leave the library for a few hours only.

4. Free Books

Stop by the trolley that says "Free Books." You can find all kinds of books ranging for literature to even potentially a textbook.

5. Wander a bit

Take a stroll through random isles, you never know what you might find. You might stumble upon a book you used to read, discover a new genre, or even find a good place to hang out and read.

6. You can renew your books online

Can't make it in time to return your book? Got to the myauk page and you can renew it from the library tab.

Around Campus

The Recreational Area



inankhsA jateR

By Rafah Al-Shohaty
It's more than just the location: it's the time, the ambiance, and the people. Each moment throughout the day casts a different shadow among the place. The Recreational Area acts more than just a transition from one campus building to another; it embodies the student life's character.

The Recreational Area, in my opinion, is the heart of the university's student body. Depending on the time or the occasion of the day, it reflects the dynamic vibe of the students. During interactive events, for example, the Area flourishes with vibrant energy emitting from the student's excitement. On the other hand, on exam days one may sense a stressful aroma hovering in the air. In addition to the change in ambiance, various groups of students are scattered among that area harmonically, weaving the student body into one.

The recreational area is not my favorite place just because of the prime location, but mostly with the time of day; it plays an incredible role in dressing-up the Recreational Area. For instance, during the mid-day, the Area is usually alive with students rushing to their classes or hanging out with their friends.

In each direction there are several activities occurring at the same time, especially during the liveliest time of the day—the time when the sun is at its highest, beaming among the students of AUK.

In correlation to the day's death, however, the students' energy begins to set with the sun. However, I enjoy the Recreational Area most when the sun is at its golden hour. That golden hour is where my favorite place resides: in that place, time, and energy. In contrast to the mid-day's high energy, a new ambiance begins to develop as the night rises.

In the midst of that moment, students are usually worn-off from their classes, so they take the time to chill with their friends. On some occasions, music begins to subtly fill the air with the juxtaposing sounds of the night crawlers. Mellow laughs and talkative voices season the ambiance, as well.

As the night matures, students commence to leave the Area, turning off the vital energy. And as the sun rises the next day, the dynamic energy is awoken with the flow of students.

Around Campus

Art and Music Therapy Centers

By Mariam Nasser



The Art and Music Therapy centers host a variety of workshops and events throughout the week that offers an educational and stimulating experience. The ambiance of the rooms are refreshing as they pleasantly contrast one another. It is fascinating to see how both rooms equalize the sound control of infinite chatter beckoning in the background. The Music room is usually vibrantly energized with many diversely talented students and a range of instruments. Whereas the Art Room hosts a quiet and relaxing environment to find inspiration. Despite the contrasting energy, both rooms offer a solace from the busy chatter and hustle coming from the lobby. The rooms are a unique tranquil escape from the rest of the work and routine mode of university life that's found outside.

The art room offers a quiet atmosphere to more effectively and efficiently focus on ideas, express thoughts, and get work done in a calm secluded workspace. These rooms are built to provide the best space to accommodate those two hobbies. The music room hosts a semi-soundproof space, in other words, a safe zone to get crazy and wild with expressing, jamming, or learning new instruments. Of course, coming in as fans to support is great too as long as it doesn't get too packed.

Unfortunately, I don't play any instruments but find the rooms an enjoyable escape corner when on my work shifts or want to come in and draw. The Art and Music rooms are open every day from 10:00am-3:30pm, making the accessibility of the rooms accommodating to different class schedules. Also, they are a great space to meet and get acquainted with new people and your fellow colleagues. To share laughs, vent, jam, or enjoy watching other talented students do their thing. I have been working here for over a year, therefore, have gotten to know these rooms pretty well. Now I know what you're thinking, and no, I'm not advertising the workplace because I have to but rather because I want to!

I know there are a variety of different skills and places to study, learn, play, workout, and hang out. But there's simply nothing that compares in AUK and Kuwait to these two special rooms. The Art and Music Therapy Centers have yet to be opened and practiced in other places around Kuwait; making AUK and the counseling center the very first location to implement this great new concept. As these rooms have been introduced by the counseling center, they implement great and interesting workshops that tackle a variety of different topics with AUK's very best counselors and specialized visitors.

In other words, why not give it a shot and visit? You are not going to lose anything by simply visiting. Get acquainted with the place and if you find something you're interested in great! Art and Music are hobbies are a great way to relieve stress, bad energy, and are proven to help boost up your mood. As well as help people express themselves creatively in a safe environment that can help you relax and spend quality time that benefits their emotional and mental wellbeing. Hobbies also, help direct one to affirm their interests and capabilities over time.

Are you still unsure about how you could spend time at the Art and Music rooms? Other than the workshops you can sign up for, you can come in and find activities to try out. Think about playing an instrument and finding your muse, or giving adult coloring a shot.

Around Campus

The Open Lab

By Batoul Alshammari

The Open Lab has always been one of my favorite places on campus. The way that everyone is focused and doing their work is extremely motivational. If you ever feel like procrastinating and out of focus, make sure to head to the Open Lab because it will sure boost your energy and clear your head when trying to finish your work. In addition to that, the Open Lab is a great place to cool off when it is blistering hot outside. During the summer, my first stop is the Open Lab to catch my breath before heading to class and enjoying the cozy atmosphere. In the winter, it is cozier than ever because of the warmth of the inside. As soon as you walk into the Open Lab and feel the toasty feeling, it will sure leave you comfortable. The good thing about it is that there's always a seat with a computer available. My favorite spot in the Open Lab has to be by the computers that are situated at the very end of the room and just behind the enormous glass windows. I tend to gravitate towards that spot every time because I like to people watch when taking a break from studying!

It is quite the experience to notice how people adjust themselves through the reflection of the glass without being able to peer into the Open Lab. However, whether you choose to use the computer or bring your own, the space is for you to use as you please. I have used the Open Lab not only for working on the computer, but to simply use the desks to practice mathematics or to work out a rough outline for a research paper. What I find most convenient is that there are printers that I can use if I needed to print something before a class and that has been the case for many instances during my years in the American University of Kuwait. I have rushed countless times in a hurry to the Open Lab to print a couple of papers. I find it more convenient that the Open Lab is located in the heart of the university which makes it very useful for a print emergency!

The Open Lab is a combination of both, the Library and the Hangout, where you can socialize but at the same time enjoy some calmness. I love the fact that even with all the focus that you feel as soon as you enter the Open Lab, it is not a strict environment where nobody talks but no one is loud either. What makes the Open Lab so fascinating is the way that it is divided, which makes it easier to move around freely without causing a commotion to those who are studying. In my free-time, while I do usually head to the gym I always find my way back to the Open Lab.

THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

BY DR JULIET DHINKA

Social media is commonly used by people in the age group of 18-25-year old for self-presentation purposes. Since the mid-1990s, social media was popular among college and university students. These platforms are used as a social tool to establish and sustain friendships, and communicate with friends and relatives at long distances, which provides users a way to feel connected to other people. The purpose of these sites varies based on professional or personal use. Social Media has transformed the way people think, talk, communicate or socialize on the web. Despite the many positive outcome in using social media, it is important to use social media moderately since excessive use affects the individual's lifestyle in terms of socializing, energy levels, eating, sleeping and exercising and even behavior towards others.

There are many downsides related to the misuse of social media, most notably cyberbullying, which has tremendously increased among school aged kids and college students than regular bullying. In recent year it has led to a rash of teenage sadness, fear, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and attempts. Cyberbullying is seen in a number of forms such as continued messages of rude and/or angry content, harassment, threats and insults, spreading rumors to harm a person's reputation, revealing personal information about a person and cyberstalking. Aside from suicidal thoughts and attempts, cyberbullying can lead to numerous other mental health issues such as low self-esteem, depression and anxiety.



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Kuwait is technologically advanced and people in Kuwait are spending a lot of their time using various types of social media application. It has been noticed that males and females in Kuwait use social media excessively for different purposes. They spend a great amount of time chatting on Facebook, WhatsApp and Snapchat and it is negatively impacting their sleeping hours, social skills and interpersonal connections.

As a society in general we are becoming more socially awkward, we spend less time face to face and our concentration and focus has decreased. We spend time sharing and posting content or buying products and services online which takes away time from family and friends. Social media has also negatively impacted the young as they don't seem to be concerned about their privacy of sharing personal content and information.

It is obvious that users in Kuwait put too much emphasis on virtual interaction using social media and less on the real world. Social media users have to channel their creativity, interest and personal growth in a more productive and healthy ways.

THE EARTH ODYSSEY:

Iceland

By Batoul Alshammari

Northern lights, Fjords and Ice Caves.

If these words don't sound intriguing to you, give this country a chance to change your mind.

In other words, if you are looking for an adventure that is lit up by nature's own magical light, then a ticket to Iceland should definitely be your next plan.



Nature's own light show: The northern lights

Trust me, it does not need photoshop. The northern lights, also known as Aurora borealis, have been a scientific anomaly that has been pondered upon endlessly. The scientific explanation of the northern lights is that fast electrons collide with air particles in earth's magnetic field. To put it into an image, it produces incredibly mystical lights of different shades, with an overpowering green and hints of pink and purple.

If the northern lights seem interesting, then Iceland will just be your match-made in heaven for the perfect trip to enjoy nature. Moreover, what makes Iceland the perfect candidate to watch the northern lights is its location! The northern lights, as the name suggests, are mostly visible in countries that are further north and Iceland is definitely far north, making it a better chance for you to view them. As for the best timing, aiming for late September to mid-april would be your best bet to catch a glimpse of the lights. However, visiting Iceland during these months does not a guarantee to view the northern lights. You will have to keep an eye on the weather forecast and ensure a clear night to fully maximize the experience.

Nature's Spa: Hot springs

If you're wondering what is the big deal about hot springs, it is literally EVERYTHING! Groundwater heated by the earth's energy, what's there not to be excited about? Imagine having a heated pool all-year round without the electricity bill mounting to the cost of a university degree. To put things into perspective, Iceland has a lot of hot springs that you can enjoy a swim in for free. Then again, you could opt to pay for something more exclusive like visit the infamous Blue Lagoon spa that's located on a lava field in Grindavík. Once you are there, you can enjoy a beautiful shade of aqua blue water that will soothe your muscles. If you have ever wondered what it feels like to be a bag of tea soaking in hot water, a hot spring in Iceland will definitely make you live that experience!

Iceland: Off the beaten path

If you are the kind of traveler that tends to go off the beaten path and aims to avoid the tourist attractions, then staying in a bubble hotel is a viable option. Imagine just getting a good night's sleep in a clear-glass dome, under the stars and, maybe if you're lucky, aurora borealis will make a debut in the sky. If you're looking for something different, in terms of activities, then whale-watching and snorkeling could be something to add to the itinerary. In addition, you can take a day trip to visit the Sea monster museum in Bíldudalur. With all this in mind, the best way to enjoy Iceland is to get to know the food and the people. So whatever your interests are, it is more than likely that you'll find something in Iceland that speaks to your soul because Iceland definitely spoke to mine.

Until next time!

A 3D-rendered scene of a courtyard. In the background, there are modern buildings under a clear blue sky. In the foreground, a large, light-colored brick wall serves as a backdrop. To the left of the wall, a small, leafy green tree is planted in a large, light-brown terracotta pot. On the ground in front of the wall, a large, rectangular rug with a complex geometric pattern in shades of red, orange, and grey is laid out. The title 'NOTE ON CULTURE' is written in large, black, serif capital letters across the center of the brick wall. Below the title, the author's name 'BY CHLOE' is written in smaller, black, serif capital letters.

NOTE ON CULTURE

BY CHLOE

Culture is an intricate part of our society as it shapes the way we live and serves as the foundational blueprint for communal interaction. The values of culture are often passed down from generation to generation with the support of tradition. Much like trends, culture is malleable. It is clear that with new notions and ideals that have inspired the new generation, perspectives on culture that eventually, change. This is one of the main reasons that I felt the need to start this column. I'm so curious about how culture plays such a prominent role in how we develop our world views and guide our thoughts, especially in such a globalized era. Thanks to the wonders of culture, this first article will be about what "culture" mean?

For starters, "culture" is a specific dish, a traditional headdress, the color of a woman's wedding dress, and even the names we give our children. I would argue that culture is in its most simple terms, is a custom that two or more people agree to be normal. Culture is not just applicable to a society, but also to a university, a group of friends or even your family. These rituals become a part of our social

routine both consciously and subconsciously whether we choose to accept them or not.

On a small scale, let's examine a family environment around dinner time. For some families, eating dinner together every night is the standard. So, setting the placemats, putting plates and cups on the table, and, well, dinner on the table is the norm. During this time, some families can expect to talk about their days, ideas, joke around and connect over food. However, for some families, eating together is less common. Perhaps, for these, gathering once a week is more common. Even so, some families prefer to eat together on special occasions like birthdays or holidays. Regardless of how families break bread, the reality is that this has become a part of familiar culture, a general accepted notion of communication and togetherness.

On a larger scale, we can consider a library as it is open to the public and an array of visitors would stop by for a relatively common goal, to gain knowledge. The generally accepted culture in a library is that silence is

valued, books can be borrowed and a vast collection of information can be found in specific sections around the library. When visitors come to the library, these expectations become the norm that everyone follows. This unspoken agreement between library users has become a part of culture that is commonly practice.

On a societal scale, traffic lights serve as a practically universal rule of driving. The color of the lights signal when to go, slow down, or stop and everyone is aware of this rule and are expected to abide by it as a conscious driver. Although this might seem small and rather minute, this is a driving system that is practiced all over the world as a part of driving culture.

In a nutshell, just about anything can constitute culture regardless of the size of the members who consider the action or rule as a norm. Due to the fact that all it takes is two people to form a norm, culture becomes malleable and subject to change with each generation, “Hello, Selfie.” So, taking a look at why we do things or where the started came from a cultural ideal that we might still be carrying today.

The background is a painting of a room. On the left, a brown corkboard is mounted on a light blue wall, featuring a small white card with a purple flower illustration. To the right, a cluster of balloons in red, pink, blue, and yellow is visible. A lamp with a white shade is partially seen on the far right. The overall style is painterly with visible brushstrokes.

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