

AUK

CHRONICLE

NOVEMBER 2012

**IMAGINE
CUP**
MORE THAN A
COMPETITION

**KUWAIT
AT 50**

**AUK STUDENTS SHARE
KNOWLEDGE & CREATIVITY AT
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE**

**ENCOUNTERING THE
GHOSTS OF BERLIN**



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The **AUK Chronicle** is a fully licensed magazine dedicated primarily to issues of Higher Education in Kuwait and the region. Published on a quarterly basis, it features editorials and opinions, research articles and subjects of concern to Higher Education. The aim is to give Higher Education a voice and forum whereby achievements, challenges, and debated issues can be published and discussed openly in an effort to further improve our knowledge and implementation of Higher Education. The AUK Chronicle is open to all faculty, staff, and other personnel working in the Academia sector, as well as major corporate stakeholders to take part by sharing their research and articles and ensuring that Higher Education attains the appropriate attention as a tool of social change.

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AUK CHRONICLE

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Message from the President



This issue of the Chronicle focuses upon contributions of faculty and staff at AUK. Dr. Raymond Farrin, a highly regarded member of our Arabic language faculty, shares his perspective on life and work at AUK. Dr. Chris Ohan and Sharon Lawrence recount their rewarding trip with AUK students to Berlin, Germany as an enrichment component for campus-based instruction. Dr. Amir Zeid relates his experience advising our very successful Microsoft Imagine Cup teams, and Dr. Mohammed El-Abd shares with us his experience at Dartmouth this past summer.

Finally, we express our appreciation to staff members who have contributed greatly to AUK over the past several years. Jill Allgier has served in the critical and often difficult role of Registrar since November 2008 and plans to retire at the end of this academic year. Laurel Stavis, who served as Executive Director of the Dartmouth-AUK Project, has assumed a new role in another division of our sister university. To both we extend our congratulations and best wishes.

Best wishes,

Dr. Winfred Thompson

KUWAIT at 50

**A PASSIONATE
PROJECT BY
AN AUK
FACULTY**

AUK anthropology professor **Dr. Marjorie Kelly** has recently completed a three-year project titled “Kuwait at 50”. It consists of almost 800 photos of contemporary Kuwait, organized into four programs: clothing, food, leisure activities, and architecture. AUK students were instrumental in developing the project. They posed for photos, took pictures, organized traditional Kuwaiti meals so they could be photographed, suggested topics, and reviewed the presentation for accuracy as it developed.

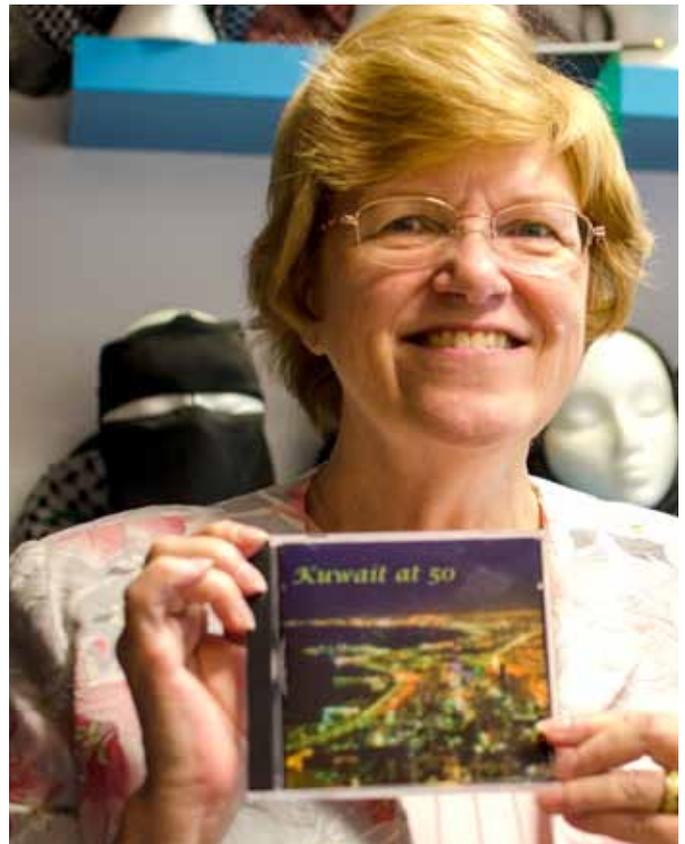
The project was initiated when a student gave Dr. Kelly the clothing that was used in the first student exhibition held at AUK in 2006. This sparked Dr. Kelly’s interest and she eventually wrote an article on contemporary clothing choices in Kuwait which was published in *Fashion Theory*. While selecting photos for the article Dr. Kelly realized that the real impact of her findings was not in the text but in the photos. She said, “I thought someone ought to do a full visual ethnography of clothing in Kuwait so that is what I did.” As the project progressed, the three other topics were added to provide a fuller picture of life in modern Kuwait.

Recent AUK graduate Dana Al-Failakawi narrated all four programs and assisted in writing the thirty-three page Teacher’s Guide. In addition to a printed version of the script, the Teacher’s Guide contains some background notes on Kuwait, a glossary, and suggested readings. The DVD and Guide are being distributed without charge for use in American and British classrooms to give the students in those countries a more accurate view of life in Kuwait.

The first presentation of the material for the general public was at the March meeting of the Kuwait Textile Arts Association at Sadu House. The clothing section of the DVD was introduced and shown by Dr. Kelly, then former students Dana Al-Failakawi and Dalal Al-Sharhan modeled several dara’as for an enthusiastic audience.

The entire project – research, production, and distribution of materials – was underwritten by a grant from Wataniya Telecom. Thanks to Wataniya’s generosity, all those attending this year’s Gulf Studies Conference at the University of Exeter received a copy of the DVD to share with their students. DVDs will also be made available for members of the Association for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies at the Middle East Studies Association’s annual meeting to be held in November in Denver. For further information about the project and the availability of the DVD and/or the Guide, please contact Dr. Kelly at mkelly@auk.edu.kw.

“ I thought someone ought to do a full visual ethnography of clothing in Kuwait so that is what I did. ”



COVER FEATURE



IMAGINE CUP: MORE THAN A COMPETITION

In the past ten years, the Imagine Cup has grown to be an inspirational global competition awaited by many. The Microsoft-sponsored competition was initiated in 2003 to encourage students around the world to apply their imagination, their passion, and their creativity to solve the world's toughest problems through technology innovations. Back then, the competition hosted only 15 contestants. By 2012, the competition had brought together 350 contestants (after qualifications) from 75 countries around the world. The fact that the competition has attracted so many students over the years prompts interest, not only in its innovative element, but also in its cultural, educational, and scientific values.

Imagine Cup first came to Kuwait in 2009 when Microsoft Kuwait initiated a campaign to encourage Kuwaiti universities to participate. AUK was among the first participants in this initiative. Founded by **Dr. Amir Zeid**, Associate Professor of Computer Science, the first AUK generation of Imagine Cup innovators made its way to the regional competition. "At that time, the Imagine Cup was not much known in Kuwait. It was not easy to attract students to participate in such contests. Only four students showed interest to join the competition. They formed the first AUK Imagine Cup team and were the first to bring victory to AUK," said Dr. Zeid. The trend has changed since then. Interest and participation in the competition have grown, and more titles have been awarded to AUK.

Highlighting the relevance of Imagine Cup to Kuwait, Dr. Zeid revealed how the Imagine Cup experience goes beyond being just a scientific competition. "Imagine Cup is a remarkable event of national significance," explains Dr. Zeid, "meeting teams from different parts of the world, each holding their own country flag, singing their own national anthem, and cheering for their own country's team creates a rewarding feeling of representing one's own country, exactly like the Olympic Games," he added.

In 2010, the Kuwaiti presence in Imagine Cup delivered an important cultural message that negates the widely-held belief that females are less capable than males in the field of technology. An all-female team from AUK qualified to the world finals beating their male counterparts. This specific case received international attention as they were one of only two all-female teams among the 68 world finalist teams.

Observing the gender structure of Imagine Cup teams over the years, and the coaching issues associated with these structures, has motivated Dr. Zeid to examine the topic of gender and education in Kuwait. "Unlike many parts of the world, gender is not an issue in technology education in Kuwait," Dr. Zeid found out. "Statistics have shown that Kuwait has a very high representation in the field of computer technology, as compared to the rest of the world. In terms of opinion and attitude, Kuwaiti females have shown to be as enthusiastic and confident as males in studying computer sciences," Dr. Zeid commented.

From an educational perspective, Imagine Cup has had a significant impact on computer science teaching methodologies at AUK. Dr. Zeid proposed a new approach to integrate Imagine Cup with Computer Science Capstone courses at AUK, saying the chances for technology courses offering interaction with the real-world are rare. "Using Imagine Cup as the main theme of the Capstone Course engages students in the UN Millennium Goals and directs their efforts to serve humanity," said Dr. Zeid. In addition to breeding new innovations, Imagine Cup teaches students how to integrate scientific research with project business viability. "The winner of the Imagine Cup and the Capstone A-student has to possess the right blend of scientific creativity and entrepreneurship," Dr. Zeid said of the final course target. Dr. Zeid discovered yet another fertile field of research in engaging international contests with educational practices. He presented his latest paper on this topic in The Frontiers in Education Conference FIA 2012 in Seattle, Washington.

The Imagine Cup, commonly named "The Software Olympics", is not only about competition. The academic, cultural, and scientific implications it holds are what makes it so popular and prestigious. Computer Science & Information Systems (CSIS) students of AUK have become the icon of Imagine Cup in Kuwait. Employers and Scientific Institutes of Kuwait approach them for job and grant opportunities. According to Dr. Zeid, "It is an integral part of education at AUK that we emphasize the importance of competing in world class events. Such events significantly contribute to personal and career development, which is the core of AUK's Liberal Arts educational philosophy."



AUK sweeps the 2012 Microsoft Imagine Cup in Kuwait and advances to world finals in Sydney, Australia.

IMAGINE CUP ACROSS THE YEARS



2009 ElectReduce: Winner of Mobile Development Category, Gulf Region

The AUK CSIS team project was titled ElectReduce which is a real time energy consumption monitor that helps reduce electricity consumption using mobile phones. The AUK team spent numerous weeks researching, designing and implementing a working prototype solution to their chosen problem and building a presentation that put them in first place and won the admiration of the judges, the audience as well as the other teams.

- Abdullah Al-Shaikh
- Salman Al-Saffar
- Ahmad Ashour
- Abdelwahab Al-Atiqi
- Ali Dashti



2010 They Want They Do: Winner of Software Design Category, Gulf Region. Represented Kuwait in World Finals in Poland, July 2010

They created a software solution (They Want They Do - TWTD) that allows physically handicapped students to use computers for educational purposes. Their project was a winning idea for the value it adds to supporting the disabled and eliminating barriers to their education.

One of the other key factors that made TWTD stand out was its relatively low cost and ease of use in comparison to expensive software and hardware that currently exists for the physically challenged.

- Mariam Al-Najdi
- Aisha Al-Rouwaished
- Abrar Amin

2012 USS: Winner of Software Design and Mobile Category in Kuwait. Represented Kuwait in the World Finals in Sydney, July 2012.

The AUK team “Code Breakers” won the Software Design Competition with their project “Universal Sign System” (USS). The young AUK computer scientists came up with a software solution capable of turning sign language into a human voice, bridging the communication gap between the deaf world and the society that encompasses them.

In addition to winning the Software Design competition, the “Code Breakers” also won the Mobile Development Award on their groundbreaking USS.

- Khaled Al-Qahtani
- Khaled Al-Jassar
- Mohammed Al-Shati
- Abdullah Al-Shaya



2011 RRS: 2nd in the Region, First in Kuwait. Represented Kuwait in World Finals in New York, July 2011

The AUK SWAP Team decided to solve the world’s problems through their ‘Revolutionary Reporting System’. Their design is based on a simple image reporting software that uses the geographic location tagging on images for reporting any emergencies related to road accidents, environmental hazards, theft, or medical emergencies. Their project was a winning idea, not only for its value to humanity, but also for the way they presented it in the public event.

The AUK team made their way to the winning podium by a live demonstration that impressed the audience.

- Ali Taqi
- Bader Al Mohammed Ali
- Eissa Al Qadeeri



Dear American University of Kuwait.



Laurel Stavis, former Executive Director of the Dartmouth–AUK Program, who recently transitioned to a new position at Dartmouth as Assistant Provost for International Initiatives. (Photo courtesy of Dartmouth College)

When Amal Al-Binali asked me to write something for the *AUK Chronicle* about my years as Executive Director of the Dartmouth-AUK Program, I started to think about what such a piece might look like. How should it be constructed? What key points should it convey? The more I pondered, the more I thought how strange and detached it would be to write about my relationship with all of you over the past several years from the standpoint of an observer or reporter.

So instead I write as a grateful friend — one that admires you from afar and hopes that our friendship will outlast all kinds of transitions, for you and for me. Happily, in my new role at Dartmouth as Assistant Provost for International Initiatives, I think we will stay in touch and I am delighted to leave our

Program in Beth Hindmarsh's capable hands. The moment she walked into our office, I knew she would take us in new and exciting directions. With Dale Eickelman's leadership, our collaboration will thrive and grow in ways I couldn't have imagined.

Dear AUK, allow me to take this opportunity to thank you. Thank you for welcoming me into your community so graciously, for teaching me about Kuwait, taking me for rides into the desert, indulging my awful American desire to ride a camel(!), trying to teach me Arabic, hanging out at the Marina Mall, The Avenues, 360, and of course the Old Souk. Thank you for sending your wonderful students and faculty to Dartmouth, and for welcoming our students to AUK.

Thank you above all for allowing me to be a part of something very few human beings ever get to see: the creation of a new university. Dartmouth's story reaches back through almost three centuries. Different people in a different era brought our university into being. Your history is within your living memory. You built AUK with your own hands, your own intellects, and your own dreams. I am extremely grateful to all of you for letting me be a part of that process. My hope is that AUK and Dartmouth will work and learn together for many years to come.

More personally, I hope to one day visit Kuwait again and be excited as I always am to see the ways in which AUK is moving into — and shaping — the future.

With gratitude,

**LAUREL
STAVIS**

*Assistant Provost for International Initiatives
Dartmouth*

(Consultant to the Dartmouth-AUK Project, 2005-2007 and Executive Director of the Dartmouth-AUK Program, 2008-2012)

Dr. Mohammad El Abd and Dr. Jason Moore (photo by Beth Hindmarsh-Dartmouth)



THE BUZZ ABOUT DATA

What do computer games and the study of bee swarms have to do with cancer research? They are both pieces of the human disease jigsaw that, while seemingly unrelated, might yield powerful new tools of diagnosis and treatment. What they share is high-powered computing. Without it, computer games could not do the amazing things they do; solving how swarms of bees (or colonies of ants or schools of fish or flocks of birds) seem to work as one entity would be impossible; and applying that knowledge to research into human disease processes, particularly cancer, would be unlikely to yield answers.

How high-powered computing might be applied to research in human disease was examined this summer by Mohammed El Abd, an Assistant Professor of Computer Engineering and expert in Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) and Jason Moore, Director of the Institute for Quantitative Biomedical Sciences (iQBS) at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth. El Abd is the fourth Faculty Fellow to study with a Dartmouth colleague. Previous Fellows include Simon O'Meara, Assistant Professor of Art History; Amir Zeid, Associate Professor of Computer Science; and Mohamad Awad, Assistant Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering. The AUK-Dartmouth Faculty Fellow placement is awarded annually to an AUK researcher who identifies a Dartmouth colleague with whom to work.

According to Moore and El Abd, the development of increased speeds of Graphical Processing Units (GPUs) for gaming has been instrumental in the management of the mountains of data that are generated each year. GPUs that are used in gaming contain many small processors which make them much more powerful than the Central Processing Unit (CPU) of most computers.

By using algorithms (step-by-step procedures for calculations and data processing) to manipulate data and discover patterns that could not be seen with previous processing power, the potential for solving seemingly unsolvable problems is immense. What's amazing is that this has come about in only the last 5 or 6 years as Graphical Processing Units have evolved and they are upgraded just about every year.

El Abd and Moore met at the 2011 Genetic and Evolutionary Computation Conference (GECCO) in Dublin, Ireland. While they are coming from different perspectives, they have a common interest in high performance computing. "I very much look forward to collaborating with Dr. El Abd on research projects at the interface of high-performance computing and evolutionary computation. I hope to visit AUK sometime in the next year to move these projects along," said Moore.

"My visit to Dartmouth was highly successful," said El Abd. "I had access to a machine equipped with three GPUs, which enabled me to implement two versions of the PSO (Particle Swarm Optimization) algorithm. Dr. Moore and I continue to talk about future collaboration."

By Beth Hindmarsh

AUK STUDENTS SHARE KNOWLEDGE & CREATIVITY AT DARTMOUTH COLLEGE



During his time at Dartmouth, Kevork Awakimian, a management major with a minor in international relations at AUK, worked with the Rassias Center for World Languages. *(photo by Chrissy Pearson -Dartmouth)*

Kevork Awakimian is one of five students who made the journey from the American University of Kuwait (AUK) to Hanover this summer as part of the Dartmouth College–AUK Program internship program. “This internship is the best experience that I have had in my life,” says Awakimian.

The cross-cultural internship program is one of many programs that link Dartmouth and AUK. Two of this summer’s AUK interns, Yousef Abdul-Husain and Helene Georges El-Neaman, had hands-on experience working in the Hood Museum of Art, the Office of Public Affairs, and the Media Production Group. “We got a taste of everything,” says El-Neaman, a double major in graphic design and computer engineering at AUK. “A taste of curating, of design, and of videography, all in one month.”

As part of their work with both the Office of Public Affairs and the Media Production Group, Abdul-Husain and El-Neaman produced a video, capturing part of their Dartmouth experience this summer. For Abdul-Husain, a communications major, the opportunity to work in video production—a hobby of his—was one of the reasons he applied for the internship. “That’s what sealed the deal,” he says.

A management major with a minor in international relations, Awakimian worked with the Rassias Center for World Languages during his time at Dartmouth, assisting one of the program’s Arabic master teachers. Awakimian was thrilled with the achievements of his students, most of whom were familiar with reading and translating Arabic, but not with speaking it.

“The first few days, they were talking like 2-year-olds, like a person who had just started talking,” says Awakimian. “On the last day, one of my students, without preparing, went on stage and started speaking Arabic. This person could not speak a full sentence when he first came here, and now he’s speaking Arabic.”

While he is proud of his students’ achievements, Awakimian is also grateful for the impact the professional and cultural experience at Dartmouth has had on his own life. “It was a challenge and improved my self-confidence,” he says.



The internship class also included Wadhah Al-Dalama and Eman Karam, who participated in the two-week Secure Information Systems and Mentoring Program (SISMAT) offered through Dartmouth’s Institute for Security, Technology, and Society. The two-week

AUK interns Yousef Abdul-Husain (second from left) and Helene Georges El Neaman (far right) spent time working at the Hood Museum of Art. They are pictured with Amelia Kahl Avdic (far left), assistant curator of special projects, and Lesley Wellman (third from left), Hood Foundation Curator of Special Education. *(photo by Elizabeth Hindmarsh-Dartmouth)*

program trains students in cyber security tools. Both women majored in information systems at AUK and participated in the Microsoft Imagine Cup finals in Kuwait.

“These collaborative programs with emerging universities are tremendously important in the sense that they give us an on-the-ground view of what is emerging, what is important, and what subject matters are most meaningful in certain parts of the world,” says Laurel Stavis, former executive director of the Dartmouth–AUK Program, who recently transitioned to a new position at Dartmouth as assistant provost for international initiatives.

The impact of the Dartmouth–AUK Program stretched across campus this summer, from the editing room of the Media Production Group to the classrooms of the Rassias Center to the computer labs of the SISMAT program. “I think for everybody involved it has been a very significant experience,” says Dale Eickelman, the Ralph and Richard Lazarus Professor of Anthropology and Human Relations and the relationship coordinator for the Dartmouth–AUK Program.

“Dartmouth is a life changer,” says El-Neaman. “It has helped me set goals and given me a bigger picture of the world.”

Awakimian plans to encourage his peers at AUK to apply for the internship program. “It’s hard to explain the feeling that you get, the experience you get,” he says. “I can’t picture it for them, but they have to come see it.”

Article Courtesy of Chrissy Pearson – Dartmouth Now



Eman Karam explains one of her projects during a SISMAT presentation. (photo by Wadhah Al-Dalama)



Wadhah Al-Dalama (right) participates in one of the Secure Information Systems and Mentoring Program’s (SISMAT) game exercises. (photo by Ali Uribe '14 - Dartmouth)



INTRODUCING THE NEW AUK-DARTMOUTH PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Elizabeth “Beth” Hindmarsh, Program Manager for AUK-Dartmouth, joined the program in October 2011. She worked previously at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth. This earlier job provided her with occasional opportunities to work on international projects. As Beth says, “The AUK-Dartmouth Program allows me to contribute full time to one of Dartmouth’s major international commitments.”

Her work involves regular contact with students, faculty, and administrators on both the Dartmouth and AUK campuses. “I especially like the Dartmouth-to-AUK and AUK-to-Dartmouth student exchanges,” Beth says. “It’s exciting to see the students explore new environments and meet new people.”

When asked what she likes to do when not working with the AUK-Dartmouth Program, she replied, “In Winter I like to ice skate on frozen lakes. After the ice melts, I enjoy canoeing.” She hopes that her involvement with AUK will allow her to visit the Salmiya campus soon.

Beth will be working closely with Dale F. Eickelman, Ralph and Richard Lazarus Professor of Anthropology and International Relations at Dartmouth College, and Relationship Coordinator of the American University of Kuwait—Dartmouth College Program.



ENCOUNTERING THE GHOSTS OF BERLIN

AUK STUDENTS TRAVEL TO BERLIN FOR SPRING BREAK 2012

The Study Abroad Berlin Spring Break 2012 trip was conceived as a way of providing students with an international experience during the regular academic semester. With this in mind, Professors Sharon Lawrence and Christopher Ohan organized a trip to Berlin for the Spring 2012 semester that would both complement and supplement their art and history courses; an art history class called “Cities as Art” (ART 211) and both halves of the Western Civilization (INST 204/205) sequence. Professors Lawrence and Ohan both believe that taking students to specific places associated with art or history enhances learning in a way that the classroom experience, while valuable, cannot. Teaching “on-site” makes any course suddenly

“relevant,” but in terms of instilling the value of tolerance, and the appreciation of perspective and cultural diversity, study abroad becomes more than an educational method, it can be a life-changing experience.

All 20 student participants, whether enrolled in the art or history courses read Brian Ladd’s *The Ghosts of Berlin* (Chicago, 1998) prior to departure. Once in Berlin the trip itinerary was organized to coincide with Ladd’s text. The group began by visiting sites associated with the Imperial Berlin of the Kaisers. Beginning with an excursion to the Reichstag, the group looked at the Brandenburg Gate and the artifacts collected in the Pergamum

Museum in the context of an imperial Germany at the end of the nineteenth century. Later, on a four-hour professionally guided walking tour of the city, the group then examined how Berlin was transformed by the Nazi regime in the 1930s. Traveling to specific locations where major events took place, students gathered in the lobby of the German Historical Museum and listened to an account of an early assassination attempt on Hitler that took place in the hall where the group was standing. They also stood over the site of the infamous bunker in the Chancellery gardens where the Nazi leader met his end in April 1945 as Soviet troops were only blocks away. For the Cold War period, the group visited the Checkpoint Charlie Museum to learn of the many individual stories associated with the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. A second four-hour guided walking tour starting at the former communist showplace of Alexanderplatz focused on sites in what was East Berlin. Students were led through a so-called "Ghost Station" where, after the construction of the Wall, subway tunnels running under East Berlin but connecting locations in West Berlin were simply sealed shut. They were also taken to a preserved part of the Berlin Wall(s) to understand how the city was truly divided. The tour included Tränenpalast at Friedrichstrasse Station, where West Berliners were eventually able to come visit their relatives in East Berlin. Known as the "Palace of Tears," it often represented a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit family members who physically lived a few blocks away, but on the other side of the Berlin Wall.

The group spent the final days looking at the "new" Berlin. As the city is attempting to come to terms with its various identities, Berliners are remembering their past in various ways, such as the Topography of Terror Museum. Built on the site of Nazi State Police headquarters, it documents many of the atrocities of the Nazi regime and allows visitors to walk in the ruins of former Gestapo prison cells. The group also visited the Jewish Memorial, a vast space of monoliths and represents another of Berlin's attempts to deal with its controversial past. Finally, the group visited the Neues Museum which is dedicated to classical antiquity but not restored until after 1990. The building itself commemorates the history of the city as parts of the architecture survive from the end of the nineteenth century while other parts, lost in the bombing of Berlin during the Second World War, were rebuilt only at the end of the last century. Pot marks

from intense shelling are evident both inside and outside of the purposely-scarred structure, whose most important artifact is the bust of Nefertiti, dating from the Ancient Egypt's New Kingdom around 1750 BC.

As stated above all students were required to read the Ladd text and submit discussion questions for each chapter. Once in Berlin the group convened each day for a meeting/discussion of what they had seen and the relation of the spaces visited to the portion of the Ladd text connected to that day's activities. Students' discussion questions submitted earlier served as a guide for these meetings. As a final project for the one-credit hour earned by student participants, each selected a piece of architecture or space and critically examined its connection to Berlin's identity. All students made their selections by day five of the trip and visited, photographed and/or filmed their selected location(s). Written project proposals and bibliographies were due approximately a week after the end of the trip. The group then gathered on campus in early April so proposals could be returned and discussed. Finally, in mid-April completed projects were due. These took the form of self-running narrated Power Point presentations or videos lasting not longer than five minutes.



Taking students out of their own cultural and societal experiences and exposing them to another is certainly one of the most valuable aspects of such a program. "Students," both Lawrence and Ohan argue, "should not end their undergraduate experience without engaging in some type of study abroad program." Hopefully, AUK will offer similar academic opportunities to students in the future.



STAFF HIGHLIGHT:

JILL H. ALLGIER
Registrar, Office of the Registrar

1) What made you decide to join the AUK community?

Good conversations with Dr. Carol, Dr. Nizar and Dr. Marina (Former AUK President) led me to capitalize on the opportunity to experience life and work in a different cultural setting.

2) How does your department fit into the long-term plan?

The functions of the Office of the Registrar are always going to be here. There's no way to get around schedule building, grade processing, graduating students, "etc., etc., and so forth" (from *The King and I*).

3) What do you like most about your job? What do you like least?

The ability to work with a great team of professionals both in the office and across campus.

Whining students who won't accept consequences of their actions or non-actions!

4) Who were your childhood heroes?

My childhood was so long ago that I don't remember having heroes. ☺

5) If you could be or do anything else - what?

Be retired again, work with Habitat for Humanity with my husband (we lead the electrical team), and enjoy family closer than half-a-world away.

6) If you could live in any other time, when might that be and why?

While I enjoy reading about different historical times, I don't want to live during another time. I'm too spoiled with air conditioning, comfortable clothing, internet communication and the ability to travel worldwide in a few hours.

7) If you could have dinner with five famous people from history, who would they be?

Former U.S. President, Jimmy Carter (as associated with Habitat for Humanity); Queen Elizabeth II; TV commentator Andy Rooney; Former U.S. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt; and author Tom Clancy.

8) What are you most proud of?

Personally, being married to David for 50 years; our daughter, Abby and son-in-law, Dan for raising two great young men; and our daughter, Allison who manages a full-time job and is currently International President of Alpha Omicron Pi Executive Board (a non-paid position) which took about 30 weekends of travel last year and will again this coming academic year.

Professionally, I am very proud that the Board of Regents of my former university honored me with the title of Registrar Emeritus upon my retirement.

9) What are you currently working on?

During my personal time, I enjoy needlework and am just starting a crewel stitchery piece which has 27 different stitch designs of which there are 18 that I have never done before. It is quite interesting and challenging to say the least.

10) What are some of the difficulties you face as a staff member living in Kuwait?

Initially it was transportation as I wasn't expecting to need a car; however, once I had one and learned my way around, I haven't had any problems. I've enjoyed shopping at the fabric and carpet souks as well as finding out the way to places like the hardware store few expats would know existed (hardware stores are a weakness for David and I). I was lonely at first without my husband, but once he began travelling back and forth, it made being here much more enjoyable and we've developed friendships with other staff and faculty building a good community.

“*The functions of the Office of the Registrar are always going to be here. There's no way to get around schedule building, grade processing, graduating students...*”





FACULTY HIGHLIGHT:

DR. RAYMOND FARRIN

Associate Professor, Arabic Language & Literature

1) What made you decide to join the AUK community?

When I was finishing my Ph.D. in California, I was hoping to find a job in an Arab country, as it had been seven years since I left Egypt (where I had studied Arabic) and I missed this part of the world. I was lucky that a position at AUK came open at the right time.

2) How does your department fit into the long-term plan?

Though of course AUK focuses on improving the English skills of its students, our department ensures that the students are proficient in Arabic as well and exposed to the rich Arab culture.

As of this year, we are proud to offer an Arabic minor for those who want to delve more deeply into their heritage and literature. We also offer courses in French, Spanish, and translation. In the future, we hope to develop the translation program at AUK and perhaps offer a minor in it.

3) What do you like most about your job? What do you like least?

I like most teaching motivated students. It is extremely satisfying to see students progress and improve over the course of semesters and years.

As for what I like least, it is probably teaching unmotivated students.

4) Who were your childhood heroes?

Most of them were sports stars, like John McEnroe in tennis and some American football players. I had hoped to be an athlete when I grew up.

5) If you could be or do anything else - what?

While I do not play an instrument myself, I think I would enjoy playing one in an orchestra, especially in an orchestra that travels around the world.

6) If you could live in any other time, when might that be and why?

I think I would like to live in Al-Andalus during the fifth century AH/eleventh century CE. It was a high point for literature and culture. Also, I would like to live in Baghdad ("The City of Peace") around the time of Harun Al-Rashid, when it was the greatest city in the world.

7) If you could have dinner with five famous people from history, who would they be?

I would have dinner with some luminaries from Arabic literature: Ibn Zaydun and Wallada bint Al-Mustakfi (when they were still together), Al-Mu'tamid ibn 'Abbad, Badi' Al-Zaman Al-Hamadhani, and Al-Mutanabbi. We would discuss their works and Arabic literature in general. That would be an amazing dinner!

8) What are you most proud of?

Completing my first book (*Abundance from the Desert: Classical Arabic Poetry*). The project took years.

9) What are you currently working on?

The translation of my book into Arabic. Also, I am working on a study of how the Qur'anic suras are structured and how their structure serves as a guide to meaning. There is a Qur'anic science that deals with this issue: 'ilm al-munasaba. I hope to add a contribution to it.

10) What are some of the difficulties you face as an educator living in Kuwait?

For someone specializing in Arabic literature, this is a great place to be. The majority of our students are already strong in Arabic, so we do advanced work in many of our courses similar to that done at graduate programs in the U.S.

The difficulties I face are those that we all face living in modern Kuwait, such as the traffic and congestion.

“I like teaching motivated students. It is extremely satisfying to see students progress and improve over the course of semesters and years”





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