

# VOICE

AUK STUDENT MAGAZINE



# Editor's Note

Welcome back to campus Wolfpack, and a warm welcome to all Freshmen!

We all have been wallowing in nostalgia as it's been ages since we have been to our second home, AUK. And with deep remorse, we can say that Zoom had taken that idyllic place the last few semesters. A two-week break that went on for a year and a half, filled with uncertainty and unprecedented news. However, we are now gearing up to be back on campus, with notes of optimism as the Fall semester commences. There has never been a better time to reiterate AUK's mantra – THINK, LEARN, BECOME - as we reintegrate with glistening hopes for a campus escapades.

In this issue, the new team would like to offer you a chance to reminisce whilst taking control of the present and cherishing each moment at university. After all, campus experience is a sine qua non for any university student, and with the Pandemic, it has not been easy for Freshmen to acclimate to the new norm. That is why this issue acts as a guidebook, incorporated with advice to ensure you get the most out of this new juncture.

However, VOICE is not just a guide. It is also a platform for students to showcase their talents and creativity to the AUK community. VOICE acts as a medium of interaction between the students and the AUK community as a whole. With that being said, I would like to illustrate the mission VOICE has for each issue we publish as a team:

**1.** To create content that is **beneficial** for the AUK community by featuring up-to-date activities and events occurring throughout the campus to help students to avail themselves of everything that AUK has to offer.

**2.** To produce **real**, unbiased content which reflects and expresses the thoughts of the AUK community and our society.

**3.** A sense of **open** mindedness by giving students the space to articulate their opinions while always abiding by the regulations set by AUK, through VOICE.

Ultimately, VOICE is your world and the place to grow your imagination. In the words of a Canadian author, Julie Czerneda, "curiosity, fed by feats of imagination, can grow," and we hope through our issues we can spark that feeling within you.

I wish you all a fabulous year ahead! Go Wolfpack!

Yours sincerely,

Lavena Jacob

Editor in Chief



# Meet The Team

## Editor-in-Chief

Lavena is a senior majoring in Finance, she is in her last semester at her joyous home, AUK. She alleviates her stress by spending time with her family, especially her naughty little nephew, her bundle of happiness. Her favorite side hustle is baking, as she has an immense passion for it that she ends up procrastinating. But the advantage here is that you can always count on her to cheer you up with her scrumptious cakes!



**Lavena Jacob**

## Co-Editor

Nourah is a senior at AUK and majors in SBSA. She's known to be a hard worker and accepts any challenges that will help her achieve her life's goals. She is also very ambitious and motivated. Not only that, but she also has an admiration for Netflix and the Marvel Universe. Her favorite quote comes from Austrian Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl "Embrace obstacles to build the resilience required to live a purpose-driven life".



**Nourah Al-Enzi**

## Graphic Designer

Mariem is a sophomore majoring in Graphic Design. She usually spends most of her time outdoors, taking long walks, being consumed with reading books, or sitting and sketching whatever scenery that happens to be there. Mariem also spends a fair amount of her time binge-watching horror and thriller movies. She is very determined to face new challenges and grow her knowledge about her passions!



**Mariem Mahmoud**



**Noha Alsahlia**

## Reporter

An AUK Freshman and English major, Noha is a casual poetry enjoyer and kick-boxer with a passion for music. She has a great desire for serenity and a constant thirst for knowledge about the world and its various cultures. A reader of vigorous, polemical and boundary pushing literature with a passion for social justice and moral philosophy. "If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive" is a quote by poet and feminist Audre Lorde that she tries to live by.



**Bader Hussain**

## Reporter

Bader is a Junior English Major, comics aficionado, and a self-proclaimed cinephile. A lover of fringes and underbellies of all kinds. Bader took a keen interest in reporting the unusual and spreading it to his readers. Bader is also interested in obscure, popular music, often documenting artists in his free time; to give them the attention they deserve but have not gotten during their time. Driven to spread the word of nostalgia, often exploring abandoned structures to find objects of the past. Piecing together things unexplained by the older generation to give readers an insight into what it was like to live in the Pearl of the Gulf.



**Dr. Angelica DeAngelis**

## Magazine Advisor

كاظم الساهر  
Anyone who knows Angelica knows how much she loves Morocco and Armed with a PhD in Comparative Literature, she has been teaching in the English Department at AUK since 2009. She is doing her best to advocate for her students and prepare them academically and personally to meet the challenges of their studies at AUK, and the adventures that await them post-graduation. Her second favorite quote comes from Elvis Costello, "What's so funny 'bout peace, love and understanding?



**Professor Claire Giddings**

## Graphic Designer Consultant

Assistant Professor Claire Giddings is an educator and artist working in photography. She studied at Rutgers University, MICA, Pratt, Parsons Paris, and Wellesley College. Claire has professional design experience in magazines, graphic design firms, advertising agencies, and museums, such as USA Weekend Magazine, Reader's Digest, and The Children's Museum of Manhattan. Her work has been shown at the Fitchburg Museum of Art, Pioneer Works New York, the Center for Fine Art Photography, and Artspace Houston.



01

## Freshmen Guidebook

- A Letter from the Vice President of Student Affairs
- Get to Know Your Majors
- VOICE's Guide to Degree Works
- Is a Liberal Arts Degree Worth It?
- Many Believe UNIV Courses Seem Pointless but They're Crucial, and Here's Why
- How to Manage Your Mental Health Throughout the Semester
- The Arabic Language: An Economic Asset to the Arab World
- Have We Undervalued the Meaning of a Campus Experience?
- Exploring Mental Heath With the Counseling Center

02

## Locus of Control

- Arrow Poems
- Where Did You Attend Your Classes?
- Matrix Pill

03

## Advice

- An Open Letter from a Sophomore
- How Fake News Affects Mental Health
- Broken Motor Skills
- Limbo – A Look into the Gap Year

# Freshmen Guidebook

# A letter from the Vice President of Student Affairs

Dear AUK Student,

It is with great excitement that we prepare for welcoming you back to campus this Fall 2021 semester. We have all missed you tremendously and cannot wait to see you heading into your classes, visiting the library, walking the hallways, and making use of the facilities we have for you here at AUK. The last year and a half put a toll on all of us, but we have all adapted to these changes in our lives, and adopted new modes of surviving, learning (and I don't just mean classroom learning), socializing, and being. This is an on-going process, and I'm sure you are aware of how this adjustment is global, and not limited to us here at AUK, or in Kuwait. As we adapt, and as you adapt, we trust that we can indeed depend on each other to help us all transition into life on campus. It is not an easy transition, and we are aware of that, but we are the Wolfpack, and the Wolfpack support each other.

Let's all celebrate 2021 with a conscious decision to make the best out of our time, to enjoy all our experiences, and to work relentlessly on improving ourselves. Campus life offers you ample opportunity for that. AUK provides you with venues to discuss a variety of issues in your classes, to meet with your peers over shared interests, to improve on your multiple skills or to explore new ones. So, expand your horizon. Make new friends. Attend workshops and lectures. Join clubs. Play sports. But most importantly, do not shy away from trying new things. This is your time to grow.

I and my team in Student Affairs are looking forward to getting to know our new students and reconnecting with our old ones. You enrich our lives when you allow us to be part of yours. Let's bring the Wolfpack community together and start Fall 2021 with a bang (not one that violates our Code of Conduct of course).

Have a great semester,

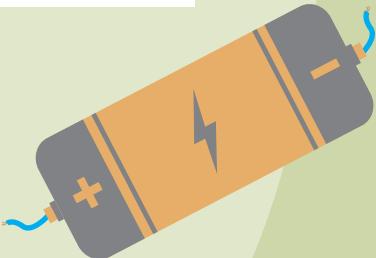
Dr. Hanan Muzaffar



# Get to Know your Majors

## College of Engineering

Scan me!



### Electrical Engineering

Dr. Ghulam Hussain

"At AUK under the Electrical Engineering majors, we help our students learn through combinations of theory and lab work. This mix of theory and practice helps students visualize concepts and apply their ideas in real life situations. Electrical Engineering students at AUK are trained to do what an Electrical Engineers do today, that is to analyze and diagnose a problem and develop an innovative solution."



### Computer Engineering

Dr. Mounib Khanafer

"Computer Engineers possess the skills to make a difference in their communities. A Computer Engineering student will work on a final year capstone project in which he/she builds a product that has an impact on society, environment, and economy. Whether it is an interesting app that helps patients in emergency situations, or a smart robot that helps kids with learning difficulties, or even using artificial intelligence to simplify complex procedures, the space is open for students to be creative in their capstone projects."



### Systems Engineering

Dr. Hanan AlTabbakh

"The System Engineering curriculum offered at AUK introduces students to different levels of science, technology and management courses such as an engineering project management course. Students will learn to identify and select projects, define projects scopes, schedule tasks, allocate resources and estimate budgets. Thus, AUK graduates will stand out due to their unique employability skills and managerial competences in leading multi-disciplinary projects."

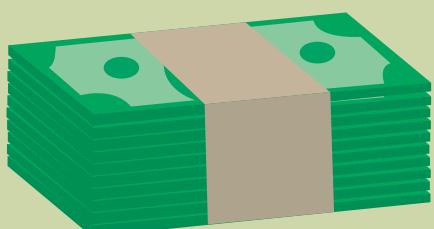


## CSI & IS

Dr. Aaron Rabaab

"CSIS at AUK provides two programs of CS and IS that are consistent with contemporary market needs and ABET standards. There are six categories of courses offered in CSIS programs including: basic/ advanced programming, computing theory, professional software development, technology, systems. And finally, a culminating experience of capstone project that capitalizes on the entire learning experience to produce a SW solution for a real problem. CSIS prepares students to be successful professionals, educators, researchers and graduate students."

# College of Business and Economics



## Accounting

Dr. Ayman Haddad

"Accounting is the language of business as it represents various financial information in the form of financial statements and reports to interested parties such as the owners, employers, management, investors, buyers, and sellers. It helps us organize and represent financial information, and it also allows individuals and cooperation to understand their finances and make decisions about the future. Accounting helps us to use the past to act in the present and change the future."



## Marketing

Dr. Mohsen Bagnied

"I am happy to introduce Marketing as it is the most exciting and profitable field in business. In short, marketing is the science that helps in the creation, pricing, promotion, and distribution of products, services, ideas, people, and places. Marketing creates and offers value to society as it is the cornerstone of business; you cannot succeed in any business or even in life without having good marketing skills."



## Finance

Dr.Wafaa Sbeiti

"Finance is fundamentally about managing money whether it's for individuals, organizations, institutions and other entities.

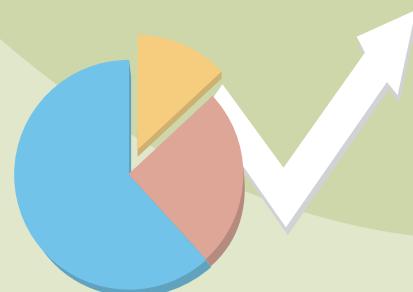
Majoring in finance will lead you to learn a great deal on how money works. In general, Finance majors will be studying the principles and tools necessary in order to make financial decisions for companies and institutions and other larger organizations in the financial areas."



## Management

Dr. Naeemah Alkharafi

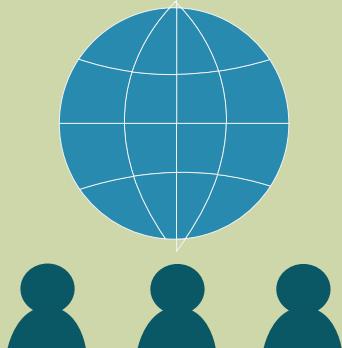
"If you decide to major in Management, you will learn about planning and how to proactively manage a business and the importance of the environment. There are many factors behind the scenes in the environment that you may not be aware of yet that can directly impact your business. Some of the courses that are taught in this field include strategic management, international business and entrepreneurship."



## Economics

Dr. Khaled Saeed

"Economics at its core is about human behavior. You will study the tools that will help you conduct both qualitative and quantitative analysis of basic economics policies and you will learn how the markets work. At the foundation levels you will gain some of the basic theories about markets, governments and how we make choices interacting with the markets and the world."



## HR Management

Dr. Salime Smadi

"We all know that the most important asset of any organization is its people or human capital. Human Resource Management is a strategic approach to effectively managing the people that you have within the organization. It is very important because it helps the organization reach its goals and objectives and it also helps to build a sustainable competitive advantage within the marketplace."

# College of Arts and Sciences



## Graphic Design

Dr. Maryam Hosseinnia

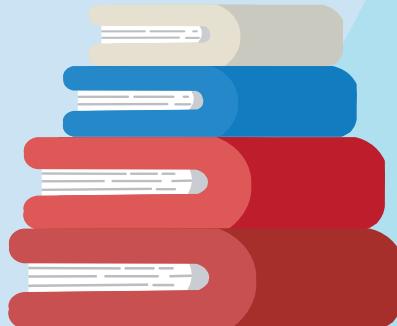
"Graphic Design according to the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), is defined as the art and practice of planning and projecting ideas and experiences with visual and textual content. In other terms graphic design communicates certain ideas or messages in a visual way. These visuals can be as simple as business logo, signage design, layouts for books and magazines or website design, package design and more."



## Communications & Media

Dr. Mohamed Satti

"If you happen to be a creative person, you may choose to focus on advertising and work for an advertising agency. Or you may wish to sharpen your writing skills and work in public relations. There is also the option of starting a career in studio production or in journalism. These choices and more will ensure that you are well-equipped whenever you join the workforce."



## English

Dr.Craig Loomis

Contrary to popular belief literature is more than the stuff on Harry Potter. As an English major at AUK, you will come to understand this. To major in English offers you opportunities to enter the world of fiction, poetry and drama. You will be introduced to the many different flavors of writers, their works, their genres and the many different literary movements that you'll come in contact with. Not to mention the intellectual currants that have taken place over many centuries related specifically to literature."



## International Relations

Dr. Roman Kulchitsky

"The Department of IR at AUK offers undergraduate students a course of study that focuses on diplomacy, conflict resolution, international law, international organizations, political economy and history. To complete the Program students must first take six core courses such as the Introduction to International Relations, World History, the History and Politics of Kuwait, Trends in International Relations, International Political Economy, and Research Methods. Once students have completed the core course requirements, they are expected to take nine courses in three of the four concentrations that the Program offers."



## Social Behavioral Science and Anthropology (SBSA)

Dr. Pelligrino Luciano

"A major in SBSA that is short for Social and Behavior Science with a concentration in Anthropology, it's basically a major in socialcultural anthropology. As a student of cultural anthropology, you learn about the how and why different people construct their way of life around the world through the culture concept. That is the rules, the values, the practices, the myths, and meanings that they hold, contest or negotiate. Our classes teach the techniques and the importance of ethnography, which is our main method of doing fieldwork."

# VOICE's Guide to Degree Works

## Don't Say Nobody Told Me What to Do When You Have This Guide

Now you might be surprised by the explicitness of the second part of the title of this article. Fun fact, this was suggested by the Advising Center. Which frankly, I don't blame them for. Degree Works has been a thing either overlooked or "underlooked". When I was a sophomore at AUK, my classes were picked mainly by the advisors during the advising period. While at a friend's place, I frustratingly explained the courses I was taking. My friend asked me if I checked my Degree Works, to which I replied in confusion to the mere mention of such a thing. She looked at me in astonishment as if I were a psychopath going through university aimlessly; this was definitely the case. She then pulled up her phone and showed me the program explaining what it does and what courses she needs to take (or how to find the courses suitable for her program). My friend then showed me how to access my file and explained what I needed to take to finish my humanities degree. Of course, before registering, students require a RAC number which the Advising Center provides. Then, you can register for classes. Students must visit the Advising Center so long as they are undeclared. Once they are declared, they visit their faculty advisor.



Now, looking at Degree Works, the first thing to notice is how intimidating the format might seem, but no worries! Once explained thoroughly, you'll realize how simple it all is. For the most part, you will be focusing on the **1** Degree Roadmap, which is the breakdown of the courses you need to take prior to your graduation ceremony in simpler terms. In the Roadmap, there's an identification column; this includes **2** your name, **3** ID, **4** classification, which is how many classes and credits you have completed throughout the year identifying what year you are in; for example, 60 to 89 credits will classify you as a Junior, and **5** GPA. Your **6** cohort is the characteristic of your study; it identifies whether you are paying your tuition or are on a scholarship. The **7** holds section usually keeps you from signing up for classes; this can vary from financial holds to library holds surprisingly (please remember to check in your books once you're done with them).

It is recommended to contact the relevant department on which a student has a hold to be cleared of it. The **8** catalog year determines the year you joined the university. Under it is the advisor, which for freshmen should be undeclared. To declare your major, you must meet a certain set of requirements and earn around sixty credits. At that time, you'll be given an **9** advisor based on the field of study. Underneath, there are **10** two bars like the usual health and manna bars you see in video games. The bars are estimates of the student's progress. In order for students to earn their degree, they must complete a set of requirements and the number of credits required to graduate.

# Degree Roadmap

Student View A0001r4E as of 13/10/2021 at 17:18

Student	Ahmad, Sarah Mohammed	2	Catalog Year	2019	8
ID	S00046782	3	Advisor	Iman Yousef	9
Classification	Sophomore/Second Yr (30 to 59)	4	College	College of Arts and Sciences	
Overall GPA	3.75	5	Degree	Degree Not Yet Declared	
Academic Standing	Good Standing		Major	Pre-Graphic Design	
Cohort		6	Minor		
Holds		7			

## Other features in DegreeWorks include Look ahead, What if, and GPA calculator.

**1** “**Look ahead**” is a feature that students can use to see where future courses they are planning to take would fit in their degree roadmap. This is a useful feature to see if the desired course can fit within the student’s requirement. Once courses are added, you must click on ‘Process New’, and DegreeWorks will show where these courses would go. The courses would be shown in blue text.

**2** “**What If**” is an another helpful feature if a student is thinking of switching majors or adding a minor. It can show a student, for example, who is currently pursuing an English degree, what their roadmap would look like as an accounting major, where the courses they have taken so far would count as an Accounting major if they switch, and so on. The purpose of the “What If” feature is to see the requirements of taking a different major or adding a minor. Above that, it lets you know what classes will be in fall through. Fall through is an indication of extra courses that are not part of the major’s requirements. It can be shown a student’s normal roadmap. Students may be financially liable if they are scholarship students. However, it is important to note that students taking Computer Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Systems Engineering, and Computer Science and Information Systems will have MATH 100 and MATH 110 in their fall through. Which is normal and expected. They will not be financially liable for these courses ONLY. What if also lets you know if the major is worth pursuing after all the credits you’ve earned, giving an almost accurate concept of what will happen when you follow another major.

**3** Finally, the “**GPA calculator**” helps you calculate your point average and what it takes to get to that route. Now there is a critical section of the calculator: the “term calculator,” which lets you calculate the point average given by each term. Please be informed that this is NOT an accurate representation of your actual GPA; it does not count repeated courses. It is highly recommended to visit or contact an advisor for a more precise calculation.

DegreeWorks may have been misunderstood, and it took an interview with the Advising Center to understand parts of its intricacies. Regardless, once you get the hang of how it works, you will be signing up for the classes you desire, all the while getting counted credits in no time. Nevertheless, the Advising Center is always happy to help with any further explanations of how DegreeWorks functions. Additionally, they hold workshops for UNIV 100 course for all the new students to have a better understanding of the major sheet.

# Is a Liberal Arts Degree Worth It?

By: Nuha Al- Sahli

Suppose you are thinking of studying subjects such as History, Literature, Writing, Psychology, and Creative Arts. In that case, you may be familiar with phrases such as "x degree gets you nowhere" or "these jobs don't pay well." These phrases made me question my decision to pursue a career in Liberal Arts, and they almost led me to be stuck in a major I do not enjoy. However, upon research, I found that the diversity of a Liberal Arts degree would prepare me for various career paths and opportunities. There are many categories and specialties within the term Liberal Arts. For example, AUK offers Communications and Media, English, Graphic Design, International Relations and, Social Behavioral Science and Anthropology, which will be my core focus.



In academics, Liberal Arts are a wide-ranged degree intended to provide general knowledge primarily in Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. The term Liberal comes from the Latin "liber" meaning free and unrestricted. Career fields vary from academic, business, government to social services, health, welfare, and more. A liberal arts degree also provides you with a set of skills needed in every job such as cross-cultural knowledge, critical thinking, communication, self-expression, innovation and much more. These are in-demand competencies that a Liberal Arts education emphasizes.

Let us examine **Communication and Media** as a major. Those studies focus on how people communicate in an increasingly digitized and connected society. It includes understanding audiences, working with innovative technologies, and learning key communication theories. Most industries need communication professionals on their team and studying Communication offers you the freedom and flexibility when it comes to career paths. Common jobs for a Communication and Media major include advertising, marketing, public relations, television, journalism, social media, graphic design, sales, event planning and translation. However, Communication and Media graduates are flexible and not restricted to only the jobs mentioned above. In fact, the skills given by this major are valuable to any job.

Next in order is an **English** degree. If you are thinking of pursuing English, it is fair to assume you have a clear idea of what you want to do later, as the study of a language is specific and straightforward. However, the opportunities are endless. Majoring in English will allow you to improve as an interpreter of literature and as a critical thinker. If you are an aspiring writer, there is no doubt in how this choice of major will improve your writing and enjoyment of this art. Jobs related to an English degree include digital copywriter, writer, editorial assistant, teacher, lexicographer, magazine journalist, newspaper journalist, publishing copy editor/proofreader and web content manager. As I mentioned before, the opportunities for the holder of this degree are endless. There are many other jobs where an English degree comes in handy such as education consultant, marketing executive, researcher and much more.

If you are passionate about creating art, you may have considered studying **Graphic Design**. Graphic Design is an extremely broad and creative major that allows its students to understand design history, theory, and methodology and use a wide range of design technologies and strategies while making connections between type, image, and different aesthetics. It may sound complicated, but if you are passionate about design or interested in creating art, the rewards are worthwhile. Graphic Design combines creativity and technology, which make up most of our forms of entertainment; therefore, Graphic designers are highly in demand. Career opportunities for Graphic design graduates include graphic designer, web designer, industrial/project designer, film and television production, TV, theater, or film set designer, advertising, and editorial roles in printed media. Graphic Design is a competitive and demanding field. However, it is a great fit for any enjoyer of art, communication, and technology.



If you are interested in a political or diplomatic career, an **International Relations** degree is the degree that will help take you there. An International Relations major studies the world through politics, culture, and economics. Students of this major will possess an understanding of the economic, political, cultural, historical, and legal factors that influence international affairs. You could take a guess at the more known career paths provided by an International Relations degree such as ambassador, government official or, Foreign Affairs Specialist but, you may not be familiar with the many other opportunities provided by this degree such as Diplomatic service officer, Government social research officer, international aid/ development worker, public affairs consultant, and many other options in governmental and non-governmental organizations. An IR degree is an excellent choice because it is not only useful for working directly in International Relations. You get many transferable skills along the way that can be valuable in almost any industry.



Lastly, the degree in **Social Behavioral sciences** includes Criminal justice, anthropology, psychology, sociology, political science, economics, and social work. AUK offers this degree with a concentration in Anthropology which is concerned with human behavior, human biology, cultures, and societies. Anthropologists can be found in a variety of fields such as governments, business, and academics. Social and behavioral science-specifically anthropology-has countless opportunities and career paths including Community development worker, international aid/development worker, Local government officer, Market researcher, social researcher, public relations officer, social worker and more.

To sum up, everything that has been said, a Liberal Arts degree is one with vast variety and provides countless opportunities for those who wish to pursue it. Considering the opportunities provided to you by your chosen degree is important. However, when deciding on a career path, the most crucial factor to consider is whether this is a field you will enjoy studying and working in. Many employers accept applications from graduates with any degree subject, so you are not restricted to only the jobs mentioned here. Pursuing something that interests you helps you engage with the work and constantly inspires you, and that is the only way to guarantee success.

# Many Believe UNIV Seem Pointless But They're Crucial, and Here's Why

By: Bader Hussain

We've all had those thoughts or had that one friend that complained about UNIV being a very futile subject to take. It's unquestionable to deny and, in some ways, it's completely understandable. I had those same thoughts myself as it took me two semesters to realize the importance of those classes, developing into a university student with an efficient workflow that got the results that made me happy. I realized that doing everything last minute was not how I should be doing college-level work because it simply meant I wasn't taking my education seriously. Looking back at my first semester, my ego was the problem, as my school pampered me because of how well-read I was. Still, I hadn't realized many other people had so much more than I did, so why was I really that special?

As a freshman, you have to admit that university, in some ways, is a competition of who can be the most efficient and productive at the same time. It wasn't just the grades. It was being able to incorporate the educational and social aspects to meet your personal goals while attaining the academic pursuits that get you a secure living. UNIV 100 and 110 teaches that, but many of us think of its futility more than trying to be emotionally aware of the information we are being given.



I interviewed Prof. Hala Najar, who was head of the FYE department at the time of my entrance to university. The interview was not only an eye-opening experience to the potentials of first-year experience courses, but also a breath of nostalgia from a crucial moment in my career as a university student.

## Some Students might see UNIV 110 and 101 as pointless subjects; is this true? If not, why?

"I have heard this as well, and I'm glad it's being brought up first. At the beginning of the first year, we address this theory of mentality or, what's the purpose of General Education?

So, if you look at liberal arts universities around the world, a general education foundation is essential.

The educational philosophy dates back hundreds of years that people should have a strong foundation. To succeed in many subject areas, you should experience academic growth and personal and social-emotional growth. So, this is why you should take, for example, a music class or a language class or philosophy. If you look at liberal arts universities, they all have a general education program that students need to vote for. Most importantly, what you might not know, though, is a gen ed program allows students that time that research proves students need. Some people enter university at 17 or 18 and 19, and they're still unaware of maybe there's their interest, strengths and weaknesses. So, a general education program allows these students to explore undiscovered talents or undiscovered interests."

"You know, at 18 or 19, you have to make a decision for the rest of your life. And, General Ed program says, 'no, no, wait, no, you don't. So, let's explore and take your time, at least a semester or two, to think about different things that you may want to explore and think about.' It's definitely not there for a university to make money. It is a program that has been developed through years of research. And the understanding that there is this transition period, and the need to develop skills and strategies and awareness that all students don't have or may not have at that age."

## What are some tools that students get out of taking Univ 110 and 100 classes?

"I cannot stress enough about the skills and strategies students can get out of UNIV 100 and 110 which are critical thinking skills are higher-level thinking. When students realize higher-level thinking means many different things. We actually show you the process or the methods behind this type of thinking. And the students loved that, and I love being a part of that. When you teach students that form of thought, they actually start applying it. So, when you see the students using the thinking strategies like discussion strategies or higher-level thinking of analyzing our society, our community or culture, it's just so impressive, and it's like, wow, I never made that connection before. It's like, you're elevating spiritually and intellectually, and I love being a part of that. I love listening to their perspectives, but really getting them to apply these strategies."

## Is there a chance for those who slacked off in Univ to redeem themselves in the long run? Are they bound to be slackers forever if they failed the most basic class in the University?

"Students do come in with the attitude that this is a useless class, or what am I going to get out of it? It's our job to show its importance, teach students to find the significance in something, and be open-minded enough to say: 'okay, I may think that it's not something I need, but let me make it a more positive experience.' And we give you the research that shows these courses are beneficial. You might not realize it now, and you might not see its importance. We talk about this because the program was developed for students as they tend not to do so well their first year and as it's a learning curve.

It's the most exciting and the most stressful time you have had—everything's new. Everything's exciting. You learn the most, and you grow the most technically, during your first year."

"Universities are set up where 100 level classes, let's say you get a C minus, your GPA isn't going to be impacted. Thus, you should always try to start off vital and do well, but a C minus in a 100-level class won't affect as much as a C minus in a 300-level class. You'll notice that the point system in the GPA is more because 300, 400 level class makes much more of an impact. So, you definitely redeem yourself just by making sure you focus on your grades in the higher-level classes that impact your GPA more."

## What are the revisions made in the syllabus over the years?

"There were improvements made. First of all, the first-year experience program was an initiative from the -President, Dr. Rawda. She talked it out as she was on the initial committee to introduce this program to the AUK committee. Again, the program is research-based and not something we come up with. We had to make modifications to it based on our student population. Then throughout the years, we continue to make these changes to the syllabus based on student feedback. It's not just a few people. It's actually a whole committee that considers other strategies being used that are proven to be successful. What students needed 10 years ago, isn't what students might need now."

## Precisely what was the difference between the virtual classes and on campus?

"They both have their pros and cons. I would really choose in person, as you remember, I love being around my students and I miss office hours with them. Don't get me wrong, I loved online as one of the main adjustments was, we were learning altogether, and it was such a learning curve. I feel I got really close to my students online because we were sharing that experience of adjusting to a new sort of routine. And it was pretty interesting because it felt like I was invited and learned so much about my students. For example, 'I was like, Hey, wait, do you like to play video games? I can see their background,' and my students would see my sisters walking in and out when I was teaching. So, I really feel like it was a more intimate experience as far as getting to know my students. Because I was actually invited into their homes three times a week, and they were invited into mine. And I got to know their families because you'd see them in the background of their cameras. And that was really fun! But I do miss the in-person interaction."

## Have students approached you saying they have benefited from the course?

"We assess the students as they're going through the course, and we ask them, 'do you find this helpful', or 'what can we do to make this more useful?' Thus, it's a really student-focused course. What we then do is, we ask junior students by sending out a survey to them saying:

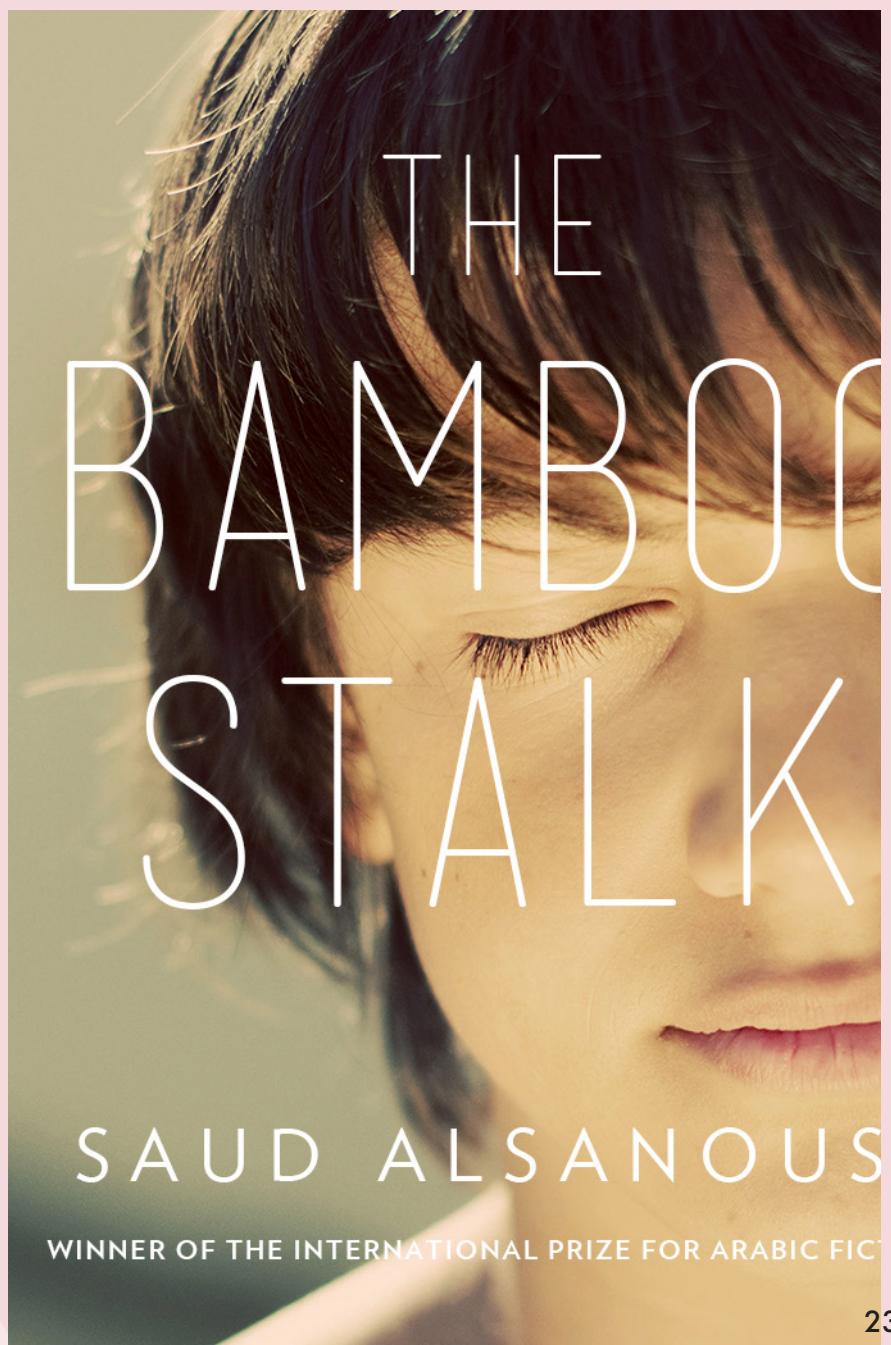
- 'Think back to your FYE experience'
- 'What did you find practical?'
- 'What are some things that you're still using to this day?'
- 'Can you give us any suggestions to make the course beneficial for students?'

They give us so much, that we established the program on student feedback we received from the surveys. An overwhelming percentage of AUK students saying yes, the course was highly beneficial, and they're using skills and strategies that they discussed and contributed. So, the small percentage that may at first say this is not useful. Many times, the students don't even realize it yet, as they don't understand what's going to apply to them. We try making it a meaningful course and making students be actively engaged and make sure that they benefit from it."

## How are the novels for UNIV 110 decided?

"The novels are part of something called a 'shared reading experience.' This is done in numerous universities throughout the world. It's actively engaging, and the idea of students sharing an academic experience as they read the same book to build and create a community. We take into consideration the novels we choose, following a rubric. 'The Bamboo Stalk' was chosen because a Kuwaiti author dived into Kuwait's biracial issue. Looking into the problems that our society faces, and we tackle those issues through diverse perspectives. And we go through the book and explore the various issues the character had accepting his Kuwaiti heritage. The students chose the 'Giver,' who thought that it would be an excellent idea to allocate the book in the FYE. Obviously, the book went through a committee, and they decided if the book would fit into the curriculum."

As of now, the First-Year Experience is going through some significant changes. That of which I have yet to find out what they are. Stay tuned.



# How to Manage Your Mental Health Throughout the Semester

By: Nuha Al- Sahli

When talking about things that cause us stress, deadlines and exams are usually at the top of the list as college students. From trying to ace your tests and submitting all your work on time to balancing your classes and personal life, navigating through college is not an easy task. The intensive workload and stress could severely affect your mental health, so it is vital to keep your mental health in check throughout the semester. Mental health problems can affect your energy levels, concentration, performance, and much more, so your well-being should be your top priority to have a smooth college journey. The most common factors that deteriorate students' mental health are pressure to succeed academically, uncertainty about a career path, work overload, and of course, stigma around getting help and discussing mental health issues.



First, we live in a culture obsessed with quick solutions. However, mental health is a wide and complex topic, and it will take you a lot of time, patience, and practice to help improve it. It can feel tempting to find the quickest solution to end your problems or simply ignore them and act like they do not bother you, even though they do. But investing in your mental health will not only make a drastic change in your life academically, but in all aspects as well.

Our mental health affects how we think, feel, and act as we live our lives. It relates to most aspects of ourselves, from how we handle stress to how we make choices, so it is vital to gain control over it. Managing your mental health as a student is difficult because the concept of "control" feels so unreachable as you deal with pressure, whether it is from your family or professors, and feeling restricted with all the deadlines and orders. However, there are many things we can do to accommodate ourselves smoothly to the college environment and reduce negative mental health influences.

**First things first,** set your priorities straight. Start with the basics: prioritizing your needs like eating, sleeping, and getting physical activity. It is easy for us to get carried away and forget about our physical health in the process of chasing academic success. However, taking care of our bodies can improve our mood, stress levels, and self-esteem as well as help reduce anxiety. Taking care of your physical health includes getting enough sleep.

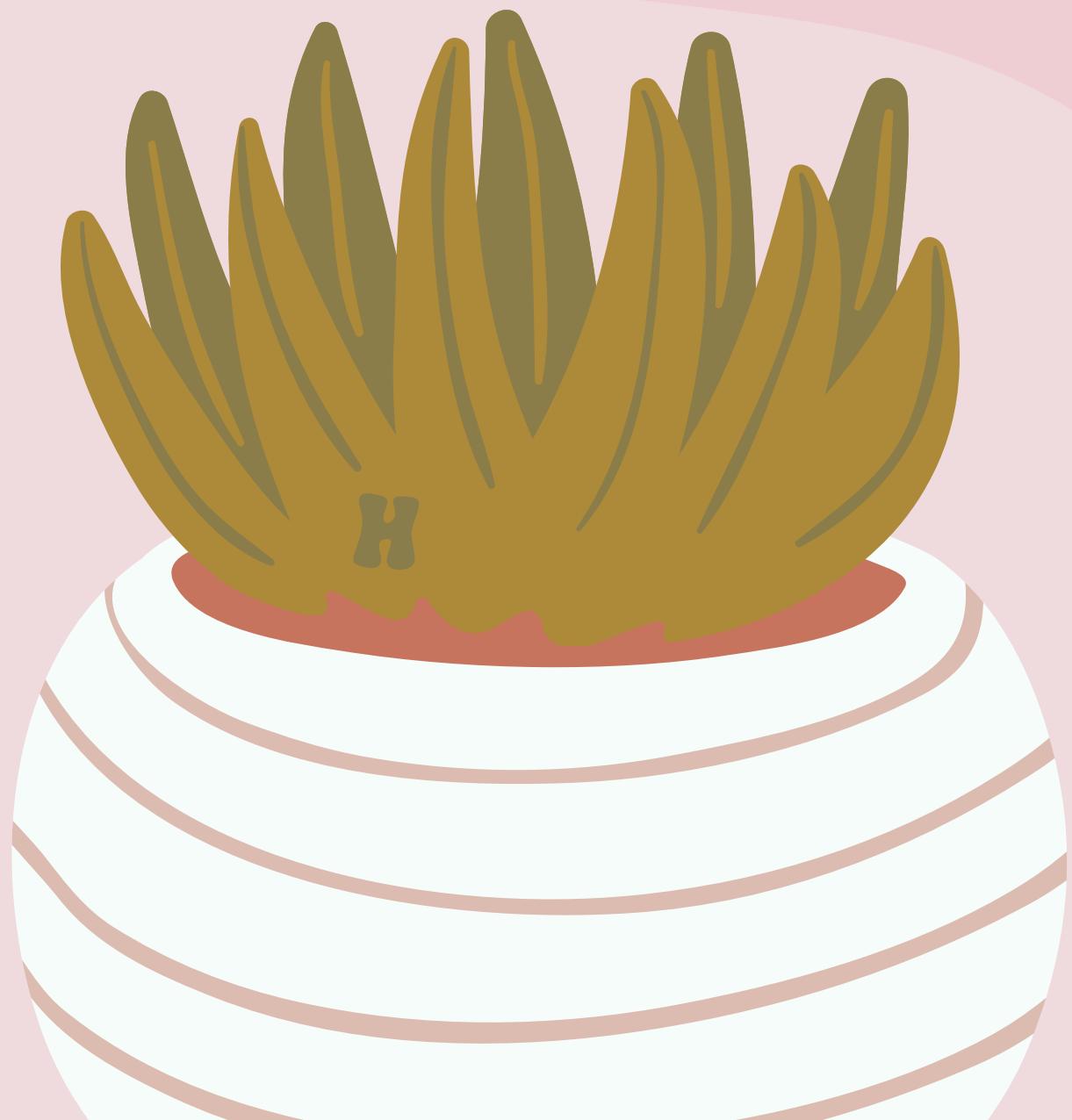


Pulling all-nighters or staying up until 3AM is one of the worst things you could do to your mental health during the semester. It will make you restless, and affect your memory recall, concentration and overall health. Lack of sleep has been reported to be the main cause of depression among college students, so making sure you get 7-9 hours of sleep carries significant importance. Prioritizing your physical health is the first step to having a healthy relationship with your studies.

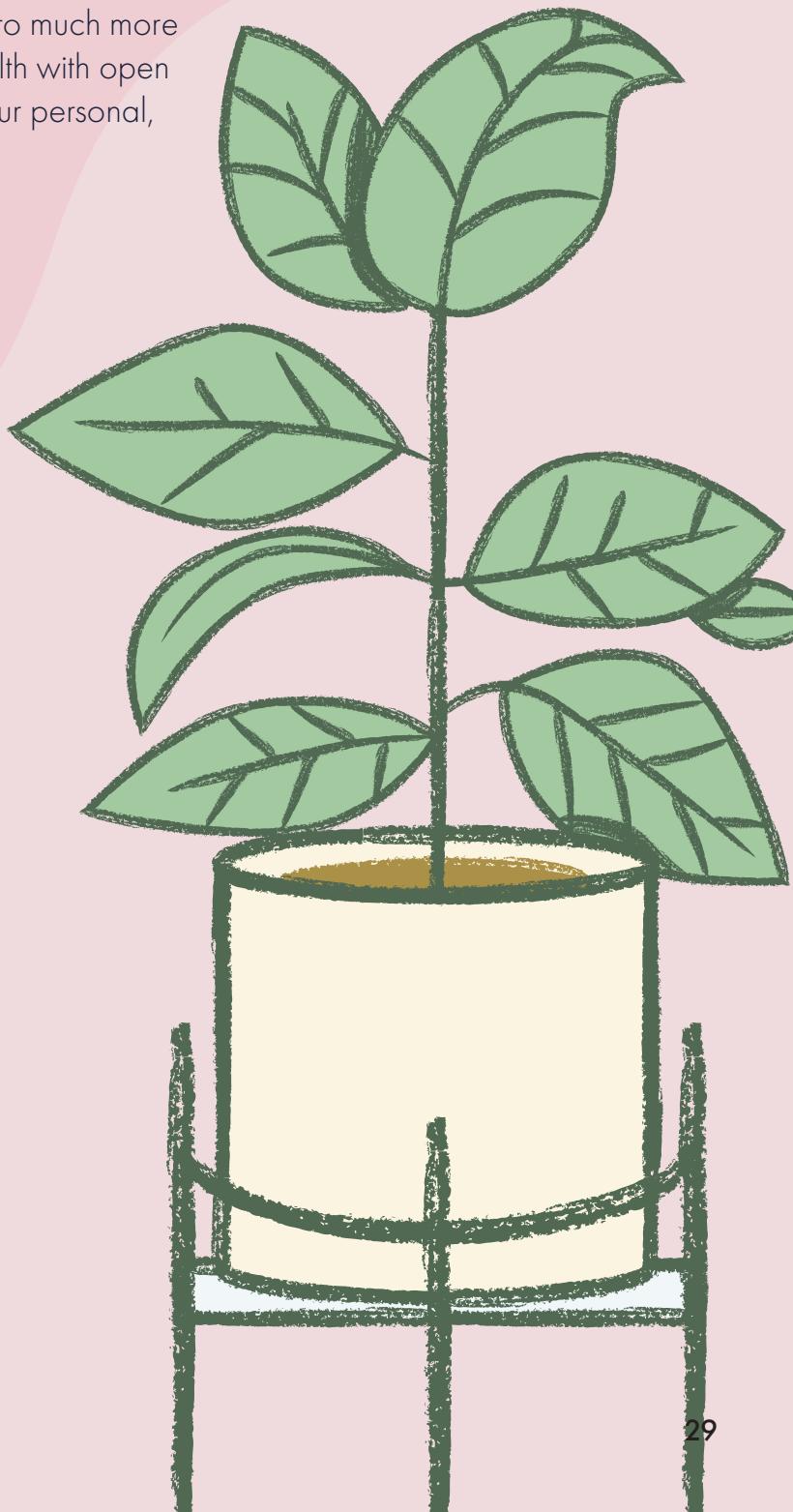
Are you familiar with the feeling of procrastinating your work and spending your time watching Netflix or hanging out with your friends, but still not being able to shake off the constant reminder that you have unfinished work?

Therefore, you are not really enjoying the time you spend procrastinating. That is an oddly specific yet universal student experience that causes you to live in constant stress due to deadlines, but not be able to do anything about it. This mostly happens when you let assignments pile on until you do not know where even to start. You can get rid of that awful feeling by starting work early. It is easier said than done, but it is important to do your assignments as soon as they are assigned. As a procrastinator myself, I know I tend to leave things until the last minute, but that only causes more work to pile up. The more work you let pile on, the more overwhelming it would be to complete a single assignment, and once you have formed a massive workload, it will feel almost impossible to start. Doing assignments when they are assigned or at least starting a week before the deadline is very helpful and will allow you to finish your work so smoothly without panicking as you near the deadline. Leaving everything until the last minute will cause you to panic and hand in rushed assignments that do not live up to your usual standards. It might help to create a manageable schedule to help you clear assignments as they come.

Taking on more work than you can handle is another factor that deteriorates your mental health. Often, we try to take extra classes or extra work to do things quicker, which sometimes results in us biting off more than we can chew. Taking on extra work may seem like a promising idea at the time, so you can finish earlier, but you must consider whether it will be sustainable, which leads me to the most important point — make realistic goals. Setting realistic goals is vital, because it helps you sustain your schedule and have a reasonable amount of work each day. Having too much on your plate can result in your feeling anxious and exhausted, with no time for your personal life. Making realistic goals also includes not pressuring yourself. We often fall into the habit of pressuring ourselves into studying for long hours and completing assignments. Even when we are exhausted, it is important to get adequate rest as it allows our body to recharge.



Finally, if you start suffering from excessive anxiety, marked and long-lasting changes in eating or sleeping, a feeling of withdrawal, extreme loss of motivation, or prolonged feeling of helplessness and loss of interest. It may mean it is time for you to seek professional mental help. It is essential to see a mental health professional rather than push yourself to navigate through life and college feeling mentally under the weather. Those symptoms can signify a serious mental health issue and seeing someone who is best suited for evaluating your symptoms. And determining the severity of your condition is crucial to getting the right treatment and improving your daily life. If your mental health condition starts negatively interfering with your life, professional help is the best thing you can do to reduce its effects. It is especially important to consider getting help if you feel controlled by those symptoms and if they are causing you harm and preventing you from completing your work and daily tasks. Untreated mental health issues could descend into much more severe issues, so meeting the topic of mental health with open discussions and consideration is important for your personal, social, and academic life.



# The Arabic Language: an Economic Asset to the Arab World

## - *with Professor Aly Mansour*

By: Lavena Jacob



Before diving deep into the importance of the Arabic language, one must understand its significance as an economic asset to the Arab World. This allows us to form economic communities such as the Southern African Development Community, NAFTA, EU, and many more. Dr. Aly Mansour, Associate Professor of Management at AUK focuses on why it is crucial for the new generation, representing most of our readers, to build an economic community in the Arab World.

Dr. Mansour mentions that to build a society, we need to draw the crescent, which signifies one inclusive community. This is illustrated on various flags in the Arab Region, as it does not distinguish between what our backgrounds or ethnicities represent. Instead, what matters is that we all are living in one society with shared values and ideals that we need to build and develop. To attain that, we need to have a common element in society: the Arabic language. This can be easily achieved if we can speak, write, and pronounce the Arabic language properly.

Dr. Mansour gave us a quick idea about the Arabic language by highlighting the difference in the development of language skills in children. Arabic's unique orthography and linguistic properties utilize a high level of cognitive processing for pattern recognition, potentially enhancing children's performance in a variety of unrelated subjects. Furthermore, Arabic's rich morphology based on a concatenate root-and-pattern may increase vocabulary recognition in learners, as Arabic encyclopedia Al-Wasit boasted that a five-year-old in an Arabic-speaking society can recognize up to 30,000 words; in contrast, a typical five-year-old living in an English-speaking community recognizes about 10,000 words. These linguistic features potentially underscore the link between language and analytical skills, which can result in better production management among Arabic-speaking youth. To leverage this advantage, it is the responsibility of the upcoming generation to know how to speak and write standard Arabic to better pave the way for the success of future generations.

"So, we want to build those thinking skills in your generation and in the younger generation, in the five-year-old and in the two-year-old. Thus, they build their cognitive skills, their analytical skills, and their critical thinking skills as they grow because they started to increase their vocabulary and knowledge. This enables them to make more sound decisions throughout their academic and professional careers and their personal lives." As a result, Dr Mansour is a constant advocate for the need to speak the Arabic language correctly.

He goes on to say, "fluency in writing and reading is essential. But I will focus more on the language's vocabulary so that I can adequately express myself in the Arabic language and not stick to a limited number of words. The ability to describe processes, functions and products precisely is crucial in production management and impacts the company and even the national and global economies. After all, according to Dr. Edwards Deming, [a management consultant,] 'a society that does not produce is a dead society.' Building a more expansive vocabulary, whether through reading, writing, speaking or even singing, is highly advantageous for the continued success of upcoming generations."

If you have attended Dr. Mansour's classes, you will know that, based on the lesson he is teaching he mentions Arabic verse or words. He says, "I try to build my students' analytical skills by emphasizing the connection between the language and the business management process. I also relate my lectures and instruction to the students' culture so that they can link the principles of production to cultural values in a Kuwaiti business context. So, I encourage them to use these skills in their everyday interactions to build a strong academic and professional foundation."

Let us move on and ask Dr. Mansour a few questions to understand his opinions on the Arabic language and its relation to production management.

**Do you think if everyone starts to speak the standard Arabic language, it might give a sense of unification for the Arab world rather than using dialects?**

"Yes. However, this does not mean we do not tolerate dialects, but if we try to adhere to standard Arabic, economic integration would be much easier. I'm only speaking from the economic and production management points of view -- as language is considered the strongest common factor needed for any economic integration."

"Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries (KFMB) imports American wheat with 5000% more GMO gluten than natural Sudanese wheat. If KFMB emphasized the use of standard Arabic in their inventory management and sourcing within the Arab World, and the Sudanese wheat suppliers are effectively able to convey the quality of their products in clear standard Arabic, the Kuwaiti buyer may more readily contact Sudanese entrepreneurs to import healthy Sudanese wheat – the best in the world – and save Kuwait 5000% more GMO gluten that may flare up many health conditions for people with physical sensitivities to gluten. In the longer term, it raises the cost of healthcare service in Kuwait and harms our economy."

**Do you think that Arabic-speaking students nowadays do not utilize standard Arabic language and instead speak different dialects?**

"Unfortunately, and regrettably, yes. They have drifted away from formal standard Arabic, but this does not mean that they cannot come back to the correct way of using the Arabic language. The Arabic language is not tricky; it is a beautiful language that we are not using to the fullest. AUC and AUB had 'Business Arabic' courses to better prepare their graduates to work in government, government agencies, public sectors, and 90% of private sector careers that deal with government agencies or public sectors on local and regional levels. Several of our graduates who worked at Kuwait Central Bank and public sector entities have a real need for 'Business Arabic'; and exclusively or primarily using country-specific dialects can hinder these graduates' ability to communicate in a manner that is clearly understood across the Arab World."

## **Do you feel that more importance is given to the English language, which causes students to be less knowledgeable in Arabic?**

"Students are less knowledgeable in both languages, and students benefit from both languages being integrated into production and project management. Students will then be able to apply both languages with increased acumen. An increased ability to comprehend culture will also result from better understanding the linguistic nuances of each language, and culture is an integral part of effective project management."

## **When did you start having a passion for the Arabic language?**

"I never liked the Arabic language throughout my school years, except in my last year in high school. However, I started to appreciate the language when I took a "Survival of Classical Arabic Poetry" course as an undergraduate student at the American University in Cairo. My professor for that class was a walking talking encyclopedia and gave me a greater appreciation for the Arabic language. He helped me realize that Arabic is not only a language; it's a culture, a vehicle for analytical thinking, and a tool for production. Remember, it is the 'singer not the song' who delivers and influences us, making a difference."

## **Do you think our university could promote or encourage the practice of learning the Arabic language?**

"The Arabic language department in AUK has excellent professors. In our case, we have good 'singers'; i.e., professors, but we also need good 'songs' by having applied syllabi and curricula that build a sense of appreciation towards the Arabic language, along with the importance of language applications in various industries and professional functions. Regardless, some students take the Arabic language as an elective as it is easy, and it should be easy. I am speaking from the production point of view, and I want these courses to add to the student's analytical skills and enhance their understanding of culture as it helps in supplies, marketing, and demand. It truly helps in a lot of things as far as production is concerned, so language is a very crucial factor to build an economic community."

## **Have you ever thought of being an Arabic language professor rather than a management professor?**

"I don't think I would. If I were to teach, it would be combining both curricula; I would focus on the analytical part of the Arabic language to boost critical thinking, self-confidence and enhance productivity."

## **What do you think is the first step non-Arabic speakers should take to learn more about the language?**

"I would suggest reading modern poetry written in standard Arabic by Ahmad Shawqy, Hafez Ibrahim, and Ismail Sabry and poetry by the Lebanese poets who immigrated to South America in the early 20th century like Gibran Khalil Gibran, Khalil Mutran, and Ilya Abu-Madhy. Of course, if we go to classic poets like Antra bin-Shaddad, Imru-al-Qayce, and Leila Bintu-al-Muhalhil, the way they describe their ideas is out of this world and genuinely worth exploring if you can try to comprehend it, not by going to Google Translate, rather by taking one verse every week or month and really focus on absorbing and understanding the meanings of these words. Some words may have multiple meanings, they even may contradict depending on context. Then, you will be able to truly appreciate the Arabic language and see the beauty of the words in their poems."

طرقت الباب حتى كل متنی / فلما كل متنی، کلمتنی / //قلت لها، يا "أسما" عیل صبری / قالت لي، يا إسماعیل صبری

The above verse was written by Ismail Sabry where he used verbs and names with different meanings

## **What advice would you like to give for incoming freshmen students and existing students at AUK?**

"Read modern Arabic poetry to appreciate the Arabic language. Appreciating and knowing the Arabic language will only propel you to greater success in your career when you graduate, especially in the Arab World. This advice is not pertaining to the Arabic-speaking population, but every resident in the Arab World."

## **Facts according to Lonet Academy and Al-Wasit Modern Arabic:**

- The international number system based on Arabic numerals
- Zero in Arabic has a value and not an omitted absence
- The Arabic language is the 6th official language in the world
- Approximately 400M people speak the Arabic language/dialects in the Arab World
- The Arabic language has 28 letters
- The Arabic language has an estimate of 4M words in the English language
- The Arabic language roots may produce over 12M words!

# Have We Undervalued the Meaning of a Campus Experience?

By: Nuha Al- Sahli

For the past year and a half, we have been deprived of seeing our friends on campus, hurrying to lectures in the early morning with our scalding hot coffee, indulging in campus life and exploring ourselves through different student activities. Surely, we complained about having to get out of our warm comfortable bed, deal with traffic, struggle to find a parking spot, sleepily attend lectures and see that one person we want to avoid seeing. But after being forced to replace those aspects with sitting in front of our computer for hours on end, we realized just how much we undervalued the

We give our university education excellent consideration, but I find that often, people do not give the topic of campus life the same value as our degree, even though they go hand in hand. I find that we do not give the topic of campus life the same value as our education, even though they go hand in hand.



Many studies have shown that students who engage in campus activities and co-curricular activities are 1.8 times more likely to achieve higher grades and 1.4 times more likely to succeed career wise. Being engaged in university activities is one of the most significant predictors for success. The deepest level of learning occurs when the materials taught in classrooms are being followed by opportunities to practice them. Campus life becomes a design lab to practice the values, skills, and habits we are learning during lectures. Campus life is important to fill in the gaps between what is being taught in classrooms and the skills students need to succeed. These activities could be done in groups such as student organizations and campaigns or done individually such as internships and student employment.

Co-curricular activities that circle around applying what has been learned in the classroom are not the only ones that carry significant importance to the student. Activities that cater to the students' needs for entertainment are also vital in enriching the campus experience. Having a setting that makes you involved and interact with other students will really help you be comfortable and happy during your semesters. Having campus parties or get-togethers with your college friends will not only create a better environment, but it will also make the university experience less lonely by giving you people to share it with. Being surrounded by your friends in an environment that could bring you stress through deadlines or exams will lighten the load and help increase your motivation levels.

Attending lectures from the comfort of our own home had lured us into thinking that this is a flawless experience. I know some of you enjoyed eating or sleeping with your cameras off during class or attending lectures in pajama pants, which are privileges campus learning did not present us with. But those small joys started to fade over the months until we have spent a year and a half at home. Feeling engaged with the materials presented at lectures through Zoom was difficult. While meeting new people was even more difficult as all your classmates turned into small squares on your screen and for me, the longer that stretched on the less connected I felt with my classes.

The pandemic was an isolating experience for everyone and surely, there may have been a few advantages to quarantine such as picking up a new hobby or having more time to discover yourself. You may have come out of quarantine an entirely different person with a new set of beliefs and a new sense of self. But as social beings, especially as college students, we need to be engaged with our environment, our major, our professors, and our peers. Investing in ourselves had become harder during the pandemic, and while the pandemic is not over, restrictions have decreased, and life is slowly taking its natural but careful course. Being back on campus this fall is both an exciting and nostalgic experience. While following the health and safety guidelines, old students will be reunited with their beloved campus, while new students will embark on a new journey with AUK. I hope you will make the best of these opportunities and compensate for our year and half long "two weeks" break.

# Exploring Mental Health With the Counseling Center

By: Nuha Al- Sahli

The AUK Counseling Center ensures the wellbeing of students and provides mental health and disability services through various means. You may be having questions about this center- How to reach out? Who can reach out? What services are provided, and how do I know which is the best for me? Whatever question you may be having, the Counseling Coordinator, Zeinab Wasfy will familiarize you with their services through this interview.

## **“In essence, what is the purpose of the Counseling Center? And who is it meant to help?”**

“I would say our purpose is to provide mental health and disability services, whether that is through one- on-one counseling sessions or whether that’s through coaching or providing accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student or alumni of the AUK can benefit from these services.” One-on-one counseling aids students in issues regarding their mental health and personal wellbeing including anxiety, depression, family issues, or academic issues. It is designed to fit the individual needs of each student to achieve the best results. These sessions are confidential, and the content of the sessions will not be disclosed. Accommodation is also supplied for students who need it to enhance their academic experience at AUK. Students with physical, mental health or learning disabilities can request accommodation after presenting a medical to either Sophia Pais or Dr. Huda Shaaban for their cases to be addressed and for the disability services to accommodate their learning requirements.



## **“What type of accommodation is offered for students who need it?”**

“Well, accommodations vary. But commonly, our accommodation generally takes the form of an increase in exam time, a preferential seat, or receiving the slides of the course in advance. There are some accommodations that allow for proctoring of exams outside the class. So, if the students need a calm space with minimal distractions, then we facilitate that by supplying a room where they can take the exam while they are being proctored by one of the staff. There are many other accommodations, but those are again, evaluated on a case-by-case basis based on the needs of the students.”

## **“The Counseling Center also offers the ‘art and music therapy rooms,’ what’s the importance of these rooms?”**

“Their importance lies in helping students express themselves creatively, whether that’s through music or art. It is a form of self-soothing. So, I feel like if someone is shy to delve into one-on-one counseling straight away, then going to such activities and trying to paint, draw or pick up an instrument is a good first step. Because we are now virtual, we have been offering workshops online to help students explore themselves, become more aware of their thoughts through creative means like arts and music.”

## **“How different will these workshops be on campus from the ones online?**

“Unfortunately, because of Covid-19, I assume we will be following the guidelines such as obviously wearing masks and gloves when in the room. The capacity of the rooms will be reduced. Social distancing or physical distancing will be implemented. There will also be a booking system so, entry is by appointment or by booking through Banner.”



## **"Can you walk me through the type of events arranged by the Counseling Center?"**

"Sure. So, the Counseling Center has been hosting events that target the wellbeing of the student or the person in general, whether that's physical, mental, or even creative wellbeing. As we also work with the AUK clinic, we host some events that relate to physical wellbeing, such as how to take care of your heart, how to reduce stress, and others. On the other side, there are more mental health targeted events. For example, we have an event called "Mental Health Matters." It is an event held on a semesterly basis, and it is an opportunity to have a conversation about mental health, how it affects us and how we view mental health issues in our society. It provides a safe space for students to discuss their concerns and ask questions like:

- How do I help someone who is going through a rough time mentally?
- How do I know when I need to see a therapist?
- Where can I seek help?
- How do I know that this therapist is the right therapist for me?
- What is the difference between depression and anxiety?
- What is the difference between different mental health disorders?

We aim to reduce the stigma that our society has in terms of taking care of your mental health. The events in the art and music therapy rooms focus on increasing self-awareness and looking within yourself and answering a lot of the questions you have been seeking. We had an event to talk about "hope," which is an important topic to discuss, especially in the middle of a pandemic. Many of us have been feeling hopeless lately as there is a lot of unwelcoming news. "Hope" was an important workshop, because it reminded us that hope is what keeps us going, and you can find it in trivial things like having a coffee in the morning, having a meal, or comfort from your pet cat or something like that. We also host events that are more artistically based, and those events are interactive. For example, one of our music therapy events consisted of a group of 10 or 11 students, and we produced a song together, and we sang it together in the workshop itself. Basically, encouraging inclusion and connecting with one another." Basically, encouraging inclusion and connecting with one another."

## **"How does the Counseling Center aim to encourage more students to use these facilities?"**

"We try as much as possible to raise awareness on the importance of taking care of your mental health. For example, we have an outreach – a social media program. Every Tuesday, we post a question, and it is supposed to be a question that allows the student to look within. Our last question was, would I be friends with myself? And we encourage them to post their comments or send us direct messages. We also host semesterly mental health matters events, where we just talk about mental health related issues. It is just an open space. Everyone is invited, and you can come and go as you please. It is not stamped, and you are not required to be there just because you are a UNIV Student. These conversations are

important. I will admit it has been more challenging with the pandemic to virtually reach students because you just see a student passing by in person or coming into the Arts and Music Therapy Rooms or the office, and you can just spark a conversation. Students would just pass by and ask about what the services are, for example, how do I know if I want to see a therapist? Or have this friend who is

struggling, how do I get them to come? And things like that. It is different online because it takes courage to message someone, especially that your name is there, and they know how to reach you afterwards. But when you pass by in person, you are a bit more anonymous that way. However, there is also an upside to the pandemic because there is not much of a worry about students who are coming in to seek counseling because no one physically sees them walk into the Counseling Center. So, in that sense, it is a bit more private. As I was posting events online, I realized how much I miss seeing students on campus partake in our events."

While concluding my interview with Zeinab, I realized the significant importance the Counseling Center holds. The topic of mental health should not be met with dismissal or avoidance, but with acceptance and open-mindedness. Reflecting on our mental health goes hand in hand with our general wellbeing, that is why turning our attention inwards and considering our thoughts and feelings is vital. From one-on-one counseling to various group events and workshops, the Counseling Center has an essential role in aiding students in their academic and personal life. If you wish to seek any of these services or have any questions, contact the Counseling Center at [counseling@auk.edu.kw](mailto:counseling@auk.edu.kw).

## Mental Health Discussion



**Music therapy  
with Carol Souki -  
Dec 11 2019**



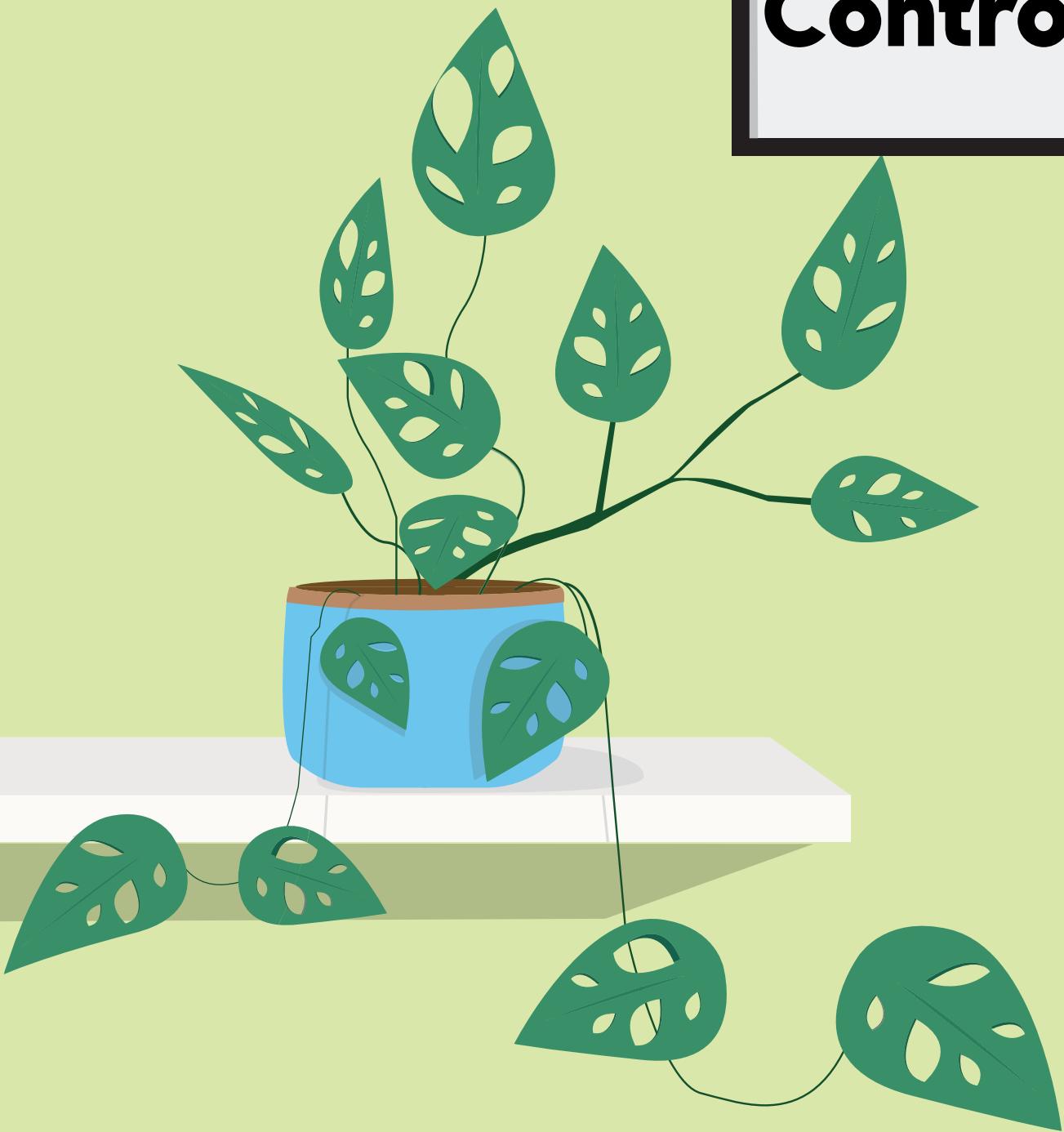
**Grand opening of  
the AMTR Oct 2017**



**Art room event  
called 'Healthy Heart'  
- Oct 4th 2018**



# **Locus of Control**



# Arrows

By: Nuha Al-Sahli

Stood upon you  
The world with all its fear, bless and, grace  
Ample wonders and queries  
Seeking a grip around a ghastly space  
Filling you with dread  
And a curiosity that is impossible to erase  
Who are you?  
Who are you meant to be?  
Questions you never cease to chase  
Is it closeness?  
Or yourself you have misplaced  
But you always appear to be the prey  
Wondering  
Who is first to decay?  
You, the unknown, or the ones you must obey  
So many arrows meant to guide you  
But you're going the opposite way  
Drumming on your window is your old friend, rain  
Your chapped desk you seem to outgrow  
But the water remains the same  
With a blank mind, you sit back and watch the show  
As your thoughts, the droplets and your faith race  
Down the glass asking you time is running by  
What have you decided?  
And yet again you lie  
You avoid questions  
And a future away from you shy  
But everybody appears to pry  
And you don't appear to stay  
So many arrows meant to guide you  
Yet you're going the opposite way

# Where Did You Attend Your Classes?

VOICE would like to showcase a few pictures of students attending their Zoom classes despite the unprecedented events and how they showed grit to thrive during the Pandemic.



## Fahad Jassim

**“I have used this setup for the past year and-a-bit for online school. A multi-purpose setup for school, digital art, photo-editing, and some games. ”**



## Dalal Al-Yaseen

**“This place has a lot of memories that will never be forgotten”**



## Lavena Jacob

Kerala, India

**“The luxury of attending classes whilst at the comfort of home and nature is irreplaceable.”**



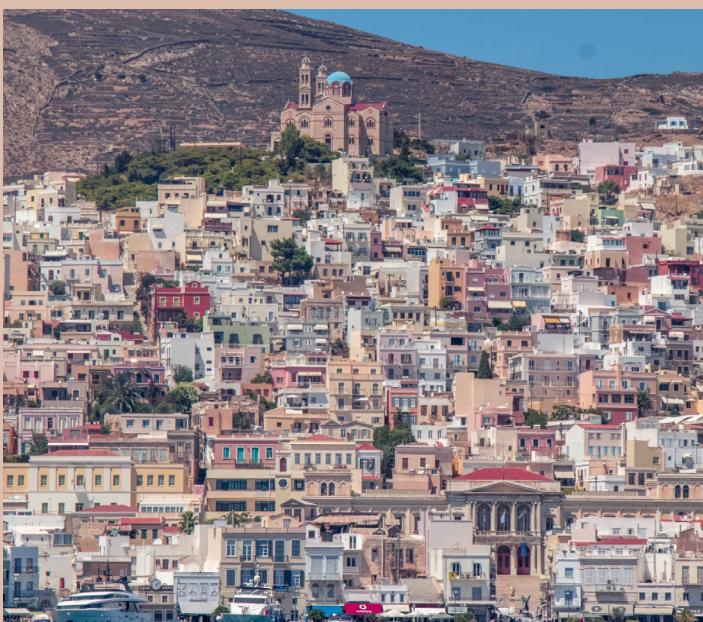
**Safwana Basheer**

Syros, Greece

**Safwana Basheer**

Temple of Poseidon, Cape of Sounion,  
Greece

"Zoom classes has given the  
opportunity to experience stresscation,  
a stressful vacation."



**Safwana Basheer**

Syros, Greece

# The Matrix Pill

By: Mohamed Ahmed

Everyone has expectations  
It is what keeps us going  
And especially in the University  
In hopes of us growing

She thought of popularity  
And trendy clothes  
Alas! Do not worry  
You will get into a ton of shows!

She wanted to be blessed with lenient professors  
And get straight A's  
She only ever dreamed of her parent's praise

He did not get his trips.  
And he was not put on the team  
She didn't get her popularity  
Nor her A's  
University is not as it seems

Once they learned to look at reality  
It seemed possible to get their degree  
And one can be trendy and smart  
And the other got into martial art

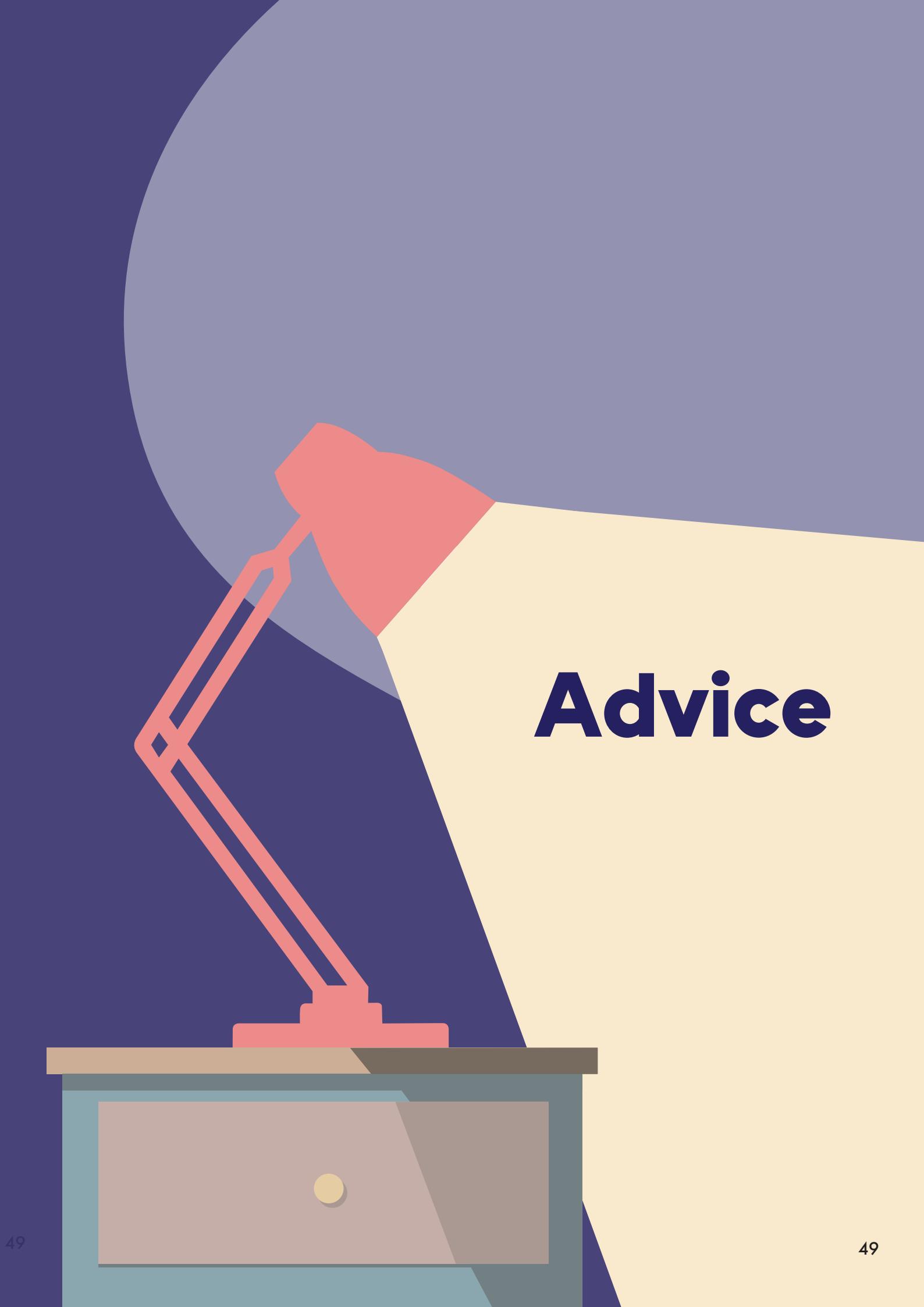
He thought of the trips  
There would be a ton of them  
He could escape all the troubles  
And the terrible mayhem

He hoped he would be on the team  
Games all day  
Maybe even travel for matches  
The world is no longer gray

So, what happened when real life hit them?  
Not two days in  
And they were doomed  
They committed  
The university deadly sin

Their issue was  
They dreamed and never paused  
They had to work  
And then look at the perk

University Life isn't as scary, my dear freshmen  
Just pay attention  
Don't be a dreamer  
Be a believer



# Advice

# An Open Letter from a Sophomore

Hello, freshman! Welcome to AUK. The first year of college might be full of the most thrilling and nerve-racking firsts. It's like wearing your new shoes for the first time and hoping that someone won't step on them or wearing white pants and hoping not to sit in dirt. Think of it as a lottery; it really depends on how much you bet on it.

Before my first day as a freshman, I searched, watched, and read numerous guides on what to do, prepare, and expect in college. Wake up early, make your bed, take down notes, and listen to lectures. They were all stating the obvious, and it was annoying. Given that classes may be online again, many are adamant about whether there is something to even prepare for.

However, I thought that starting strong and embracing this means drinking the proper habits would make it less vexing in the long run. As my first year of college came to a close, I learned that habits and

changes are something you should just start doing and not something to prepare for but never do. So, allow me to share what I actually learned and should have done during my first year of college in AUK.

**1. I should have connected more.** I did not have the privilege of knowing anyone in the university. Those who entered university with their friends are lucky, and the experience must have been more joyful. Sudden WiFi interruptions and not being able to hear what the professor said is terrible, but not having anyone to ask about what happened is worse. I get it, though. It is easier to make friends or become acquainted with someone in person— in a classroom. But if you do not make the first move by sending an email or a text message, it can cost you a missed homework assignment or awkward break out room sessions.

**2. Take Advantage of Office Hours.** Professors normally discuss their office hours and how to book or attend one during the first week. Although emails work, you do not get a response right away or converse thoroughly. Think of office hours as a phone call to a friend. Ask details about a project or research, share ideas, review an exam, even discuss your class standing and grades. It is also a great opportunity to know more about your professor and vice versa whilst we are in an online learning mode.

**3. Plan your courses and create a schedule that works.** Read your degree requirements. Deliberate with our Advising Center. If you are a morning person, take morning classes. Do you usually sleep and wake up late? Take afternoon classes. Do you have personal appointments every Wednesday? Avoid Monday/Wednesday classes. What courses interest you? There is so much to take into consideration. Plus, there will be lots of welcome weekly surprises, workshops, and events to attend as a freshman or a Wolfpack member in general. You might want to have time for those too.

**4. Turn on your cameras.** Not only is this a university policy, but having your camera on will actually help you focus more. The idea that someone could be looking at your little frame on Zoom will make you want to not be in bed, on your phone, or walking in the mall during classes.

**5. "You won't always be inspired, so learn to be disciplined."** As A Freshmen, everyone is off to a great start— new university, new people, new professors, fresh plans and ideas. Nothing is more inspiring than starting with a plain white canvas. But all these beginnings could also be overwhelming and can eventually burn us out. Hence, it is important to be disciplined to finish tasks when you forget why you even started.

Freshman year, held online or in person, will always be one for the books. So, I am leaving you with a quote by Charles Swindoll, "Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it."

Good luck, Wolfpack!

Best,

Lea Calingasan

# How Fake News Affects Mental Health

By: Nourah Al-Enezi

Mental health is an important aspect of every person's life. No individual could remain peaceful if they knew one of their family members was suffering from a mental issue. But think of what fake news can have on a person's mental health, based on an article by Lev to discuss the subject of fake news.

The increasing rate of fake news or misinformation is perceived to have resulted in numerous cases of mental issues. For instance, a survey conducted in 2006, just after the US elections, revealed that most Americans perceived fake news as leading to confusion. Furthermore, a statistic study shows that two in three American adults, approximately 65 percent agreed that fake news led to more significant confusion concerning current issues and events. These effects were felt across the board, despite the level of education, income demographics, and partisan learning.

With the increasing flood of fake news people encounters daily on social media and other information platforms, it is easier for individuals to get lost in deciphering accurate information, disinformation, and misinformation. Continuous hearing of fake news can exacerbate people's mental issues and enhance the symptoms, thereby making it more challenging for them to cope efficiently or heal.

The latter can also escalate contemporary mental health issues that develop due to the inability to cope with misinformation or disinformation. Generally, this is one of the major impacts of fake news on a person's mental conditions. The dangers also occur when misleading information turns into violent attacks and racism against culture, like the hate of Asian people in the USA because of the former President's accusation of them being the cause of the pandemic.



In other situations, people may subject themselves to complete stigmatization where they avoid leaving the house generally due to the fear of dealing with fake news. While staying home alone is perceived as an urgent form of healing, most people subject themselves to an environment that does not promise quick healing. Instead of recovering from coping with fake news, they acquire other medical issues such as depression.

Fake news has also been associated with manias. The mania problem is simply a situation where the mental status of an individual is pressured negatively by information being published differently on social media and TV stations. An individual must be committed to some activities to eliminate suicidal thoughts. In most cases, if the fake news concerns individuals directly, the impact could be immeasurable, and such people may be in urgent medical care. The impact of health is also an issue when one spreads misinformation about the vaccine when indeed, the purpose of this vaccine is to save lives. But still, people on the media are spreading a false narrative giving anxiety to those who need it.

Last but not least, fake news or simply what is known as misinformation or disinformation also seems to affect memory. For instance, a study conducted among military workers indicated that misinformation affected individuals' memory of the event and impacted the accuracy of recognizing the identity of an aggressive interrogator. Generally, fake news is unsuitable for positive mental coexistence, particularly when it concerns individuals who fall prey to misinformation or disinformation (Lev, 2021).



References: <https://www.talkspace.com/blog/misinformation-disinformation-effect-mental-health/>

# Broken Motor Skills

By: Bader Hussain

The Anxiety of Assimilating back to Reality and What to do about it

Can you believe it's been a year and a half since the pandemic started? It seemed like yesterday when we were all about to go on a break for the national holiday. Only to find out that Covid-19 would extend the holiday — for five months. At first, it seemed fun. I wouldn't have to see people for a long time. I would be in my room just listening to beat tapes and playing video games while the world was economically falling apart. Sure, everyone has a story to tell about what they did in their quarantine, including me; some were ultra-productive while others were just relaxing. While we were stuck in our homes attending zoom classes, some slept through lectures, turning off their cameras.



Others cheated on many of the tests and quizzes provided in their classes. Essay writing websites boomed with tons of customers because people were overwhelmed with the anxiety of university work while being at their homes. Other people actually put up with its work and took the opportunity and registered for more than four classes, graduating sooner than they needed to. Because the internet culture exploded, the authentic life culture seemed far scarier than it needed to be.

With the politics of Covid-19, many folks were drained with the uncertainty of the world's future. People were not likely to catch up with old friends or new ones because their lives were isolated; their mental health was vital. Having to deal with the baggage of someone else's being far from their minds, which is understandable. Going back to university and seeing old and new faces is scary and intimidating. The fear might stem from friendships being left on a cliffhanger. This, in turn, has put each group or individual on a social stalemate; by then, it would be hard to catch up since it's been so long since everyone was on campus. That little voice in your head is screaming at you for messing up one little word or sentence. Or, better yet, leaving mid-conversation awkwardly because 'you had something to do.' We've all been there at some point. It can also be challenging to get out of this predicament, and depression can in due to believing you are in such a mess (which you are not). You might think I know so much about broken motor skills, but here is my story.

During my first semester, I was practically an anxious loner. I had a handful of friends in university that I intentionally avoided because of my social anxiety. I was afraid I would mess up so badly that I would be given the weirdo handle of AUK. Likewise, I was already convinced of being a weirdo, listening to noise tapes and trying to persuade others to get on the experimental train with me. This would be a more complicated mission as everyone else was listening to mainstream music, which essentially wasn't my taste. Then I realized something: trying to please others for their sake was only going to bring me down. I still have to go through that lesson each waking morning because making people happy was why I was pleased. This made me realize I shouldn't be what others wanted, but be more of who I am, which attracts the people you want in your life. Cliché, right? It's frankly very accurate. The more authentic you are to yourself, the more genuine the attraction. And that is the first rule of fixing your motor skills. Stay true to who you are and never fall into the social category of being a textbook personality.

Now, my second point would be the pursuit of your happiness. No, this isn't a Will Smith joke, but try to find an interest you have and stick to it; this can be one thing or a lot. Whether it's music, literature, films, stealing gums from under your classroom tables. Let it be something that you love doing, and make it define you. Ultimately, you don't want it to explain your whole existence entirely, but a small part of who you are.

Can you actually guess what the last one is? It's one that you will hate to hear, especially the one you don't like. I'll give you a hint; five letters. Study, my father always engrained me with the idea of studying first then socializing later; honestly, he can't be more right in this aspect. You are in university to hit the books, to thrive in your personal growth through the indulgence of knowledge. Sure, interpersonal relationships are great, but they aren't the center of your college life. The center is you, and with that studying comes disciplining yourself through dedication and commitment. You being an honor student or getting complete A's is personal growth. Hanging out with the boys or girls each weekend is really not. You're not gaining anything besides the measurement of others (this revolves back to my first point).

I know people who are younger than me and graduating next semester because of their discipline. Frankly, I am proud. However, I envy them with all my heart because I know it isn't easy. So, there you have it students. The truth is, it's your path to take and however you sail it, the ship is yours. But know this, a great author once said, "don't try," and that should be your whole university experience, to not try, but to do. Because who accomplished anything while only trying; I certainly haven't.

# Limbo

## A look into the “Gap Year”

By: Bader Hussein

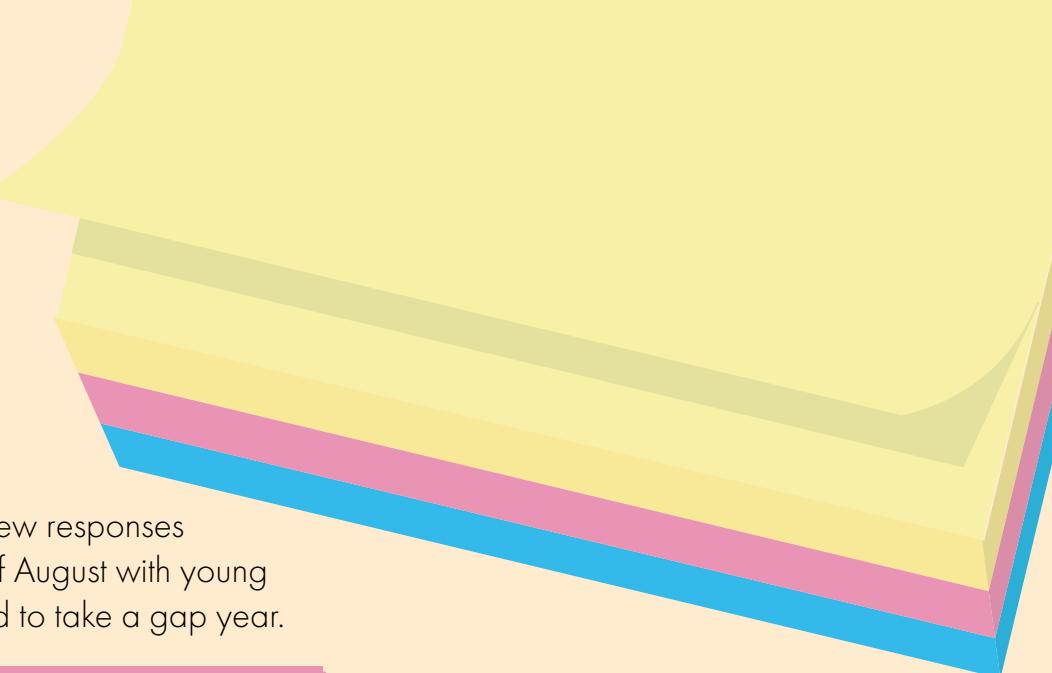
Rise, windows shut. Static from the television haunts the room, along with the lights of the computer screen. Time is non-existent, and days go by faster than comprehension. Leaving this room becomes a cosmic nightmare and comfort is its only savior. Having to talk to people you love is increasingly draining and anxiety-fuelling. Time to play some games, logging in, I see the same individuals I have come to meet from all over the planet, playing the same games and strategy. Nothing changes, and nothing will change because to change is to live uncomfortably. Like wearing a new pair of shoes that you were forced to buy or purchasing clothes you hate to wear.

The sort of feeling I describe through gonzo experimentation is the very essence of a “hikikomori.” A Japanese trend where people ages 16 to late 50s shun society by locking themselves up in their room and refusing to go out. Hikikomori often has the traumas of school or the pressures of family weighing on them, making them feel hopeless living up to the potential society expects them to be. The concept is all too familiar in countries worldwide; the only difference is the circumstances of each culture.

In Kuwait, a gap year is often controversial, stemming from a family’s viewpoint. For example, some families see it unnecessary to break from education (which lasts for roughly a year). The gap period is described as purgatorial limbo; the individual is left with nothing productive and often resorts to playing video games. This is not to generalize people in a gap year; some are actually quite productive and use their time to their advantage. I am simply talking about those vulnerable to solitude like me. I crave the connection they desire but find it so hard to do because of this age of isolation.

With Covid 19, people in limbo find it increasingly harder to get things done; it's a long process and requires leaving their comfort zone. With that, they play the waiting game hoping that the economic uncertainty will end, and people will revert to their everyday lives, including the limbo kids. I've seen many of these people roam around in cafes, sat with them, and often converse on deep levels. I've gotten to know their situations, Kuwaitis and expatriates. Saying that limbo kids are usually lazy or barely graduated high school is a false overstatement. I have found them generally to be highly intuitive and knowledgeable. Their reasons for being in this category of limbo are traditionally sad and make you need a stronger word, like scrutinize the education system and its unwillingness to give people a chance. This leaves them later in life to often roam from job to job, not "settling in."

Limbo kids often have a talent of some sort; their need to express themselves in the arts speaks through many when they can show it off to their close friends or social media pages. Often, their frustration with the realistic situations they are put in speaks volumes through their artwork.



Below is a collection of interview responses conducted during the month of August with young people in Kuwait who decided to take a gap year.

## Why did you choose to take a gap year?

"I chose to take a gap year to spend more time on work and gain more experience for my career."

"I needed the time off before I decided to go with the next step of my life."

"Personally, I feel that a gap year was necessary for my family and myself. I come from a big family. So, it's kind of the inevitable. It happened to me, happened to my sister. It happened to many of my other sisters. It's out of my control, you know. It's basically the circumstances of life."

"Initially, external forces beyond my control stopped me from pursuing an education. Hindrances, frustrating bureaucracy, and other factors shifted my focus to work. I attempted to find ways to work around it but evidently shifted my focus to working as I at least figure out what to study, and life's beautiful way of piling responsibilities on our shoulders prolonged that."

## **How has Gap year affected you? Would you say the gap year helped you be ready to tackle university life?**

"No, if anything, it did the opposite. It put me in a state of dissociation from university life, especially after a year of Covid 19."

"It helped me pin down what I wanted to major in and what I wanted to do after I was done with university."

"I feel that the gap year that I'm taking right now, could help me with my social skills. Because currently my communication skills they're not that good. So, I think that putting myself out there with more people in my age range since I was older than my classmates in high school. Thus, I can talk about things that we have common interests in, which would help me socially. As a result, I would feel less anxious and feel more independent when it would come to becoming a university student."

"Well... a lot has happened to not derail me from wanting to pursue higher learning. A gap year is a double-edged sword that not everyone is ready for because you are still prone to change your direction in an ever-changing world. Risks run rampant. Complacency can set in us. Evidently, being young and inexperienced in life further confuses us as we try to find our place in the world. Ultimately (at least in my predicament), I learned that I needed to find myself first and that in no part is a simple thing. I wouldn't say it helped me prepare to tackle university life per se, as it has given me an arsenal of experiences that aided me with life. Which did branch off in my case to not give up wanting to pursue a particular academic discipline."

## **What were some emotional realizations you had? Any downfalls?**

"I did realize that it really felt like I was essentially doing nothing. Even though I set out to work and gain more experience, that is a little hard when you still don't have a degree, especially during the pandemic."

"When I took the gap year, I wished I didn't because most people around me are already starting university."

"The main downfall that comes with taking a gap year is the whole age range thing. Especially since I'm 20 years old now, and I'm taking a gap year going to be starting college at the age of 21, I'm going to be older than, you know, regular freshmen. They're going to be 17 and 18, and I'm going to be 21. So, I will always have that age gap between my classmates for the rest of my life until I get a job. It's difficult because I'm far behind. The first thing that people would do is jump to a conclusion and their first guess would be that I was a failure in life."

"Oh god, too many. Way too many to mention. I was disappointed more times than the hairs on my head. In multiple cases, I gave up; in all the weight those two words bring. Even the emotional realizations have profoundly affected me, that I genuinely do not feel comfortable answering this question."

**There's a stigma towards people in a gap year to be lazy and unmotivated. Did you find it to be productive or lazy? Were you able to properly know what day or month it was at your time being in a gap year?**

"I was able to keep soundtrack of time (but that's just me personally obsessing about keeping track of time). Yet, I did feel quite lazy at times and productive at others. The main thing to point out is the potential inconsistency that comes with a gap year, especially when you don't have a set job or routine."

"I found it productive, but like any other person, I had my lazy or unproductive days. However, I still had the same routine: waking up early, working out, and focusing on the things I didn't focus on before, and it helped me stick to knowing what I wanted for my future."

"Well, there's definitely that stigma, but it's for a reason. Usually, people during their gap year really are unmotivated because things aren't really working out for them in their favour. So, that does cause them to feel unmotivated towards routine activities like waking up early or having breakfast. There have been countless times I promised my father to attend his office meetings to learn a thing or two, but I somehow convinced myself I really don't need to. This has been a reoccurring problem for the past 3 months, and I still haven't gone. Until today I try to tell myself that it was not important just so that I'm not too hard on myself emotionally. My father thinks it's because I'm lazy, so he has been trying to get me out of the house to do something useful."

"It's a little bit of both. In a way, it's an inevitable price you pay when taking on such a decision. The reality of that kind of decision and whatever transpires afterward isn't something that can be easily understood. People can take a gap year and then decide what and where they want to study there. Others start noticing that there are way more routes to pursue in life than the traditional university expectation. Sometimes people want a gap year to find out who they really are, truly and profoundly. Of course, there are factors of people who just are inherently lazy. I know university students who shame everyone in laziness and just dragging along for 4+ years aimlessly."

Meanwhile, I've seen men and women earn specialist certifications in different fields and have been able to build their lives in unexpected ways. It's a cheap answer to something that those who call people who choose a different path can't even begin to understand. Being unmotivated is normal. You can be unmotivated to study for your university exam. You can be unmotivated to look your sharpest. Motivation is a good bonus that can aid you. However, ultimately you need discipline, not motivation. You won't wake up every day feeling motivated, but through a field, you can ever hope to reach wherever you are aiming. You don't have to hit the target the first several times. Still, you give yourself way better alternatives, the same recycled "I'm not motivated" or "I don't feel like it" attitude that ultimately makes their respective life paths harder than it needs to be. You are more prone to it if you take time away from the idea of college to "figure things out" but ultimately don't do anything. Not even something as basic as setting a small routine through working any job or even working out. However, to call anyone who has taken a gap year or has wholly shifted focus (permanently or temporarily) from the idea of university lazy and unmotivated, I should be the prime example of laziness and lack of motivation."

### Did the gap year give you time to consolidate what university and significant you wanted to pursue?

"Yes, it definitely put a lot of things in perspective, but to be honest, since I had my gap year during Covid-19, so did the pandemic put things into perspective."

"It definitely did. I had a clear mind for what I wanted to do and what I wanted to pursue. I might have gotten into a completely different field from what I initially thought about. Still, it's going to get me places."

"Yeah. During my break from education, it gave me time to explore myself a lot more. My interests, what I'm good at. So, as I said, it has pros and cons. And I feel like one of the pros was that it did help me ease my path and find the right major for myself."

"Yes, it has. It took several years (3-4 to be specific), and 9 different times, I've reconsidered a field in higher education. But for all the good and bad that has transpired in these years, it has not only given me valuable work experiences in areas that range from clerk to F&B, to hospitality, to now aviation; but also helped me fully understand what I'm willing to dedicate precious years of my life to and where. It is essential to state that this effort needs to be constantly applied without quarter. Even when exhausted, take some time off to recharge through healthy means, and get back on track."

## **There is a whole culture of kids going through a “limbo” phase; any advice on achieving their aspirations or how to get out of this gap phase?**

“The advice I wish I got in my gap year was that everything would be okay and things would fall into place, no matter the situation. So, my advice would be, at the end of the day, you’re the one who’s going to be making a change in your own life; pursue what you believe is right for you and for your future regardless of peer or family pressure.”

“Just try to work hard towards putting yourself back on track because being in this state can lead to you being potentially demotivated about life and just generally getting too comfortable sitting on your couch binge-watching Netflix. Next thing you know, you’re living in your mothers’ basement, and you haven’t seen the sun in a year because you have no reason to go out whatsoever.”

“Be patient. You’re still so young. You have so much time. Don’t worry. If someone were to say all of the things that I just said, I would just reply that I’m still young. I’m way too young to be thinking far ahead into the future because that’s the only thing you think about when you’re stuck. You have nothing to do. You have no purpose. You literally feel useless. You make no progress. And you’re trying to find anything to feel like you make a difference. I feel like if someone had told me that I’m still young, and I still have so much time left in my life. It would have made my journey a lot easier as you have all the time in the world for now. So, just be patient.”

“Buckle down, breathe deep. It’s not going to be easy. You will encounter defeats, losses in numerous colors and shapes, despair can set in, you will constantly doubt yourself, your capabilities, and your progress. Don’t despair. It’s not an easy road; it’s complex and alien. But whatever effort you put in is never wasted, even when you doubt it. Don’t just focus on the end result; look at where you are on your journey, and try to micromanage your life while adapting to changing circumstances. Remain humble through the storms and beyond them, and you will eventually see how far you’ve come. Build skills and habits that enrich you mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. They will help mould your character into something that rivals even the most seasoned of all your future colleagues. It’s wise to think, but too much time thinking will paralyze you before you even act. Calculate and execute. To say the reason that kids take a gap year for personal issues would be a definite understatement. It may be laziness sometimes. But it also is life’s circumstances that steers them down to a path that is not of the norm. In some ways, Limbo kids are the outsiders of our society, whether they like it or not. It is not how they get out of it that matters, but the time they are given to strive for more extraordinary things. Things beyond our comprehension, like entrepreneurship or getting a job that doesn’t need a college degree. So, if you do have a friend in limbo, don’t ever be the one that demotivates them, be the change they need. Do it for them because you’ll never know how much your presence can be the reason, they leave the hole they were put in the first place.”

