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**Class of 2010 eager to leave their mark on the country**

Despite their eagerness to graduate and leave campus, members of the AUB Class of 2010 had few plans to leave the country.

They want to stay in Lebanon and contribute to its growth.

That was the predominant perspective of many of the 1,700 graduates attending the 141st commencement exercises on June 26, 2010, held on the Green Field in the presence of proud parents, faculty members, and a number of officials. About 1,860 students graduated from AUB this year.

Christian Corban, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in business accounting, plans to stay in Lebanon and give back to his country some of the knowledge AUB gave him. "I want to give back to this beautiful country by staying here … contributing to Lebanon’s growth,” he said.

Corban’s confidence in his future was unwavering. “As AUB students, we are well-prepared for the real world.”

Rani Ghazeddine, a mechanical engineering graduate, agreed, saying that AUB students are better equipped to find good job opportunities than other graduates because of University's great reputation and the excellent quality of education it offers. Ghazeddine wants to open a manufacturing company for
mechanical products in Lebanon, after acquiring a few years of work experience. “When I open my factory, I will also be creating jobs for Lebanese youths,” he said.

Asma El Zoghbi, a graduate from the Faculty of Medicine, was all praise for AUB’s high quality of education, noting that she found it to be on a par with educational standards in the United States. “Going abroad and seeing the level of education over there made me appreciate what AUB has given me,” she said.

Zoghbi’s career plans include gaining further experience in the United States before establishing her practice in Lebanon. “I will come back to Lebanon with more experience, and so I can better benefit my country and community,” she said.

AUB’s outstanding education was also praised by President Peter Dorman, who started his speech by greeting the audience in Arabic. “Our University is on the verge of taking great strides to enhance our academic programs, research excellence, and campus and medical facilities,” he said. “I wish to emphasize one important message,” he continued. “We also believe an education at AUB must remain affordable to every qualified applicant.”

Dorman congratulated the students, reminding them of the “common values that bind us together;” namely freedom of speech, diversity and tolerance, and pursuit of excellence...

“You are setting forth today on a quest for professional and personal fulfillment that will be enriched, not only by the degrees conferred upon you this day, but by the experiences you have had in these university years with your professors, your colleagues, and your friends,” he added.

Dorman also paid tribute to Faculty of Engineering and Architecture Dean Ibrahim Hajj and Dean of Student Affairs Maroun Kisirwani, who are retiring from AUB this summer. “Their counsel has been invaluable to me, on many counts,” said Dorman.

Speaking on behalf of students, business graduate Elias Ghanem, also the vice president of the University Student-Faculty Committee, told his fellow classmates: “We shall not mourn our AUB memories, but we ought to cherish every moment we lived on campus among our fellow students. Today, we are ready to proceed; we are ready to become responsible citizens of our beloved nation; we are ready to govern our companies and our countries; we are ready against adversities and hardships. We are ready to become effective team players; we are ready to take
our own decisions, and most importantly, we are ready to become leaders in our needy societies.”

He also praised the openness shown by the AUB administration toward students and their concerns. “The collaboration between students on campus and officials in management has always been evident; every student’s voice is heard and every concern is addressed,” he said, before paying tribute to his alma mater. “AUB, you are a legacy and a regeneration of progress; you are a model for [combining] control and authority with marked freedom and autonomy.”

Students, too, expressed their appreciation of the AUB administration’s encouragement of free expression. “What I like mostly about AUB is the freedom of speech,” said Rania Jaber, an MA graduate in public health.

Ghanem also paid tribute to parents and Deans Hajj and Kisirwani. “It is not an exaggeration when we claim that on every occasion, you stand out amidst chaos and disorder as the embodiment of wisdom and knowledge,” he said of Kisirwani, whom he called “our father and our guide.”

Keynote Speaker Walid Khalidi, a Palestinian intellectual and Harvard professor emeritus, overviewed the history of the region, highlighting the Arab-Israeli conflict and Lebanon’s own political problems.

Nevertheless, he told the graduating class not to emigrate from this region as their contributions are really needed.

Khalidi also lauded AUB, saying: “No where else in the Arab world does one find such a conglomeration of talent in one place as can be found at this University. No other campus in the Arab world can compete with the diversity present here or the outstanding academic discourse.”

He also credited AUB’s ability to thrive and create a rich and diverse academic discourse to Lebanon’s diversity and climate conducive to freedom of expression.

A number of AUB Board of Trustees members also participated in the ceremony. Among Lebanese officials at the main ceremony was Minister of State Jean Hogassapian, representing the three top leaders of the country.

The AUB choir, led by Professor Paul Meers, played a selection of music pieces during the ceremony, which also included the announcement of the names of outstanding, distinguished award-winning students.
Volunteers make commencement call center a success

Four digits were the talk of Graduation 2010, and they had nothing to do with the number of degree recipients—1,860 students—or the fresh graduates’ prospect of monthly salaries.

The four digits referred to the phone extension of a new call center established specifically to respond to queries, solve problems, and coordinate the gigantic effort of organizing a smooth graduation day for all to enjoy.

Extension 3213 (as well as extension 3216) was the number everyone could call on that day to have their questions answered.

Working the phones was a team of half a dozen volunteers, both AUB staff and students, coordinating among more than 70 student volunteers on the ground, the Red Cross, the Protection Office, ushers, representatives from six faculties, and the Physical Plant.

“We did our best not to turn anyone away on that day,” said Randa Zaiter, who usually works as Production Manager in the Office of Communications, but was leading the team on that day. “Everyone was here for a happy occasion and our aim was to help everyone not miss out on that day.”

In its first year, the call center, which was located right at the Charles Hostler gate, handled hundreds of queries.

“I got the idea to establish a call center after seeing one in action at a London conference I recently attended,” said Johnny El-Hajj, AUB’s events coordinator. “I wanted to link up all those involved in the organization of AUB’s biggest day through a centralized call center.”

The center was linked to people on the ground through walkie-talkies, allowing all to be well-informed and well-equipped to solve problems throughout the day, El-Hajj explained.

“The team of volunteers did a great job this year and next year we’ll do even better, because we logged all the problems we encountered and we can now work to minimize them next year,” he said.

Among the 70 or so volunteers on the ground, twelve-year-old Yasmine Zaiter stood out as the only non-AUB student volunteer.

Despite her young age, Yasmine exhibited the enthusiasm and responsibility required for the success of a volunteer.

She guided parents and guests to the call center, the faculties, their seats, or even toilets. She responded to queries. She checked tickets. And despite some tricky situations, she would “do it all again,” she said eagerly.

“I love to help people and like to feel useful,” said Yasmine. “And I really wanted to help AUB students on the best day of their lives.”

Yasmine is no stranger to volunteering and has helped at her own school, International College.

Volunteers involved in helping on that day all expressed their enthusiasm for the experience.

“In addition to helping others, volunteering on campus gave me the opportunity to expand my network on campus and meet staffers that I would never have had the opportunity to meet,” said Rania Murr, international student coordinator in the Office of Student Affairs.

Large turnout for education pledge

The Department of Education distributed award certificates at its Education Pledge Ceremony on June 24, 2010, in the Assembly Hall.

Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Patrick McGreevy highlighted the importance of education in order to motivate students’ love for discovery.

Guest speaker Mounira Al Nahedh, deputy secretary general of the Arab Thought Foundation, applauded the students’ decision to become teachers and stressed...
the importance of self-confidence, creativity, and risk-taking.

The ceremony was initiated in 1999 by two department students, Jessy Tadrous and Rania Kassab, and was designed to motivate students to commit to the profession of teaching and special education.

Students recite a pledge in front of members of the education faculty, AUB administration, families, and friends. This year’s ceremony attracted a crowd of about 300, with education Professor Amal Bou Zeinidddine leading graduates through the oath.

Some 15 students participated from the bachelor’s degree program in elementary education and 27 from the teaching diploma program in elementary education, secondary education, and diploma in special education, management, and leadership.

Sahar Kassem spoke on behalf of graduating students. She said that study in the field of education was central to creating responsible, creative, and educated citizens in a nation.

Ghazi Ghaith, chair of the Department of Education, and Dean McGreevy announced the recipients of this year’s Educators’ Award, Sara Ishak El Koury and Carole Oussama Mehio, who received certificates.

A reception hosted by FAS followed the ceremony.

Three who left mark on region honorary doctorate recipients

The American University of Beirut awarded on June 26, 2010 honorary doctoral degrees to three individuals who were recognized for their life achievements and advancement of human causes through their fields of expertise: drama and comedy; scholarship and activism; and journalism and diplomacy.

Syrian comedy actor Duraid Lahham, Palestinian professor and rights activist Walid Khalidi, and French journalist and former ambassador Eric Rouleau were awarded honorary doctorates during a noon-time ceremony in the AUB Assembly Hall.

President Peter Dorman introduced the degree recipients, following an official procession of faculty members in academic regalia, led by Chief Marshal Samir Makdisi. President Dorman and Provost Ahmad Dallal presented the honorary doctorates to the recipients.

“The fundamental purpose for the establishment of this American university in Lebanon was to engender an enlightened and responsive impact on the region,” said Dorman.

“The three honorands we celebrate today have each exerted a profound impact of their own. Through popular art that reaches and speaks to the concerns of the average Arab citizen; through scholarship and public advocacy that illuminates the history of Palestinians and their current struggle; and through journalism and commentary that analyzes and elucidates the issues of the modern Middle East for Western audiences.

“Confronting inequality and intolerance is rarely an easy path to take. It requires courage to follow one’s deepest convictions and it is this commitment that we hope and desire our students—indeed all of our community members—to embrace.”

Introducing Lahham—popularly known as Ghawar al-Toushi—Dorman referred to his “inspirational life journey. . . [that] speaks volumes about what can be accomplished given the right combination of talent, opportunity, and determination. Moreover, he lauded art for its ability not just to entertain but also to “create the possibility for change,” by motivating, instigating and shaping our beliefs. “Duraid Lahham has surely entertained; but in addition to making us laugh, he has also made us think.”

Dorman also recognized Lahham’s commitment to humanitarian causes, noting he was named UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador for Childhood in the Middle East and North Africa from 1999 to 2004.

Lahham thanked AUB for the honor in a heart-felt speech interspersed with humor. He ended by saying, “I am only 165 cm tall, and this honor will not make me taller nor more intellectual, but it will make me prouder and more
committed and resolved to serve humanity and especially children . . . who are our future.”

Dorman then invited Professor Walid Khalidi to the podium after describing him as “one of the most influential Palestinian intellectuals of the twentieth century,” and “the voice of the people.”

“Walid Khalidi’s record of scholarship is extensive and has helped to portray and illuminate the plight of Palestinians before, during, and after the defining war of 1948 . . . [helping] to destroy the myth that Palestinians left their homes and villages voluntarily, laying bare historical facts regarding the Israeli planning behind the forced expulsions and ensuing occupation,” said Dorman.

University of London and Oxford trained Khalidi also taught at AUB between 1957 and 1982 and later at Harvard for about 15 years.

Khalidi also cofounded the Beirut-based Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS), a fully independent research organization devoted to the documentation and study of Palestinian affairs and the Arab-Israeli conflict. He also established a number of non-profit organizations.

Khalidi recalled his years at AUB and collaborations with a number of colleagues on important projects, including the IPS, which he cofounded with the late AUB professor Constantin Zurayk.

“Time is swifter than a weaver’s shuttle. It is noiseless like thieves in the night,” concluded Khalidi. “Even if you take it by the forelock, there is so much unfinished business left behind. But at the threshold of senility, it is good to know there is recognition of whatever footprint one leaves in the sand.”

Eric Rouleau, former special correspondent and chief Middle East editorial writer at the French daily, Le Monde, was the last recipient.

Journalist, author, academic, and diplomat, Rouleau has been said to bring “knowledge, depth, and authority” to every story and scoop he made, said Dorman. “Throughout his life and career, Eric Rouleau has exhibited an enormous depth of understanding about the current events and history of the Middle East and North Africa and great empathy for its people,” said Dorman. “His commitment to human rights and dignity can be seen throughout his extensive body of work, and is best evidenced by his unflagging support of the Palestinian pursuit of peace and justice.”

“To say that I am honored by the distinction you bestow me would be an understatement,” Rouleau said in his acceptance speech. “I am gratified by one of the most prestigious universities in the world, of which I am a long-time admirer.”

Rouleau then spotlighted his connection to Lebanon first as a visitor enamored with its charms and hospitality and then as a “concerned journalist” experiencing the tragic events the country endured.

He also referred to the difficulties he faced as both a journalist and a diplomat handling the Palestinian conflict. “It was also no easy task to write on the conflict for a western audience where biased views were quite widespread; at that time a journalist accomplishing his duty had to resist, during tense periods, angry phone calls, insulting letters, and sometimes death threats.”

“President Dorman, the honorary doctorate you offer me today is, as I understand it, a recognition of what I stood for,” he concluded.

Attending the ceremony were a number of academics, AUB Board of Trustee members and public officials including former Prime Minister Fouad Siniora and Minister Tarek Mitri. The honorary doctorate ceremony was followed by a reception outside the Assembly Hall.

Traditional Class Ring Ceremony revived

AUB students can once again choose to receive their university class ring, thanks to a student initiative that revived one of the oldest traditions on campus.

Initiated by the University Student Faculty Committee (USFC) and supported by the Worldwide Alumni Association of AUB (WAAAUB), the inaugural class ring ceremony took place on June 24, reviving a university tradition dating back to 1968. With the receipt of the special AUB ring, each graduating student automatically becomes an alumnus.

The ceremony transformed the Green Field into a sea of black and white, as young men in black suits and young women in black or white dresses prepared to take their oaths as alumni.

“With this ring we salute you, our alma mater. We promise to be faithful and committed to our beloved AUB.” Uttering these words in unison, the graduating class of 2010 became part of the restored AUB class ring ceremony.

“We are delighted to revive one of AUB’s oldest traditions,” said Elias Ghanem, vice president of the USFC. “A ring is a universal symbol of commitment and a sign of an everlasting bond. This ring confirms your permanent relationship with the University and with your classmates. Just
as you have been part of AUB, so will the University always be a part of you.”

After singing the National Anthem, Tony Harrouk from the WAAAUB Programs Committee welcomed the students, their parents, and guests to the ceremony before introducing Ghanem.

WAAAUB President Khalil Makkawi welcomed the graduating students to the group of 54,000 alumni spread across 62 countries. “We encourage the bond that the class ring commemorates and invite you to stay connected with your alma mater, to become members of WAAAUB, and to actively participate in your local alumni chapter.”

AUB President Peter Dorman thanked students for their influence on the University during their time on campus. “How AUB has impacted you is apparent, but less apparent is how you have impacted the University. Successive classes all give the University something different, helping us to change and grow.” He went on to mention his pride in the class of 2010 for reviving two AUB traditions—the class ring ceremony and the Speakers Corner, which originated on campus in the 1970s and has now been reintroduced.

“You have influenced life on campus. Your fresh ideas help us to innovate so that AUB can be a more enriching environment,” he said, urging students to maintain a strong connection to their alma mater and support its mission to help the next generation of AUB students.

“I am sure this class ring will remind you of the things you learned at AUB, the teachers who inspired you, and the friends you made, but I also hope it will prompt you to remember the foundational tenets that have defined AUB for generations and motivate you to live up to them,” said Dorman, referring to the University’s commitment to freedom of thought and expression, tolerance and respect for diversity and dialogue, and promoting social responsibility.

Dean of Student Affairs Maroun Kisirwani reminded students of the ways in which AUB has contributed to their lives in terms of building their confidence, integrity, pride, freedom of expression, critical thinking and accountability. “Nurture these values to create a better community,” he said.

“Your step today is your leap into the future. Watch your steps carefully,” said Kisirwani, signaling the commencement of the oath taking.

Each faculty was called up on stage as a group to join their faculty dean and recite the oath while holding up their right hands bearing the class ring—a silver band engraved with two cedar trees between the words “American University of Beirut Class of 2010.”

The ceremony ended with the singing of the Alma Mater, after which guests were invited for refreshments in the courtyard of the Charles Hostler Center.

“Forty-five-year-old alum Nadine Yared is graduating for the fifth time, with a master’s degree, and was excited about receiving her first ring. “I wanted my children to see this so that it would make them want to graduate too,” she said.

WAAAUB gives war-time alumni official graduation ceremony

The Worldwide Alumni Association at AUB held a special graduation ceremony for members of the classes of 1975 and 1985 who had missed out on their big day due to the particularly unstable period in the 1975-1990 Lebanese Civil War.

“The ceremony took place on July 2 at 6 pm in the Assembly Hall, part of a fun-filled reunion weekend held July 2-4, 2010, for 11 classes which graduated between 1955 and 2005.

“During the years of 1975 and 1985, AUB was forcibly

Continued
unable to hold commencement exercises, and the graduat-
ing students received their degrees in silence,” said Arabia
Ousseiran, director of Alumni Relations and one of the main
 coordinators of the event. “Dedicated to the students who
could not celebrate their graduation due to times of war
and turmoil in Lebanon, this event was especially organized
for them.”

After a heartfelt welcome extended to the returning
classes, AUB President Peter Dorman congratulated the for-
mer students, reminding them of the importance of student
life in keeping the doors of AUB open in good times and
in bad. He also praised the educational standards of the
University and its leading role in research in Lebanon and
the region.

Jinane Maalouf, WAAAUB vice president, AUB alumna
and one of the event organizers, flew in from California
to attend the commencement exercises and welcome all
returning students.

Straight from South Africa, Kamel Abdallah, class of
1985 keynote speaker, said the trip back to AUB had revived
his love and emotional attachment to the campus. “I am
proud to be an AUBite,” he said. He then rewound back to
1985, recalling how the student body had held an unofficial
graduating party in West Hall, after the official ceremony
had been called off. “Since then, have we changed the
world, or has the world changed us?” he asked.

He added, “Change is inevitable... but growth is optional.”
Visiting AUB a quarter of a century later, Abdallah
said, “It’s great that AUB stands for what it says; there is a
beautiful truth in its words, ‘to have life and have it more
abundantly.’ This enforces our respect for AUB.”

Minutes later, the class of 1985 officially graduated for
the first time, and was honored for its 25th silver graduation
anniversary.

Flare Majali, an AUB alumna and keynote speaker of
the class of 1975, shared how the war had impacted her
life and that of her classmates when they were still stu-
dents. “The storm derailed our lives. In 1975, we went our
separate ways and waved a silent goodbye to each other
and Bliss Street. We never felt we truly graduated. There
were no farewell parties, no addresses exchanged, and no
transcripts given.”

Today, as Majali rediscovered the campus and Bliss
Street, she said, although some names have changed, the
spirit of the area remains.

“After 35 years of adult wisdom, let us begin here
again,” she concluded.

A class picture at the AUB Main Gate stairs followed
the ceremony, and both returning war-time classes
tossed their caps in the air for the first time.

The celebrations continued over the weekend, as AUB
and WAAAUB invited this year’s celebrating classes to enjoy
two days full of activities. On Saturday July 3, the Charles
Hostler Student Center was bustling with returning AUB
alumni and their families, deans, and faculty members. The
homecoming brunch, live music, and various children’s activi-
ties allowed the classes of ’55, ’60, ’65, ’70, ’75, ’80, ’85,
’90, ’95, ’00 and ’05 to catch up and reconnect in a friendly
outdoor setting to rediscover the places and people at AUB.

The 50th Old Guard Honoring Ceremony took place on
Saturday at 12 noon at the Charles Hostler auditorium. This
event was dedicated to honor the class of 1960, celebrating
their golden anniversary.

President Dorman welcomed the class of 1960, thank-
ing them for their continued support.

Haralambos Harris, a civil engineering graduate student
of 1960, delivering his message to the celebrating class,
praised AUB for embracing a multi-cultured and multiethnic
environment. He ended his speech by saying, “We learned
to love our alma mater, and we kept in touch, thousands of
kilometers away.”

As images from the 1960 yearbook were projected on
the walls on both sides of the stage, memorabilia were
distributed, and the class of 1960 walked the stage, one by
one again, 50 years since they first left campus, surrounded
by echoes of cheers and applause.
Mellon Fund supports the arts and humanities at AUB

Five faculty members from AUB have been given funding for a range of fascinating projects that bring into sharp focus the importance of the humanities at the University.

Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation with grants distributed through the Presidential Discretionary Award, the projects are designed to encourage student participation and creative thinking.

Speaking about the grants Provost Ahmad Dallal said, “The Mellon Grants are among several initiatives that reinforce AUB's commitment to supporting the arts and humanities. By helping our students develop knowledge and skills in a broad range of fields, we are preparing them to think in original and creative ways. This, no doubt, will provide our students with better opportunities for professional success, but above all, it will prepare them to live richer and more rewarding lives.”

In a series of workshops cosponsored by the Center for American Studies and Research (CASAR) and the Departments of Architecture and Graphic Design, and Fine Arts and Art History (FAAH), Henry Chalfant, graffiti art expert, will explain his pioneering work on street art as a serious cultural phenomenon. An author and filmmaker, Chalfant’s work includes the modern classic, *Subway Art*, and the documentary film, *Visit Palestine: Ten Days on the West Bank*, about graffiti in Palestine.

In addition to the workshops with AUB students, local artists, and faculty members, Chalfant will give a lecture on street art and screenings of his films. The renowned actress Kathleen Chalfant will accompany her husband and has agreed to give a theater workshop as well as a talk sponsored by CASAR. Speaking for CASAR, director Robert Myers said, “I am happy that the Mellon Foundation is helping AUB resume its former position as one of the most vibrant centers for the arts in the Middle East.”

Ghassan Abou-Zeineddine, Department of English instructor and faculty adviser for the student literary journal, *The Banyan Tree*, is delighted that the Mellon award will help establish the new journal on the AUB cultural map. Dedicated to writing across five genres—fiction, nonfiction, poetry, playwriting, and graphic story writing—*The Banyan Tree* gives students a rare opportunity to express their creative ideas in print. It also provides valuable work experience for its all-student editorial board and its design and layout team from the Graphic Design program. “The award shows a commitment from the administration towards promoting the arts,” says Abou-Zeineddine, “and it will allow *The Banyan tree* to expand and grow.”

William Shakespeare will be another beneficiary of the Mellon award. In the past five years, studies of the Bard have taken dramatic shift east towards the Levant. As Professor Francois-Xavier Gleyzon of the Department of English explains, “Publications in this new emergent field recently proved how Shakespeare could be instrumental not only to understand the Middle East (through *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and other plays) but also how Shakespeare could be comprehended and reinvented as a cultural and social bridge uniting the East and West.” This shift in perception will be the subject of a conference entitled “Shakespeare and the Orient,” organized by department of English faculty and students with the participation of international Shakespeare scholars. It will include a special session for student papers under the supervision of these scholars.

David Kurani, FAAH senior lecturer, has a more recent drama in his sights. He will be working with students and members of the AUB Drama Club to translate “*Sijn el Nissa*” (*Memoires of a Women’s Prison*) by Nawal El Saadawi, into a play directed by Professor Lina Abyad, from the Lebanese American University Theater Department. Kurani will be in charge of costume and set design for this daring work that explores resistance to violence and injustice and the formation of a women’s community behind bars.

In a challenging collaboration between music and physics, Jihad Touma from the Department of Physics, and Moslem Rahal, master neyzen and ney maker from the Higher Institute of Music in Damascus, will work together with AUB students on a year-long project to explore the nay in an interdisciplinary framework which marries mathematical modeling of the underlying physics with the construction of actual neys and with music making.

Although AUB has received previous funding from the Mellon Foundation, this is the first time money has been made available for the arts and humanities. The generous $100,000 award will subsidize these five projects and additional initiatives over the next three years.
AUB Engineering Professor and entrepreneur Rana El Chemaitelly emphasized the need to invest in young Lebanese minds and prepare them for the future.

Chemaitelly is the creator of The Little Engineer and was recognized as one of the Middle East and North Africa’s most promising entrepreneurs. She was awarded $50,000 in June 2010 as start-up capital at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Arab Business Plan Competition, hosted annually by the MIT Enterprise Forum of the Arab Region, in partnership with the Abdul Latif Jameel Company.

The Little Engineer is an after-school edutainment center which introduces children from four to sixteen plus years to pre-engineering courses such as robotics, physics, electricity, electronics, and renewable energy. Students enrolling in one of the offerings will visit the center once per week, for eight successive sessions, closing with a competition.

The Little Engineer “provides kids with social benefits. We are teaching kids how to work in teams and how to communicate with each other and be sociable instead of wasting their time browsing the internet,” she said.

She added that this project aims at teaching young people how to organize and complete their tasks on time. “We are teaching them perseverance so they have to complete every task before they leave. Moreover, we are teaching them how to troubleshoot their work and be consistent with what they are doing.”

Chemaitelly came up with the idea when teaching a mechanical engineering course at AUB she was asked to give a robotics class. “I had to go to the internet and do some research about robotics in order to build my skills before giving the course. While researching, I was so surprised to see that kids in the United States were working on robots at a very early age,” she said. “This is how I decided to bring the topic to Lebanon, work on it further, and give this opportunity to our kids in this country.”

Chemaitelly added from her position as a working woman that another aim of this initiative is to divert children’s attention from the internet, play stations, and TV. “I wanted to create a positive environment where they can communicate with others, build skills, and use the technology in a positive way.”

However, Chemaitelly felt very surprised that she did not get any attention from the Lebanese government. “When I won the first prize I thought about my country and how I raised the name of Lebanon, and when I came back and went on the internet I saw that everyone celebrated the second and third winners while here in Lebanon everybody is dormant,” she said. “I am working hard and in a very short time to franchise this company abroad, which is considered a great asset for Lebanon because we are not importing a franchise: we are exporting it.”

But she thanked AUB and BankMed for backing her project. “I want to thank Associate Provost and Mechanical Engineering Professor Nesreen Ghaddar and BankMed for sponsoring The Kids and Teens Go Green initiative,” she said. “They both pushed hard for The Little Engineer. And I will stay loyal to AUB and BankMed.”

She also criticized Lebanese banks for the lack of support provided to entrepreneurs in Lebanon. “Lebanese banks are not effectively supporting young entrepreneurs, and even if you get a loan you are always asked for collateral in return,” she said. “Young entrepreneurs cannot provide collateral because they are starting with their businesses, and banks should facilitate their tasks since they have financial experts who can track what they are doing and assess whether what they are doing is right or wrong.”

Chemaitelly is expecting around 850 Lebanese youngsters to enroll in her classes during the summer in the four centers located in Msaytbeh, Verdun, Aley, and Dbayeh.

McGreevy receives American Geographers’ top book prize

The prestigious J. B. Jackson Book Prize for American cultural geography was awarded this April by the Association of American Geographers to Dean of Arts and Sciences Patrick McGreevy for his work, Stairway to Empire: Lockport, the Erie Canal and the Shaping of America (SUNY, 2009).

McGreevy explores the hidden stories of the common people who constructed the Erie Canal—a monumental nineteenth-century project connecting the Atlantic Ocean with the Great Lakes, thus opening the interior of North America to US settlers and investors and helping make New
York both the commercial and the financial center of the continent.

The narrative focuses on Lockport, a nascent canal town at the base of the Niagara escarpment and site of the most impressive geological barrier on the proposed route of the Erie Canal, where over 1,500 immigrant laborers dug a channel through miles of solid rock and constructed a double staircase of five locks.

The completion of the canal at Lockport signaled the start of a market revolution that transformed the lives of millions of Americans from subsistence farming to a world of money, wages, trade, and inter-regional connection.

For nineteenth-century Americans, the Erie Canal and specifically the Lockport locks, became symbols of national achievement according to McGreevy. American nationalism emerging at that time was accompanied by a growing sense among the common people of belonging to one nation.

Stairway to Empire, a long-term project based on primary sources long buried in archives, is a story of human achievement exposing the previously untold experiences of immigrant laborers who sacrificed their lives to construct a canal for which others would take credit and from which still others would profit.

Karl Raitz, chairman of the J. B. Jackson Book Prize committee and professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Kentucky, was one of the many scholars who complimented McGreevy: “I have [long] been intrigued by nineteenth-century construction projects, such as roads and canals, especially regarding the labor-management relationships that developed,” he said.

Dean McGreevy was formerly director of the Center for American Studies and Research (CASAR) at AUB, an academic unit dedicated to increasing knowledge of the United States in the Arab world.

Minister Khalifeh joins London Royal College of Physicians

The Royal College of Physicians of London announced that Health Minister Mohammed Jawad Khalifeh has joined its prestigious college, “one of the most prestigious and oldest medical schools in Britain.”

“It is a great honor to join the Royal College of Physicians,” said Khalifeh in a statement to the Royal College. “I was impressed by the warm welcome that made me feel as if I were at home. I admit that my experience in Britain was of enormous benefit to my academic and medical careers, and that it reinforced my administrative performance as Health Minister.”

The chairman of the Royal College of Physicians Sir Ian Gilmore said, “We are honored that Dr. Khalifeh has become a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians. Through his efforts and his administration, the quality of medical care has improved in Lebanon, and the treatments provided are better value for your money, and I look forward to our cooperation in future projects.”

In a statement, the college said that Khalifeh has maintained a successful academic and medical path since his appointment as minister in 2004, and during his term Lebanon launched the first public health services; the number of hospitals has exceeded 20 public hospitals, some of which are affiliated to universities and educational institutions. Moreover Khalifeh has played a role in the formation of a new record to ensure quality and pricing of medicine in Lebanon according to a comprehensive reform plan.”

After training in surgery in the UK, Professor Khalifeh returned to Lebanon in 1998, where he was distinguished by the President of the Republic, the Lebanese Ministry of Health, and the Lebanese Order of Physicians for developing liver transplantation. In 2001, the President of the Republic bestowed upon him the National Order of the Cedar, officer rank. Professor Khalifeh is also a member of several boards, including that of the American College of Surgeons. He is also currently a member of the executive board of the World Health Organization’s Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean.

Dr. Khalifeh joined the AUB Medical Center as assistant professor of surgery in 1998 and became associate professor of general surgery in 2003. He is also director of the Liver Transplantation and HPB Unit.
AUB Chairman Emeritus releases new book on Islamic law

AUB Board of Trustees Chairman Emeritus Richard A. Debs has authored a book entitled *Islamic Law and Civil Code: The Law of Property in Egypt.*

In this 216-page reference work, Debs analyzes the classical Islamic law of property based on Islamic Shari’ah, traces its historic development in Egypt, and describes its integration as a source of law within the modern format of a civil code.

A trained lawyer, Debs focuses specifically on Egypt. Its traditional law, the Shari’ah, is the fundamental law of all Islamic societies, and Debs demonstrates how Islamic jurisprudence can be sophisticated, coherent, rational, and effective, developed over centuries to serve the needs of its societies.

Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, described the book as “indispensable” for those “studying or working in fields requiring an understanding of Islamic and Middle Eastern law relating to landed property.”

Rashid Khalidi, Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies at Columbia University, called the book a remarkably clear “analytical exposition of how Islamic law and civil law have operated together in the Egyptian context and by extension in much of the Arab world.” The book is a rare work, he said, easily accessible to the non-specialist.

Chairman Emeritus Debs served for several years as chairman of AUB’s Board of Trustees. He is also an advisory director of Morgan Stanley and a member of its International Advisory Board, and the former president of Morgan Stanley International.

Previously he had served as the chief operating officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and as an alternate member of the Federal Open Market Committee. He is the US chairman of the Bretton Woods Commission, past chairman and a member of the New York Stock Exchange International Committee, vice chairman of the US Saudi Arabian Business Council, a member of the Group of Thirty, and chairman of its Study Group on Eastern Europe.

Debs’s many other duties have included serving as an adviser to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and on the Russian American Bankers Forum. He is a trustee and chairman emeritus of Carnegie Hall and a trustee of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Institute of International Education, the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, and the Barenboim-Said Foundation.

Richard Debs was a Fulbright Scholar and a Ford Foundation Fellow in Egypt, and holds a PhD from Princeton and a JD from Harvard Law School as well as an Honorary Doctorate from AUB. He has been decorated by the government of Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

*Islamic Law and Civil Code - The Law of Property in Egypt* is available at www.cup.columbia.edu and www.amazon.com

Teaching Excellence Awards for two professors

Two AUB professors were recognized for teaching excellence at an awards ceremony at the Center for Teaching and Learning (CLT) on June 25, 2010.

Inanna Hamati-Ataya, assistant professor in the Department of Political Studies and Public Administration, shared the Teaching Excellence Award with Professor Rabih Talhouk of the Department of Biology.

President Peter Dorman and FAS Dean Patrick McGreevy both attended the ceremony.

“I haven’t done anything extraordinary—I just have a wonderful job, and I love what I’m doing,” said Hamati-Ataya after accepting her award.

Professor Saouma Boujaoude, director of the CTL, welcomed the family, friends, and students of the two professors before Provost Ahmad Dallal introduced the recipients and presented the pair with award plaques.

Dallal described Hamati-Ataya as someone who orients her students towards political autonomy and encourages independent thought.

“She teaches them how to voice their opinions responsibly, while challenging and inspiring them to reach their full potential,” he said.

Talhouk, receiving his second nomination for the award, was described as having a keen eye for detail.
“He’s able to humanize the cell while cultivating an active learning environment and encouraging analytical and critical thinking,” said Dallal. Talhouk has mentored 42 graduate students during his 18 years at AUB.

Peter Kairouz, editor-in-chief of the 2008-09 Campus yearbook, said Talhouk’s involvement with students stretched beyond the classroom.

“He’s not just an adviser—he’s an involved adviser,” said Kairouz. “He comes to every meeting and is an integral link between students and the administration.

“He helped us sort out a lot of problems while balancing these extra-curricular projects with his teaching job.”

Two of Hamati-Ataya’s students who attended the ceremony, Gabriella Magro and John Hayden, testified to her teaching ability and attention to students.

Hayden praised her exceptional skills as an educator. “She's a dynamic person, and her course is interesting and exciting, and we're constantly stimulated by her,” he said.

Hamati-Ataya, who is in her eighth year at AUB, returned the compliments during her acceptance speech. “I learn from them too, so it's a reciprocal process. My students have made every teaching hour unique,” she said.

Talhouk also thanked his students. “I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. It's our students who keep us here and make this place so great,” he said.

The selection committee for the Teaching Excellence Award consisted of a faculty member from each of the University’s six faculties, a student, and an alumni representative, all of whom remained anonymous.

Both recipients’ names were placed on a plaque in the CTL with names of previous recipients of the award.

After the ceremony, President Dorman talked about the award's significance. “Teaching is at the heart of our campus and this is a chance to recognize the best in our teachers,” he said. “It's absolutely critical for any university to recognize excellence in teaching.”

Much like the medical profession, running the marathon requires commitment and perseverance, and Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine Arafat Tfayli accomplished this feat twice, running the Oklahoma marathon in 2005 and 2006.

Added to these key attributes, modesty and a general sense of gratitude are always commendable. “I am grateful to Naif Basile for giving me the opportunity to come back to AUBMC,” said Dr. Tfayli, who joined the Department of Internal Medicine’s Division of Hematology/Oncology as a member of the Naif K. Basile Cancer Institute in September 2009.

Always having wanted to be a doctor, Tfayli received his MD from AUB with distinction in 1995, then finished his internal medicine residency at the State University of New York in Stony Brook, spending an additional year there as chief resident.

After completing his fellowship in hematology/oncology at Georgetown University, where he spent a year as chief fellow, Tfayli did a one-year fellowship in bone marrow transplantation.

Since 2002, Tfayli has been a faculty member at Oklahoma University, becoming an associate professor of medicine and also the director of the hematology/oncology fellowship program. Dr. Tfayli is board certified in internal medicine, hematology, and medical oncology.

Currently Tfayli’s research is focused on better tailoring chemo and hormonal agents for individual patients with breast cancer, a valuable study as Lebanese women seem to contract the tumor at a young age. “Although we have fewer cases of breast cancer in Lebanon than in the West, the sufferers here tend to get the disease at an earlier age—during their thirties and even twenties,” explained Dr. Tfayli, the author of several peer-reviewed papers.

Tfayli likes to read biographies of leaders and to listen to both classical music and Fairuz. Married with three children, he enjoys shared interests with his family: “My son is learning Arabic at school and loves Fairuz, and I learn the piano with my kids,” added Tfayli, who also considers running an essential part of his weekly activity. “To me running is psychotherapy and the ultimate stress relief; I try to cover at least 25 kilometers every week,” he concluded.
Ulrike Polzl

Visiting Assistant Professor Ulrike Polzl welcomed the opportunity to join AUB’s English Department as a visitor in the spring of 2010 as she had first viewed the University in 2003 and found it “one of the most beautiful campuses” she had ever seen. Polzl looks forward to interacting for the next two years with the “cosmopolitan, kind, and open” people here.

An Austrian-born linguist who obtained her MA in German/English literature and linguistics in Austria in 1993, Polzl gained some work experience before continuing with her studies of English, which she calls “the language of the global nomad.” She earned another MA in modern English language from the University of London in 1999, before pursuing her PhD in intercultural communication with English as a *lingua franca* from the University of Vienna in 2006.

The multi-disciplinary aspect of her studies focusing on the cultural and intercultural identity as well as the consequences of globalization on human diversity prompted Polzl to visit different countries in our region in order to collect data for her research, stopping in Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.

Her love for the sun and the Mediterranean were important factors in Polzl's decision to work at the College for International Studies in Madrid, where she spent the past three years prior to coming to AUB. Polzl speaks Spanish quite well and now resolves to revisit her Arabic and build her knowledge of the language.

At AUB, Polzl is teaching two courses to undergraduates: Introduction to Language as well as Pragmatics and Discourse. She is also giving a graduate seminar, covering students' research interests. She finds AUB students “polite, kind, nice to work with, willing to get involved in research; and they have a brilliant sense of humor as well a perfect sense of irony. They are also savvy and wise beyond their years.”

Polzl is passionate about her work, which she often does while listening to classical music such as Mozart. She considers such listening “the perfect therapy to all ails.” In her spare time, she likes to explore Lebanon and take care of her new little kitten, Azul, “because of her blue eyes.” Following her motto to “discover sense” in her life, Polzl is always driven by finding a “sense of humor along the way.”

Matthias Liermann

Building things and engineering go hand-in-hand, and Assistant Professor Matthias Liermann, who joined AUB's faculty of engineering and architecture in September 2009, intends to build many things.

As a child, he “really wanted to build a robot” and started learning everything he could about programming and electronics. At age 17 he actually built three model airplanes, but left it to someone else to fly them as he went on to pursue his education.

Choosing to major in mechanical engineering seemed logical to Liermann, and not just because his dad was a railway engineer. “Engineering gives understanding of how things we use in our daily lives actually work,” explained Liermann, who could have succeeded just as easily in another major.

“After high school, I spent half a year on an assignment teaching German to high school kids in Slovakia. That was a good experience for me, and I enjoyed interacting with that age group a lot,” said Liermann, who believes that “inner attitude is what makes a person's work valuable, as it counts more than the type of work one does.”

After receiving his master's in mechanical engineering from the RWTH Aachen University in Germany in 2004, Liermann worked at the University's Institute for Fluid Power Drives and Controls, specializing in analysis and design of hydraulic systems. “The work there was great, as it involved many technology domains. I felt I was getting closer to my goal of building a robot,” smiled Liermann.

But Liermann's next step was to complete his PhD in 2008 on the design and development of a new type of self-energizing hydraulic brake system for trains.

A specialist in the field of mechatronics, Liermann is currently working on developing a new course for fourth-year engineering students in fluid power systems. Teaching control and automation, he finds “AUB students very polite, creative, and funny. They have good intellectual capabilities, but lack being inquisitive and analytical enough in some unfamiliar approaches.”

Married with two small daughters, Liermann is happy to be living on campus and loves to spend time with his family. He also enjoys playing squash and windsurfing as well as playing the guitar and the cello and singing along with his wife. Liermann likes to read biographies, novels, and historical fiction in both German and English. An admirer of nature, Liermann is in touch with his faith and defines himself by the relationship he has found and built with his Creator.
Staff members receive President’s Service Excellence Awards

University staff members were honored at a special service for the presentation of Excellence Awards on June 22, 2010, in the courtyard between College Hall and Jafet Library.

Speaking at the ceremony, AUB President Peter Dorman said the event, held every year in June, was a way of recognizing outstanding performance from deserving employees.

“This is a celebration of those that not only make this University run, but who do it with a little something extra—those who go beyond the call of duty, who do their work with a smile in good times and bad,” Dorman said in his welcoming speech.

Members of the award committee select a few candidates out of a large number of nominees each year. To be eligible for the award, an employee should exhibit excellent job performance and should satisfy a number of customer service criteria, said Andre Nahas, director of the Office of Strategy Management at AUB.

President Dorman said a few words about each of this year’s six winners.

Rhayim Abdel-Rahman has been a registered nurse at the AUBMC for eighteen years.

“[Abdel-Rahman] is a model nurse; professional, knowledgeable and experienced, [with] a great sense of belonging and dedication to the department,” Dorman said.

Jumana Radwan Abu-Assi, a secretary in nursing administration, has been committed to the department and institution throughout her 31 years.

Dorman noted Abu-Assi was well-known for going beyond the call of duty.

“Jumana demonstrated creativity by turning the place—without budget—into a suitable living space for nurses,” he said.

Mohammad Hajj-Hasan has worked in the Radiology Department for 28 years.

Referring to his high-quality service to AUB patients, medical students, and physicians alike, Dorman noted that Hajj-Hasan “facilitates and expedites services to his customers in a humanitarian spirit that overshadows the technicality of his work.”

Mustafa (Mike) Hamam has been a systems analyst at AUB since 2003. Hamam built from scratch a complex environment that includes 150 PCs, an Oracle database server, and a specialized graphics lab, all on the same network linked to the AUB backbone, noted Dorman.

“[Hamam] has shown creativity in setting up another cluster at the Computational Sciences Program that allows for parallel programming, and [has] played an important role in setting up another sophisticated cluster at the Center for Mathematical Science,” he said.

Salma Dannawi Oueida, who joined the Development Office in January 2003, is currently associate director of Development.

“She has quickly comprehended the core requirements of her new job and developed the skills to deal with donors, playing a key role in AUB’s very successful Campaign for Excellence,” said Dorman.

Khaled Sayyah, a staff nurse in the operating rooms, excels in the various tasks that he performs, according to Dorman.

“Khaled is very customer-focused; he has earned words of appreciation from patients and colleagues throughout an excellent track record spanning 18 years,” said Dorman.

Dorman presented each of the awardees with a plaque inscribed with their names.

A reception followed the award presentation ceremony in the courtyard outside Jafet Library.

Conference paves way for better roads

Public Works and Transport Minister Ghazi Aridi said that poorly-maintained roads in Lebanon are having a negative impact on the safety of Lebanese citizens.

“The great gap that exists between theory and practice when it comes to the construction of proper roads could be filled by follow-up and seriousness in work,” he said. “Instead negative practices [prevail] . . . affecting citizens’ safety but . . . also leading to the mismanagement of public funds.”

Aridi’s remarks came during the Middle East Society of Asphalt Technologies (MESAT) conference held at the

Continued
An AUB team of engineering students grabbed first place in a computer programming contest recently held at the Lebanese American University, beating 19 other teams to the top.

The three-member team, also known as Spontaneous Self-Combustion and consisting of third-year students Mario Ghandour Achkar and Jad Hachem, and fresh graduate Oussama Hariz, solved seven of eight programming problems using algorithms and computer programming languages such as JAVA, C++, or C.

Organized by the Computer Science and Mathematics Department at the Lebanese American University, the second Lebanese Collegiate Programming Contest was held June 25-26, 2010, under the supervision of the ACM-ICPC (Association of Computing Machinery-International Collegiate Programming Contest).

In the five-hour contest 19 teams from 11 universities in Lebanon were each given eight programming problems to solve.

AUB participated with three teams all of which achieved good results, ranking first, second, and fifth. Team expenses were covered by the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at AUB.

Coach Nagi Nahas commended the AUB teams, highlighting the importance of such contests. “These contests build team spirit and teach students to produce programs that are free of errors,” he said. “You see, in the real world, there have been several disasters that were caused by minor software glitches, and it’s so important for students to learn to be rigorous.”

Nahas gave a few examples of disastrous small software glitches, such as the explosion in 1996 of the Ariane 5, an unmanned European space rocket, and the failure of the London Ambulance Service to save people from fire due to a crippling minor software glitch.

“That’s why the rules in these contests are harsh and students cannot get credit for partially correct answers,”
explained Nahas. As a result, such contests compel students to train themselves on complex algorithms which allow them to create programs that solve problems faster, he added. “Such contests motivate students to improve their skills while having fun, too,” Nahas said.

Student Oussama Hariz could not agree more: “The experience was both fun and educational. . . . We had to be competitive while working as a team.”

Teammate Mario Ghandour Achkar gave high marks to the entire experience: “I sharpened my algorithm skills while at the same time having fun.”

The two other AUB teams, Syntax Error, consisting of students Elio Abi Karam, Contestant, Abbas Bazzi, and Badih Ghazi, and Slashroot, consisting of Farah Charab, Samer Chucri, and Marc Farra, placed second and fifth respectively. Members of the winning team were each given a Blackberry.

Next goal for the young AUB programmers: the November Arab Collegiate Programming Contest which will take place in Lebanon and attract participants from the region. Go AUB!

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**Electrical and Computer Engineering grants first PhD**

Elias Yaacoub was awarded the first ever PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering on May 27, 2010, after successfully defending his dissertation.

“This is a historic day for AUB, as we [award] the first PhD ever in the ECE department to Yaacoub, the best student I have known,” said Adnan Al-Alaoui, professor of ECE and thesis defense committee chairman, to an audience consisting of Provost Ahmad Dallal, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture Ibrahim Hajj, engineering faculty, members and students.

The PhD thesis committee consisted of Professor Adnan Al-Alaoui (chair), Professor Zaher Dawy (thesis adviser), Professor Mohamed-Slim Alouini (external committee member from King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), KSA, in addition to ECE faculty Professors Karim Kabalan and Ibrahim Abou Faycal.

Held at the Al-Qatami Engineering Lecture Hall in the Bechtel Building, Jacob's defense presentation highlighted the multiple novel techniques proposed to deal with multi-user frequency interference in mobile wireless communications. In the next-generation wireless systems, services like high-speed internet and video downloads need to be provided with enhanced quality, Yaacoub stated.

Currently, mobile devices do offer access to the internet, but the connection speed is still not comparable to that of wired internet. Yaacoub hopes to change that by making the connection speed of wireless internet on a par with wired internet. While mobile users are now able to download and view a video film in real-time, Jacob's work would help improve the quality of viewing real-time multimedia over mobile devices.

In his dissertation entitled, “Efficient Resource Allocation in Uplink OFDMA Systems,” Yaacoub proposes a number of techniques to help achieve this goal.

Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiple Access (OFDMA) is the accessing scheme for state-of-the-art mobile communication systems, such as Long Term Evolution (LTE) and Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access (WiMAX).

Yaacoub's innovative contribution to the area of wireless system services proposes efficient ways of using available radio resources as well as techniques for dealing with frequency interference.

Most sections of Yaacoub's dissertation have already been published in the proceedings of international conferences, such as the IEEE Wireless Communications and Networking conference, held in Budapest in April 2009, and the IEEE Personal Indoor and Mobile Radio Communications conference, held in Tokyo in September 2009.

Sections of his dissertation have also been published in European Transactions on Telecommunications and in IET Communications Research Journal. He has published a total of 32 articles in refereed journals and in conference proceedings, and has another eight in the pipeline.
Minister of Information Tarek Mitri emphasized the need to modernize the public sector in Lebanon during the opening of the Eighth International Conference on Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) held at AUB on June 10, 2010.

“We won’t be able to meet the modernization challenge unless there are greater synergies between the public sector, private sector, and the academic world,” said Mitri. “I trust that an initiative such as your own helps in creating such synergies.”

Mitri, representing Prime Minister Saad Hariri, said that public services in Lebanon are still behind, and that as far as modernization goes “we have a lot to learn from the private sector, and we have a lot to draw on the experience of people in the academic community.”

The conference, which was attended by high-level government officials, bankers, and academics from over 30 countries in the world, was organized by AUB’s Olayan Business School. It aimed at discussing the importance of applying DEA to performance management and measurement in both public and private sectors.

DEA is a nonparametric method in operations research and economics for the estimation of production frontiers. It is used to measure empirically productive efficiency of decision making units.

DEA was defined by Associate Professor Ibrahim Osman as being “an ongoing management improvement process of the overall health of an organization unit by comparison to best practices of peer alternatives.”

Osman underlined the importance of DEA by saying that one cannot manage what one cannot measure. “Around 45 percent of people make decisions according to their feelings and hence, 67 percent of companies who are supposed to be more efficient than governments achieve only 60 percent of their goals,” he said. “I leave it to your imagination to assess how the government’s performance would be.”

Osman called upon Hariri and Mitri to establish a center in Lebanon specialized in decision making.

For his part, Rajev Banker, who is Merves Chair in Accounting and Technology at Fox School, explained that there are a wide range of resources that are required in order to produce what is desired by the various constituents of an organization. “This is done in the context of a wide range of external forces that impact organizations. The way you take all that into consideration at the same time is the challenge that DEA has been addressing over the past 30 years.”

OSB Associate Dean Khalil Hindi praised AUB’s role in knowledge creation and knowledge transfer in addition to the University’s efforts in organizing such international conferences. “For us, this particular conference has additional significance, for we seek to provide a business education that is steeped in the disciplines and that emphasizes analytics,” he said. “What can better serve this purpose than a conference that introduces our students and faculty to an area of intellectual endeavor that is deeply rooted in the science of planning better, doing better, and evaluating better?” he asked.

Provost Ahmad Dallal also commended the conference,
Blogshops

Anita Greenhill, senior lecturer in technology management at the University of Manchester, addressed an AUB audience about the social impact of technology in the workforce in a conference organized by the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business.

Dubbed “Blogshops: Technology and Social Networking in E-commerce,” the June 1, 2010 lecture focused mainly on 13 to 22-year-old girls in Singapore who resort to blogshops in the aim of selling unwanted goods to other people to make extra money.

Blogshops are currently expanding from Singapore to other national, on-line e-commerce sites.

Greenhill’s research reveals an unusual business and management practice where technology, globalized youth culture, social networking, and e-commerce have merged ostensibly to sell fashion objects for financial gain, but more subtly, to benefit the social standing of an individual.

“It is an interesting development because it is about young girls in a unique situation taking advantage of e-commerce and the need and desire to get rid of goods and make money, in addition to being involved in the economic process,” said Greenhill.

Greenhill explained that girls take pictures of themselves in various things they are selling. “They operate in terms and conditions that are entirely left to the host. The girls write these rules,” she said. “They directly make this money, and it goes to their pockets while nobody else is involved. They run with no budget and no investment, and anyone can do it in theory.”

This is why, she added, the Singapore government has taken some legal measures to stop the practice, under the pretext that “Transactions are not official and no taxes are being paid.”

Greenhill said that Singapore has a wonderful train system which these girls take advantage of to exchange products and money. “You can get anywhere across the city on the train. So for our study it is interesting that they are redeploying existing cultural practices specific to location and region to carry out this entrepreneurial activity.”

This action entails a huge amount of trust so one must be living in a very secure society to perform these actions, Greenhill added.

The girls, she said, step outside the normal shopping environment as a form of capitalist resistance being experienced on-line. “The technology and knowledge that these girls have is enabling them to do something that is unusual.”
AUB students attack Bliss Street trash problem

Business ethics students hashed out ideas for improving hygienic and environmental standards by Bliss Street establishments, through class presentations made to an eight-member jury which selected the winners.

The presentations were part of an assignment for Business 215, a business ethics course given by Professor Dima Jamali. The assignment called for addressing the Bliss Street trash problem and identifying both those responsible and feasible solutions.

“We need to acknowledge that there is a waste and garbage problem on Bliss Street,” said student Wael Mekdash during the presentations, which took place on May 20, 2010, in the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business. “The AUB community litters and the retail stores place their trash bags directly across the street from their shops, with no respect for the environment and other people.”

An eight-member jury was appointed to elect the winning presentation. The panel included: Cynthia Myntti, director of the AUB Neighborhood Initiative; Fadia Homeidan, director of the AUB Office of Grants and Contracts, Professor Mouunir Mabsout, director of the AUB Center for Civic Engagement; Professor Hanin Abdalllah, assistant dean of Student Affairs at the OSB; Professor Jad Chaaban, assistant professor of agricultural sciences; Ziad Abichaker of the Cedar Environmental Company, and Leila Bsat, a Bliss Street resident.

Students Mariam Akkou, Wael Mekdash, Grace Rahhal, and Lana Sabayon stressed the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) with regard to trash on Bliss Street. CSR is defined as ethical behavior by establishments, which contributes to a healthier environment and the well-being of society as a whole. The second group of students, Sarah Fawaz, Rana Yassen, and Dana Mahdi, evaluated the trash problem by calling it a collective rather than an individual problem; its resolution can only be realized through aggregated efforts. The two groups interviewed Malik El Taouk, McDonald’s, Burger King, Hardees, Bliss House, and Zaatar w Zeit, the Municipality of Beirut, the Ministry of Tourism, and International College to try to evaluate them in terms of CSR and the Bliss Street trash problem.

“What became apparent to us is that all parties involved threw the blame and responsibility on one another, with no one ready to undertake an initiative and be the leader in generating and implementing a comprehensive solution,” Akkou said.

The first group suggested that the restaurants adopt the conviction CSR, whereby they behave ethically for the sake of the environment, rather than compliance CSR, where the real objective is satisfying customers and adopting a good reputation.

Their proposed solutions included a sit-in organized by International College, AUB, and St. Mary’s Orthodox School to protest against the Bliss establishments.

“The main problem with this solution is that it is not realistic to expect establishments to adopt conviction CSR,” said jury member Professor Chaaban. “The more effective way would be to hit them where it hurts: Establishments are most concerned about keeping customers and [reaping in] financial benefit. If, for example, students advertised about the establishments’ unhygienic practices by passing out flyers at Main Gate, the establishments would be motivated to clean up their act to keep their customers.”

The second group of students suggested that the solution might lie with AUB, which could offer restaurants monetary compensation for purchasing their recyclable items, in addition to gathering the restaurants’ organic waste and composting it in AREC to produce fertilizer.

Another solution would be to provide compressed dumpsters that prevent the release of odors and the breeding of pests, with separate bins for glass, paper, and plastic.

The jury thought that the bins were a good idea, but that it would not be realistic for AUB to take on the task of composting and recycling because the costs would outweigh the benefits. For example, the cost of transporting the organic waste to AREC would far outweigh the advantages of using the fertilizer produced.

After the vote, both groups were named winners, and prizes were distributed.
Byblos Bank Donates $50,000 to OSB

Within the framework of the joint cooperation between Byblos Bank and the Olayan School of Business at AUB, a ceremony was held on campus on June 22, 2010, during which, Semaan Bassil, vice-chairman and general manager of the Byblos Bank Group, handed over to OSB Dean George K. Najjar a check for $50,000 to establish the Byblos Bank OSB Faculty Research and Development Fund in support of research activities at OSB.

Dean Najjar thanked Bassil for the support of the Byblos Bank Group and lauded the ongoing constructive cooperation between the two institutions, noting that several joint projects are under way. He added that strong ties with the business community are a strategic imperative for OSB and an integral part of its mission.

Bassil responded by underscoring Byblos Bank's commitment to cooperating with AUB and OSB in pursuit of common goals. He said, "We are carrying out this initiative today as a step forward in Byblos Bank's support for research and education in Lebanon. We believe that research is crucial for invigorating our economy, generating job opportunities, and retaining high-level skills and talents." He added, "Byblos Bank is a major economic and financial player that has a long history of fruitful collaboration with Lebanese universities, in general, and AUB in particular. We really hope that this contribution to research will be of inspiration to other influential institutions in Lebanon."

EDSU celebrates 10 years of environment work

Members of the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS) at AUB gathered on May 21, 2010, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU).

Speaking at the ceremony, FAFS Dean Nahla Hwalla underlined the vital role FAFS played in introducing the green revolution to Lebanon and the region "where the main challenge was to feed an ever-growing population and at the same time address environmental and natural resource challenges."

"Even at the height of the Lebanese [civil] war, FAFS did not stop innovating, thinking and rethinking the academic fundamentals of agriculture, nutrition, food systems, and the application of these fundamentals in Lebanon and the region," Hwalla added.

She paid tribute to ESDU for innovating since its inception new research methods.

"It was established as an experimental and research and development platform to serve our vision on how we can... ensure that research is grounded according to the needs of the local people," she said.

Hwalla added that ESDU represents an important milestone in the consolidation of the regional outreach of FAFS.

"We would also like to see ESDU playing a more active academic role in FAFS, especially when it comes to the rural community development program that we are planning to launch very soon," she said.

Meanwhile, Professor Shadi Hamadeh, who chairs the Animal Science Department at AUB, overviewed the beginnings of ESDU and the difficulties faced by FAFS members back in the early 1990s.

"We discovered that FAFS was in a complete coma and resistant to change. We were teaching the same old courses and we had to do research with relevance to community needs," he said.

Faculty members back then would find themselves Continued
underwriting their own research projects in order to conduct community-based studies that piqued their interest, said Hamadeh.

Hamadeh stated that it was International Development and Research Center (IDRS) Director Eglal Rashed who recognized the potential of FAFS members when a big grant allowed the launch of the famous Aarsal project, the first pilot community-based project linking research to development. “This project ended up being an international success,” Hamadeh said.

Environment Professor Rami Zurayk said that while funds for ESDU were increasing year after year, relying solely on external funding restricts the freedom of researchers who have to abide by the agendas imposed by funding parties.

ESDU was established in 2001 at FAFS to promote collaboration on sustainable development initiatives among AUB departments and a wide variety of other institutions and organizations undertaking related activities.

Studies reveal Lebanese getting fatter

Lebanon will face an epidemic of obesity-related illnesses, if adults, adolescents, and children continue to put on weight, according to two national obesity surveys carried out by AUB.

Through collaborative efforts of the Nutrition and Food Science Department at the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS) and the Faculty of Health Sciences, two studies, in 1997 and 2008, showed an alarming trend in the percentage of the population which is overweight.

Results showed that 53 percent of people over 20 were overweight in 1997, a figure that continues to grow. A two-fold increase was observed from 1997 to 2008 among the elderly population and the percentage of overweight youths (aged 6-19) grew from 20 percent in 1997 to 35 percent in 2008, with a doubling in obesity rates.

The studies found that the Lebanese population will face a spate of obesity-related illnesses if current trends continue. Although being overweight should be considered a disease on its own, it is also one of the key risk factors for other conditions including type two diabetes, hypertension, and some forms of cancer.

Obesity in Lebanon is mainly due to poor dietary practices, consisting of a high-fat diet and consumption of soda drinks, the studies found. Researchers revealed that adults who were the least educated and married were also more prone to being overweight. As for adolescents and children, the majority who were least physically active had the highest rates of excessive weight.

According to Dean Nahla Hwalla at FAFS, there was a need to draw on the latest scientific evidence to recommend mobilization efforts to the government, international agencies, and local communities.

In addition, preventive action is needed to reduce the prevalence of overweight people through proper educational practices, public health campaigns, and intervention programs.
Some of the major problems the agriculture sector in Lebanon suffers from include mismanagement, over-productivity of certain crops, and the lack of cooperative work and markets. These problems were addressed in the Establishment and Management of Cooperatives workshop at AREC on May 15 attended by farmers from the Deir El Almar region, representatives from the Beqa'a cooperatives, and current students. It was funded by the “Istituto per la Cooperazione Universitaria” from Italy.

The workshop addressed the challenges faced by cooperatives, from geographic boundaries to personal identities and objectives, to the marketing of agricultural products, to the financial control of cooperatives. The participants also actively discussed the funding of cooperative projects, including governmental support, the National Union for cooperative crediting, and the National Bank for agricultural development.

The workshop also addressed other topics, including farmers and the agricultural market. Participants discussed the conditions needed for forming agricultural markets, the marketability of products, VAT rates, and the need to link productivity to the agricultural market.

To understand the root causes of problems the Middle East faces, analysts and scholars should examine Arab regimes, but also Arab society as a whole, said Brian Whitaker during a talk at the American University of Beirut on June 9, 2010.

“There’s a discrepancy between the problems of the Middle East as perceived from the West and the problems as perceived by Arabs themselves,” said Whitaker to an audience of AUB academics and students, journalists, and Middle East specialists.

Sponsored by AUB’s Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, Whitaker’s talk highlighted some of the main problems that plague the Middle East region today and touched on the ongoing processes of change. “Processes of change [in the Middle East] are already underway; they may be patchy and slow, but they are already happening,” said Whitaker, referring to the current public debate about gender segregation in Saudi Arabia.

These processes of change are driven by globalization, satellite TV, and the internet.

In his recent book, entitled, What’s Really Wrong with the Middle East, published by Saqi (2009), Whitaker highlights some of the grievances of the Arabs, including nepotism, corruption, family pressure, and lack of accountability. Whitaker also underlined the mismatch between western and Arab perceptions of what is wrong with the Middle East. The West blames “dictators and extremists while Arabs blame centuries of foreign interference,” said Whitaker.

The problems of the Arab region are not "exclusively Arabs' problems." In a globalized and highly inter-dependent...
A wide difference exists between Islamism and jihadism, said a prominent United States political theorist during the open discussion “Understanding Jihadi Ideology” held at AUB June 11, 2010.

During a talk organized by the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, Nelly Lahoud, assistant professor of political theory, including Islamic political thought, at Goucher College explained that Islamists form political parties and participate in elections held in their home countries.

She argued, however, that jihadists do not join political processes, since they reject the idea of nations, which they consider to compromise God’s law.

“Jihadists point to the failure of Islamic groups in achieving change by adapting to political progress,” Lahoud told the audience, which included political studies Professor Ahmad Moussalli and instructor in international affairs, Timur Goksel.

Lahoud focused on Sunni groups adopting military doctrinal jihad like Al-Qaeda and Jaish Al-Islam in the Gaza strip.

Many jihadi groups term modern nation states corrupt and seek to establish an Islamic caliphate, asserted Lahoud.

She explained that jihadists believe Muslims are being attacked by their corrupt leaders who rule in un-Islamic ways and enjoy Western support. Accordingly, jihadists position themselves against their leaders, promoting the defensive doctrine of jihad.

“Jihad as an individual duty is a key dimension in jihadism,” explained Lahoud.

Lahoud noted that the second feature of military jihadists is promotion of loyalty to principles rather than to leaders or parents, an interpretation of jihad enabling jihadi movements to mobilize youth by urging them to serve God rather than succumb to their parents’ will. “They give the youth the religious ammunition to fight against their parents,” argued Lahoud, quoting some Al-Qaeda leaders.

Besides obeying principles and adopting military jihad to defend Muslims, Lahoud pointed out that all jihadists interpret religion independently from religious authorities.

Lahoud touched on some weaknesses of the jihadi
The first conference of the Kamal A. Shair Central Research Science Laboratory (KAS CRSL) was held at AUB on Thursday, June 17, 2010. Convened by KAS CRSL Director Youssef Mouneimne, the event was held to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the lab, which serves AUB professors and students, encouraging research on all applied science at the University. The conference was held at the Charles Hostler Auditorium on the AUB campus. Established in 2000, the lab was dedicated in 2007 to the late Kamal A. Shair in recognition of a financial donation granted by Shair to the facility.

During the first session of the conference, Professor Mouneimne said that AUB was planning to expand the core lab to accommodate more equipment and researchers. Faculty of Arts and Sciences Dean Patrick McGreevy said that KAS CRSL has set an example for other universities in pooling resources and using them strategically. Faculty of Engineering and Architecture Dean Ibrahim Hajj paid tribute to Kamal Shair, who was also a member of AUB’s Board of Trustees, for the support he provided to the central lab.

He also noted that AUB will recruit more researchers in KAS CRSL. Dr. Ali Bazarbachi, associate dean for basic science research at the Faculty of Medicine, emphasized research as a priority for the faculty. He outlined a number of achievements by the Faculty of Medicine including the establishment of a regulatory internal structure for biomedical sciences, institutional animal care, and a renovation project which will transform the Diana Tamari Sabbagh Building into a collection of “centers of research excellence” in the coming few years.

Following the introductory speeches, several research studies in various scientific fields were highlighted. Professor Hala Gali-Muhtasib, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, discussed the results of her research on thymoquinone from the black seed plant, which has shown a promising role in the treatment of colon cancer. Professor Antoine Ghauch, Chemistry Department, talked about the results of his research on eliminating residual medicine from water by micrometric iron particles.

Later an award was distributed to the best researcher.
AUB trains and recruits people with disabilities

AUB departments were honored during the closing ceremony of a project aimed at giving people with disabilities better representation in social and economic life.

The Youth Association for the Blind (YAB), Mercy Corps and the Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union (LPHU) initiated the USAID-funded the Towards Inclusive Development in Lebanon project, which sought to give disabled individuals access to regular employment.

The project’s final session took place on May 26, 2010 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, with introductory speeches by YAB President Amer Makarem, Mercy Corps Country Director Steven Haley, and Kimberly De Laney, USAID’s acting mission director. Mounir Mabsout, director of the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS), represented AUB in his introductory speech.

Fadia Homaidan, director of the Office of Grants and Contracts at AUB, was approached by Mercy Corps and YAB in May 2009 and asked whether AUB would train two interns. Both the electrical and computer engineering and the biology departments agreed to train Hilmat Al Mawla, who has a physical disability, and Sanaa Shayya, who is visually impaired. Two months into the project, Fatme Masalkhi and Nagat Nazzal, who are both visually impaired, were received by the CCECS and the Office of Development.

Other interns were also received at the AUB Medical Center.

“We had to overcome many obstacles and limitations when we embarked on this project, but the results were absolutely rewarding,” said Mabsout.

Visually impaired Masalkhi and Nazzal received at AUB

“[This project] showed us that while [people with disabilities] face many challenges to break into the workforce, organizations benefit when they open their doors and help them in,” said De Laney.

Representing Haigazian University, Salpi Jalian, coordinator of Human Resources, said that given the opportunity, “communities can be educated to realize that [people with disabilities] have the skill to be major contributors in the circle in which they live.”

Mabsout said that the project could “lead to actual opportunities for work.”

The interns received training in basic skills, such as computer literacy and English language proficiency, and showed significant progress by the end of the sessions.

Both Masalkhi and Nazzal have been offered casual jobs at AUB for a period of four months.

The ceremony closed with the distribution of certificates to the trainees and presentation of awards to the hosting institutions.

AUB was presented with four awards in appreciation of its willingness to host four trainees in four departments. AUBMC was also honored with an award.

A sixth award was presented to Homaidan, for her unstinting support of the project.
Experts tackle health education

A prominent regional NGO joined AUB professors, students, and public health activists in an event aimed at bridging the gap between civil society and marginalized Lebanese communities.

At AUB in late May, members of American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) and the Outreach and Practice Unit (OPU) at AUB's Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) shared advice about best practices in discouraging smoking and promoting proper nutrition, exercise, and healthy feeding practices for infants and children at AUB.

The festival also included parades and interactive activities prepared by community members and FHS students.

Tamar Kabakian, associate professor in the FHS Department of Health, Behavior, and Health Education, thanked ANERA “for creating this beautiful environment on the campus and for giving the opportunity for our students to meet health activists from different communities, who were very motivated to discuss health topics and share their experiences from the field.”

The activities met the OPU's objectives of facilitating the transfer of skills and knowledge in various fields (including public health) and developing human capabilities and promoting the culture of collective responsibility.

ANERA has worked for more than 40 years in the region, providing development, health, education, and employment programs to Palestinian communities and impoverished families in Lebanon, Jordan, the West Bank, and Gaza.

Wellness Program promotes healthier AUB community

In the spirit of preserving the health of the community, the AUB Wellness program has been responding in an efficient and timely manner to the AUB community’s health needs and concerns.

Since 2006, the Committee on University Wellness (CUW)—a part of the AUB Wellness Program, under the jurisdiction of University Health Services—has held activities to improve the health and wellbeing of the AUB community at large, with emphasis on active staff, faculty members, and students.

In 2009-10, the CUW offered a range of free activities. First came the creative and comprehensive awareness campaign, Keep the Flu Away. The CUW provided educational sessions for dormitory students and housekeeping staff, trained student reporters for dormitories, and constructed a webpage highlighting flu prevention measures.

A Taste of Fitness, included sessions in yoga, aerobics and Pilates for students and staff at the Charles Hostler Center.

The Fit-a-Thon, a 30-minute walk through campus led by the university athletics staff, was the next step towards promoting wellness. During the walk, the participants stopped at several booths to receive nutrition, exercise, and health-related educational materials as well as to participate in health awareness activities.

The AUB Medical Center Nursing Services offered a Heart-Saver CPR Certification session, certified by the American Heart Association, to five dormitory resident
assistants and 10 staff members from the offices of Athletics and Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management.

Communicating Our Problems Effectively (COPE), coupled a two-day experiential, interactive, and participatory stress management workshop for students with counseling. Back and Neck Pain at Work was an ergonomics awareness workshop for 160 participants, hosted by the Physiology Department. You Think What You Eat, a workshop offered to dormitory students, covered two days and dealt with eating in relation to stress.

The CUW also provided an awareness session, How Tobacco Companies Get You to Smoke, including a short movie projection of the documentary Making a Killing as well as a discussion facilitated by physician Norbert Hirschhorn and Lebanese journalist Rania Baroud.

The committee plans to continue its activities in 2010-11 in order to familiarize the AUB community with the presence and impact of its program.

AUB doctors perform first PVI operation

Two AUB doctors performed the first operation in Lebanon and the region for the treatment of atrial fibrillation, a common condition causing irregular heart rhythm and possibly leading to stroke and heart failure.

Atrial fibrillation afflicts six percent of people over 60 years old.

Drs. Oussama Wazni and Maurice Khoury from the Electrophysiology Section and the Division of Cardiology in the Department of Internal Medicine at the AUB Medical Center performed the first pulmonary vein isolation (PVI) procedure for the treatment of atrial fibrillation in the region.

During the PVI, doctors insert catheters (long, flexible tubes) into the veins of the leg and guide the catheters into the left atrium under intracardiac echo guidance.

Radiofrequency energy is delivered with three-dimensional mapping guidance through the tip of the catheter to tissue targeted for ablation. The procedure lasts about three to six hours.
A single procedure is completely curative in 80 to 85 percent of patients with paroxysmal atrial fibrillation unassociated with any other heart disease.

Dr. Wazni, formerly the director of the Electrophysiology Lab at Cleveland Clinic, recently joined AUBMC. The Electrophysiology Section at AUBMC was established by Dr. Khoury in 1996 and has been the leader in implementing new device therapies for the treatment of patients with heart failure and heart rhythm disease.

International nurses honor society launched

The Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society is a global society of nurses who use their knowledge and skills to help people make health-care decisions and strengthen the ideals of nursing, said Christine Abbyad, clinical assistant professor of nursing at AUB’s Rafic Hariri School of Nursing (HSON), during the first informational meeting held on June 24, 2010, in the Hisham Jaroudi Auditorium at HSON.

An honor society recognizes “the superior achievements, academic and professional, of nurses, promotes high standards, encourages creativity, and strengthens the ideals of nursing,” said Abbyad to an audience which included HSON Director Huda Huijer, professor of nursing; Myma Doumit, assistant professor at HSON; Nuhad Dumit, associate professor of nursing; Marjan Fooladi, professor and Fulbright scholar at the HSON; and other HSON faculty members and graduates, nursing leaders, and BSN and MSN nursing students.

Many efforts have been made since the 1990s to launch a Lebanese chapter of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society. Once the Lebanon Honor Society Chapter is launched, it would be the first Honor Society of international significance in the Middle East, noted Huijer. “What better place to launch the [Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society Lebanon Chapter] than at HSON at AUB,” said Huijer.

The qualifications for joining the chapter include being a graduate of the BSN and MSN programs at AUB or an AUB nursing student who meets eligibility criteria for membership, being a nursing leader, holding a baccalaureate degree or equivalent in any field, and demonstrating achievement in the field of nursing.

“Establishing the AUB Honor Society of Nursing reaffirms our vision to be nationally and internationally recognized for excellence in education, research, and service and for recognizing graduates and nursing leaders who excel in all these areas,” said Huijer.

Being “part of an honor society is an honor; you feel you are part of a global community,” said Abbyad.
Spain donates Jafet Library book exhibition

The exhibition of 450 volumes by creative Spanish book designers should encourage AUB students to look at books as objects of art, according to Provost Ahmad Dallal, speaking at the opening ceremony of the “Ready to Read: Book Design from Spain” exhibition, held outdoors between College Hall and Jafet Library on May 26, 2010.

Present at the event were Spanish Ambassador Juan Carlos Gafo and Luis Prados, first counselor at the Embassy of Spain in Lebanon.

AUB’s Jafet library has been chosen by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the Spanish State Agency for Design and Innovation Development as the permanent home for the book exhibition.

The exhibition’s curator, Enric Satue, an award-winning Spanish designer, design historian, university professor, and author, selected books printed in Spain between 2000 and 2006, from conventional and unorthodox publishing houses.

The wide-ranging variety of books, from books on literature to books on architecture and children’s collections, is displayed in an intimate setting created by designer Jaime Hayon, who tried to recreate the atmosphere of a traditional bookshop.

Lokman Meho, director of University Libraries, said the addition of the valuable books would add to the diversity, strength, and uniqueness of Jafet’s collection.

The “Listos Para Leer” (Ready to Read) exhibition is part of a project intended to foster mutual understanding between designers and publishers in Spain and the host countries, as well as book lovers throughout the world, Gafo said.

Zeina Maasri, associate professor of graphic design in the Department of Architecture and Design at AUB and co-organizer of the exhibition, said bookmaking is a craft in its own right. The design and content of a book complement one another, she added.

Zaki Nassif 2010 music program competition

Schools from across Lebanon participated in the music competition, A Choir from Every School 2010, organized by AUB’s Zaki Nassif Music Program. Performances by winners took place at the Assembly Hall on May 21, 2010.

The competition aimed at encouraging students to appreciate Oriental music and get closer to their roots, Salma Oueida, associate director of Development at AUB, told the audience, which included Patrick McGreevy, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), former FAS Dean Khalil Bitar, AUB choir Director Paul Meers, and the principals of participating schools.

The Zaki Nassif Music Program at AUB honored Meers, a “tireless, enthusiastic music adviser, who pushed to make [tonight’s concert] possible,” said McGreevy. Under Meers’ directorship, “the choir has grown and its ripples felt well beyond AUB’s gate.”

Continued
McGreevy and Nabil Nassif, AUB mathematics professor and Zaki Nassif’s nephew, presented Meers with a plaque recognizing his efforts in developing the choir.

Themes of songs performed during the concert turned on innocence and the pain of growing up during war.

The choir of the Antonine Sisters’ School in Ghazir, directed by Frederika Ammouri, came third in the competition, tying with the Louise Wegmann School choir, from Bchemoun, directed by Paula Kabbani.

The Hariri III School Choir, directed by Nidal Abu Samra, won second place while the American Community School (ACS) choir, directed by AUB choir member Yara al-Rabb, and the Lebanese School for the Blind in Baabda, shared first place.

Two young violin players from ACS charmed the audience as they accompanied their choir. The concert’s highlight, however, was when the choir of the School for the Blind sang to a standing ovation.

The family of Salvador Arnita, former AUB professor of music and former choir conductor, established the school choir award in recognition of students’ musical talent and achievements. First, second, and third prizes were $1,500, $1,000, and $500.
The Ayadina Association, which often holds a series of fundraising events in collaboration with the Office of Communications at AUB throughout the year, recently held a major fundraising garden lunch in Sofar on Saturday, June 19, 2010.

Ayadina’s work is focused on helping the aged and the young from underprivileged neighborhoods. Held at the Donna Maria Sursock Gardens, the event attracted over 200 guests of all ages from among Ayadina’s growing community of friends and supporters.

Proceeds from the fundraising activity will be used to finance a broad range of Ayadina programs for senior citizens and youngsters of the Nabaa/Sin El Fil area, one of Beirut’s most impoverished neighborhoods.

The fundraising lunch, supported by the Byblos and Federal banks, was sponsored by the National Bank of Kuwait and its Group CEO, Ibrahim Dabdoub.

The Ayadina Association holds a series of fundraising events every year, including benefit Christmas concerts in collaboration with AUB.