



THE BALAMANDIANS

EDITORIAL

GRADUATION CEREMONY

COMMENCEMENT SPEECH BY
PRESIDENT WARRAK

KEYNOTE SPEECH BY DR. DIMITRI
AZAR

SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Nadeem Abu Rustum
MP Fayçal El Khoury
Vice President for
Internationalization & Engagement
Prof. Ramí Abboud

ABET ACCREDITATION

ALUMNI FEATURES

Ms. Sophie Boutros
Dr. Camille Hage
Ms. Samia Jamali
Mr. Gaby Al Aridi

FACULTY NEWS

Dr. Mervat El Hoz
Dr. Charbel Dagher
Ms. Ursula Rizk

STUDENT AWARDS

High Early Strength Binder
Engineering Student Awards
Structural Engineering Projects
Competition
Universiade 2019

AGREEMENTS

Litani River Authority and UOB
sign agreement to support natural
resources management
Saving lives with GIS
UOB signs Agreement with Dreib
Union of Municipalities, SKL -
International, and G8T Solutions

EVENTS

Closing Ceremony of Tripoli Social
Leaders' Program
International Museum Day
Spring Festival



FROM THE EDITOR

Dear alumni and friends,

Welcome to the fall 2019 edition of the Balamandians newsletter. We are pleased to publish this issue which includes different topics that reflect the commitment of the University of Balamand through its different faculties to provide students with quality education by creating knowledge, and building a conducive environment for teaching and learning.

The huge impact the University of Balamand has had and continues to have is evident.

On June 2019, we celebrated the graduation of 1,328 students at the commencement ceremony.

As we reflect on commencement, and celebrate the beginning of the academic year, this issue highlights the commencement speech by President Warrak, and the keynote speech by Dr. Dimitri Azar who told the graduates that “today's commencement marks the beginning of your careers as alumni of this great University”.

As such, this issue highlights success stories from our alumni, faculty members, and how new board of trustees members volunteer their time and expertise to contribute to the success of the University.

We also celebrate the beginning of the new academic year with an interview featuring Vice President for Internationalization and Engagement and Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Prof. Rami Abboud, who is thrilled to be joining the Faculty of Engineering at a time when we receive the ABET accreditation.

You can also read about the learning opportunities and innovative projects, and the many ways our students, faculty members and alumni promote the presence of the University.

Finally, we hope this issue will encourage you to have a positive influence on others.

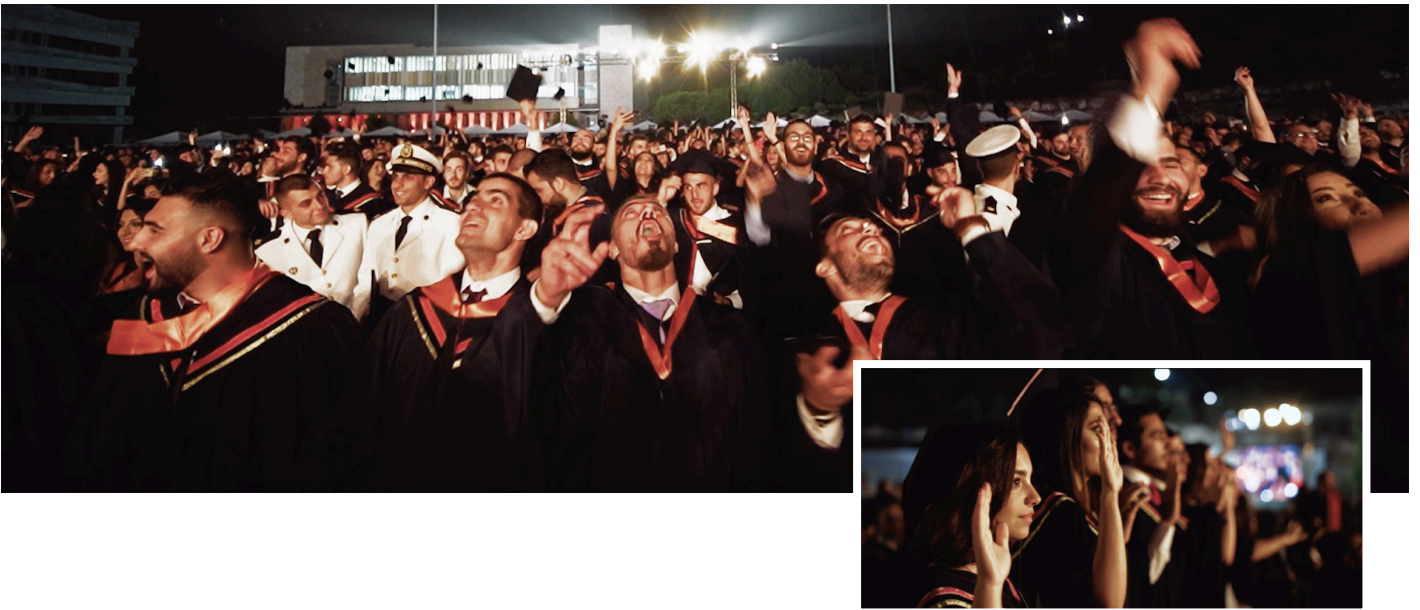
LEGEND

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CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2019



“Honor your father and mother for they are the blessing of heaven on earth. Obey them for this pleases the Lord...”

President Elias L. Warrak

On June 22, 1,328 students celebrated their graduation from the University of Balamand in a ceremony that took place at the University's main campus, with the participation of thousands of parents, friends, and faculty members. The ceremony was held under the auspices and presence of His Beatitude Patriarch John X who delivered a short prayer to the graduating students.

President Elias Warrak, in turn, addressed the students, telling them “I am pleased to be with you here today on your graduation day from your beloved University, that shares with you the pain of farewell, and on the other hand, celebrates your success”.

President Warrak offered commandments to the graduating class and urged them to humble themselves, to dream big, and to face their fears. “Honor your father and mother for they are the blessing of heaven on earth. Obey them for this pleases the Lord. They are the anonymous soldiers who sacrifice their lives for you to win the battles of life and enjoy the victory”, he said.

GRADUATION CEREMONY

He also reminded the graduating students to be loyal to their family, community and professors.

“Be loyal to your family, to your community, and to your country; a country that lives up to your dreams, a country that fights to keep its children to their families and prevents their immigration”, he concluded.

The keynote speaker for the evening was Dr. Dimitri Azar, Senior Director at Google Verily Life Sciences who expressed that “today’s commencement marks the beginning of their careers as alumni of this great university”. He also echoed the significance of taking satisfaction in the fact that graduates are being recognized as future leaders in their fields in interest. He continued: “For those of you who will stay in Lebanon, you will reinforce the ties between your university and the people of this great country and the ties between each other. And for those of you fanning out across the world, you’ll take the same satisfaction, the same values, and the spirit of giving to your new communities”.



I am confident that the foundation in education that you have received here, at Balamand University, has prepared you for continued success”

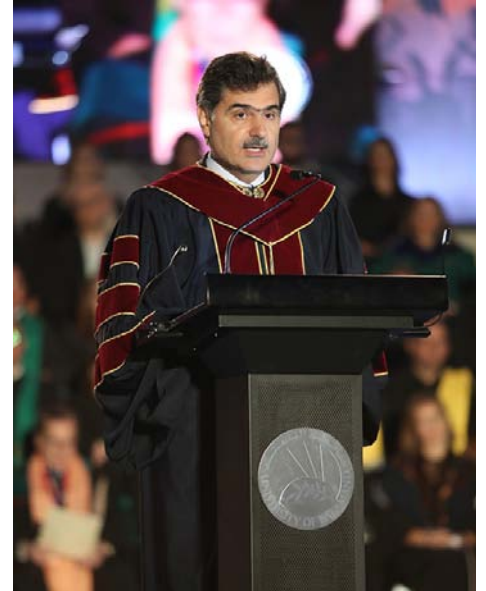
He also encouraged students to make their own contributions to world science, technology, engineering, art, literature, mathematics, philosophy and healthcare, in order to continue the tradition of scholarship and leadership. Dr. Azar also spoke about his personal experience in Google Verily Life Sciences, where he highlighted the importance of working in convergent fields with brilliant engineers to create digitally- enabled solutions for medical and ophthalmic conditions.

He concluded: “your careers will take you into challenging jobs or demanding postgraduate programs. I am confident that the foundation in education that you have received here, at Balamand University, has prepared you for continued success”.

Congratulations Class of 2019, and all the best to you!

كلمة الدكتور الياس وراق رئيس جامعة البلمند في إحتفال التخرج

يوم السبت في ٢٢ حزيران ٢٠١٩



صاحب الغبطة البطريرك يوحنا العاشر الكلي الطوبى،
أصحاب السيادة والمعالي والسعادة،
أعزائي الخريجين وعائلاتهم،

يُسعدني اليوم أن أشارككم حفل تخرّجكم، تخرّجكم من جامعة أحببتموها
وأحببتكم، تألمت لحرزكم وابتهجت لفرحكم.
هذه الجامعة الأم تحزن لمعادرتكم، حزن الأم لسفر أولادها، ولكنها تذرف دموع الفرح
لأنها أودعتكم بذوراً إذا ما أحسنتم زرعها، تفتحت مُستقبلاً زاهراً قليئاً بالرجاء، مُفجماً
بحب الحياة وبريق الأمل. في هذا اليوم أستودعكم ببعض الخواطر، خواطر أعطيها
وَصايا الأب لأبنائه.
أوصيكم بالتواضع، فهو من شيم أهل العلم والمعرفة. هو الطريق الأقرب لقلوب
الناس والمثال الأجدى أن يُحتذى به. إنه دليل الإيمان الحق والرجاء الصالح.

أوصيكم أن تحلموا، فالعلم أساس الحياة. فمن لا يجرؤ أن يحلم، لا يجرؤ أن يعيش.
أحلامكم إذا اقتزنت بالعلم والمعرفة، أصبحت سبيل النجاح وطريق المستقبل،
«واعلموا أن أحلام الذين ينامون على الريش ليست أجمل من أحلام الذين يفترشون
الأرض»، كما قال جبران خليل جبران.

أوصيكم أن لا تخافوا الفشل، فإنه تنبعث شرارة الإبداع. إجعلوا من فشلكم سبباً
للنهوض نحو مستقبل مُشرق وحياة أفضل.

أوصيكم أن تحفظوا كرامتكم واعلموا أنها أعلى ما عندهم. ضعوا حيث لا يمكن أن
تلامسوها. ولا تدخلوها جيوبكم كي لا تدفعوا منها ثمناً لمصالحكم. فالكرامة لا تُباع،
ولا تُشتري، ولا تُسترد.

”أوصيكم أن
تحلموا، فالعلم
أساس الحياة.
فمن لا يجرؤ أن
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أصبحت سبيل
النجاح وطريق
المستقبل.“

الدكتور الياس وراق

”أوصيكم أن لا
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للنهوض نحو
مستقبل مُشرق
وحياة أفضل“

الدكتور الياس وراق

أوصيكم أن تحترموا الوقت، أن تُقدِّروا الدقيقة في الساعة والثانية في الدقيقة، فالوقت كما المال قيمته بما تفعلوا به. والوقت كالكرامة إن ذهب فلن يعود. أوصيكم أن لا تخافوا الخوف، فالخوف هو عقل الشجاعة. ومن لا يخاف لا عقل له. ولكن لا تجزعوا فجزع القبطان يُغرق السفينة.

أوصيكم أن تحفظوا حرية فكريكم، فحرية الفكر هي السبيل إلى الإبداع، وهي أمل الشعوب في التطور، ورجاء الأوطان في الإصلاح.

أوصيكم أن نُحيوا بمخافة الله وحفظ تعاليمه. فالأديان يجب أن تُمارس، وأن تكون أسلوب حياة لا كلمات تُرددها في دور العبادة، ونحيا بعكس ما تقول. كُونا المبشرين بالسلام والمحبة والتعايش بين الأديان، نابذين الحقد والكراهية والمتاجرة بالشعائر الدينية. أُحبوا بعضكم بعضاً كما قال السيد المسيح. وتذكروا أن «الخلق كلهم عيال الله، أُحبهم إليه أنفعهم لعِيالِهِ»، كما جاء في الحديث الشريف.

أوصيكم أن تحفظوا جسديكم، فهو هبة من الله، وقسكن الروح فيكم. فلا تُنهكوه بالسهر، ولا تحتقروه بما لا يليق بأخلاقكم وحسن تربيتكم. فإن أصابكم النعاس إسمحو للنوم أن يتسلل لعيونكم ولكن لا تسمحو للنوم أن يصيب ضمائركم.

أوصيكم أن تُحبوا وتحترموا أهلكم. فهم بركة السماء على الأرض ورضاهم من رضى الخالق. هم الجنود المجهولون الذين يبذلون دماءهم لتريحوا أنتم حروب الحياة وتنعّموا بغنائم النصر.

أوصيكم أن تنتقوا أصدقائكم. «فالصديق المزيف هو كالظل، يسير معكم في الشمس، ويهجركم إذا حل الظلام».

أوصيكم بالكريم وبصنع الخير. فكلما أعطيتكم بلا مقابل كلما زرفتم بلا توقُّع. إعملوا الخير بصوت هادئ لأن أعمالكم تتحدّث عنكم بصوت مُرتفع.

أخيراً أوصيكم أن لا تنسوا ما تعلّمتم، من علم وأخلاق ومعرفة. أذكروا جامعتكم ومن علمكم، أذكروا من ألهمكم ومن ساعدكم. كونوا أوفياء لأهلكم ومجتمعتكم ووطنكم، ووطناً يرقى إلى مستوى أحلامكم. ووطناً يحفظ أولاده لأهلهم ولا يقتات من هجرة أبنائه.

هنيئاً لكم تخرُّجكم. هنيئاً لكل من ساهم وساعد في إيصالكم إلى ما أنتم عليه اليوم.

عشتّم، عاشت البلمند، عاش لبنان.

KEYNOTE SPEECH BY DR. DIMITRI AZAR



Distinguished graduates -

Today's commencement marks the beginning of your careers as alumni of this great University. We are in a commencement ceremony! Calling it a commencement, rather than a graduation ceremony, reminds me of a favorite quote by Sir Winston Churchill:

"This is not the end.

It is not even the beginning of the end.

But it is the end of the beginning".

As graduates of this outstanding Institution, you should take great satisfaction in the fact that you are being recognized as future leaders in your fields of interest. For those of you who will stay in Lebanon, you will reinforce the ties between your university and the people of this great country and the ties between each other. And for those of you fanning out across the world, you'll take the same satisfaction, the same values, and the spirit of giving to your new communities.



Dr. Dimitri Azar is a scholar, a scientist, a creative inventor, a world class academician and an internationally recognized eye surgeon.

Higher education in Lebanon has a rich tradition of excellence and outstanding contributions to world science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics, philosophy, and healthcare. Based on recent statistics from the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 200,000 students are enrolled in the 47 Lebanese Higher Educational Institutions. This country's emphasis on education and knowledge-dissemination can be traced back to the Phoenicians.

And throughout the past millennium-and-a-half, Lebanese and Arab scholars have assimilated the knowledge of neighboring cultures and made innovative

KEYNOTE SPEECH BY DR. DIMITRI AZAR



Dr. Azar's journey started at the American University of Beirut where he completed his Medical Degree, then to Johns Hopkins, onwards to Harvard where he served as a Professor of Ophthalmology and Director of Cornea and Refraction Surgery Services at the Mass Eye and Ear Infirmary. He served as Dean at the University of Illinois' College of Medicine from 2011 to 2018. He then joined Alphabet Verily Life Sciences where he currently holds the title of Senior Director of Ophthalmic Innovations.

Dr. Azar has published over 450 articles and book chapters, 22 textbooks, and 38 patents. He received multiple leadership awards, including the Lans Distinguished Award, and the Barraquer and Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

seminal scientific discoveries and sublime literary and artistic contributions. I encourage you to make your own contributions to continue this tradition of scholarship and leadership. I am confident that one or more of you graduating today will transform our future... It could be you, or one of the graduates sitting next to you!

Soon, your careers will take you into challenging jobs or demanding postgraduate programs. I am confident that the foundation in education that you have received here, at Balamand University, has prepared you for continued success. You have worked hard to reach this day, and you should take great pride in your accomplishments.

You will face rapidly changing fields. New discoveries emerge every day. As you contemplate your future goals, some may advocate that you should plan your life goals in detail and with obsession. My bias, however, is to follow the advice of Constantine Cavafy in his poem Ithaka.

Ithaka is the island destination of Odysseus, or Ulysis, the hero of the Homer's Odyssey. He spent ten years at sea with the single goal of returning to Ithaca and reuniting with his wife, Penelope. Reading the odyssey, we feel the pain and share the agony of Ulysis on his long adventurous journey, as the Laistrygonians devour half his crew, as he struggles to escape the cyclops, Polyphemus, and as he narrowly survives Poseidon's unwavering anger.

In contrast to Homer's Ithaca in the Odyssey, which describes the trials and tribulations of life, Cavafy's Ithaca is about hope. It's a short poem, five stanzas, about the thrill and joy of the journey, published in 1911 by a then-unknown Greek poet living in Alexandria, Egypt. I will read some excerpts:

*"As you set out for Ithaka,
hope your road is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
You'll never find fearful things on your way--
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high.
Wild Poseidon—you won't encounter him
unless you bring him along inside your soul.
Hope your road is a long one.
So you're old by the time you reach the island,
Wealthy with all you've gained on the way!"*

Dear graduates, commencement speakers often give advice to the graduates from personal experience. I have three personal lessons to share today: 1. Challenging oneself to work outside one's zone of comfort; 2. Asking analytical WHY questions; and 3. Compassion.

KEYNOTE SPEECH BY DR. DIMITRI AZAR

“Challenge yourselves to identify areas of convergence of disparate fields: The opportunities for success are immeasurable.”

Dr. Dimitri Azar

I was very CONTENT during my seven-year tenure as Dean of the College of Medicine at the University of Illinois. I was fortunate that we were able to reshape and modernize the curriculum of the largest medical school in the United States by, among other things, updating facilities and introducing more interactive classes. My biggest pride however is that we changed the Medical School's strategy to work outside physicians' comfort zones and capture the convergence between medicine and engineering.

I am now Senior Director at Google Verily Life Sciences. The excitement of working in convergent fields keeps me going: I work with hundreds of brilliant engineers to create digitally-enabled solutions for medical and ophthalmic conditions. One Ophthalmologic example is the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) programs that are training on millions of eye images, and now can diagnose diabetic retinopathy with %98 accuracy in the general practitioner's office, as compared to approximately %85 by an ophthalmologist.

Another example is the development of smart devices in and on the eye that can automatically change power to remain in focus; or devices connected to the cloud to improve the treatment and medication compliance in glaucoma. These smart devices with miniaturized electronics are examples, par excellence, of convergence between the fields of Medicine and Engineering.

To the graduates, I would like to say: Challenge yourselves to identify areas of convergence of disparate fields: The opportunities for success are immeasurable. So are the challenges of working outside your comfort zone. With the appropriate level of humility and courage, you will change the world! Remain open to new ideas and concepts. You will learn in most unexpected ways!

PERSONAL LESSON TWO:

Analytical WHY questions.

Do not settle for the descriptive "WHAT" questions, but rather focus on the analytical "WHY" questions. At the university, your success was based on learning the facts that enabled you to answer the professors' homework and exam questions. Throughout my education and yours, the focus was more on the descriptive "What" rather than the analytical "Why".

The internet will help you answer most, if not all, of the What questions. Your success, however, will be based on your asking worthy analytical Why Questions, which have three foundations: the insight to observe an important gap in knowledge; the desire to make an impact and fill the knowledge gap; and the initiative and gumption to find the answer.

I have long been fascinated with translational research. The research work on corneal tissue healing emerged from my clinical work on Corneal Transplantation surgery and Refractive Surgery. What is unique about the cornea is that when transplanted, it heals with minimal scarring and without blood vessel growth. That doesn't happen in many other parts of the body.

“I am confident that the foundation in education that you have received here, at Balamand University, has prepared you for continued success.”

Dr. Dimitri Azar

A student asked me the WHY question. It took twenty years to arrive at the answer. The result of this quest was the discovery that the cornea produces unique anti-angiogenic molecules, natural substances that inhibit blood vessel growth, we named Neostatins. We are hopeful that these inhibitors of vascularization can be used to treat blood vessel growth that causes macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and other blinding diseases, as well as in the management of malignant cancers.

PERSONAL LESSON THREE:

Compassion and Respect.

I am an opera fan! Opera was developed in the late Renaissance and early Baroque as a form of musical story-telling. In the eighteenth century, educators and philosophers were portrayed as buffoons who did not respect others. This changed in the 19th century when works such as Verdi's *La Traviata* or Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* have the knowledgeable physician playing a compassionate role in caring for the patient. By the 20th century, knowledgeable individuals were depicted as non-compassionate; as in Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, in which an arrogant non-compassionate scientist focuses on the scientific success at the expense of the patient's well-being.

As you gain greater knowledge and higher education, you should guard against the erosion of your humility and compassion. I would like to share a quote that stayed with me from Wagner's *Parsifal*:

"Durch Mitleid Wissend" (THROUGH COMPASSION KNOWLEDGE).

It is important to do a good job, to be excellent. However it is more important to care. Unfortunately, I have observed many learned professionals fail because they were disrespectful, self-indulgent and inconsiderate. They created an artificial dichotomy between knowledge and compassion! They have forgotten that it is through compassion that one will attain special knowledge, self-actualization and, yes, future success!

To the 2019 graduating class I conclude by saying: It is my sincere hope that your life journeys will be long, fruitful and full of excitement; that you will successfully manage the inevitable tension between the sanctuary of the familiar and the exuberance of new adventures outside your comfort zones; that you will always have the insight, desire and gumption to ask and pursue analytical Why questions; and that, you will always treat others with respect and compassion...

Congratulations and best wishes!

DR. NADEEM ABU RUSTUM

ENSURING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AND CREATING KNOWLEDGE



Nadeem R. Abu-Rustum, MD, is Chief of the Gynecologic Oncology Service in the Department of Surgery at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, where he also serves as Vice-Chair for Technology Development.

Additionally, he is the Avon Chair in Gynecologic Oncology and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York.

Prompted by the opportunity to contribute to the University of Balamand and give back to the community and country where he grew up, Dr. Nadeem Abu Rustum joined the University's board of trustees.

Chief of the Gynecologic Oncology Service in the Department of Surgery at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Dr. Abu Rustum also serves as Vice-Chair for Technology Development. Additionally, he is the Avon Chair in Gynecologic Oncology and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York.

In his current role at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, he is actively involved in the development and improvement of surgical techniques and oversees surgical research programs.

Dr. Abu Rustum believes that with the expanding number of institutions offering higher education, a main challenge for Universities will be to distinguish themselves based on quality metrics and continue to stress novel research, collaboration, and development of innovative strategies to keep Lebanon a beacon of scientific advancement and innovation in the region. Learning from past experiences and difficulties we have faced at academic institutions abroad, we will hopefully be able to provide the University of Balamand with the best strategy to enhance its existing excellence and move forward with its mission, he explains.

He stated that it's a tremendous privilege to participate in this distinguished board and work with colleagues and friends under the leadership of President Warrak who outlined in the latest board of trustees' meeting, a strong and innovative vision to advance the University, focusing on the realistic challenges of the future in Lebanon and how to guide the University for continued growth, financial stability, and academic advancement.

To achieve this, says Abu Rustum, one of my goals is to provide the University leadership with an independent sincere feedback to questions and challenges that Balamand University may face now or in the future. Ensuring financial stability and wellbeing for any large academic institution will always remain a critical challenge and continuously seeking innovative approaches for fundraising and development will be more and more needed in our region.


Dr. Abu Rustum ideas about success are not limited to conventional definitions. He equated success with creating a culture of life-long learners who are intellectually curious and committed to a continuous bi-directional giving and sharing of knowledge between students and staff.

Dr. Abu Rustum contributions to Surgical Technology and Education are clearly significant. He has authored and co-authored more than 280 publications and is co-author to numerous book chapters and four textbooks in gynecologic oncology. He has worked at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center for more than 20 years and is in full-time practice of gynecologic oncology in New York.

“Seeing the younger generation grow and achieve beyond what we have accomplished or dreamed is invaluable”, says Abu Rustum.

Dr. Abu Rustum argues that the mission of the University of Balamand is to provide a unique opportunity for the young people of Lebanon and the region to receive higher education in a truly diverse open environment with unlimited opportunity for growth and development.

The ability to create opportunities for students to develop their ideas and see their hopes and dreams materialize into realistic opportunities is a vast reward for any academic institution, he concluded.



It's a tremendous privilege to participate in this distinguished board and work with colleagues and friends under the leadership of President Warrak

MP FAYÇAL EL KHOURY

THE BRIDGE TO EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION



Lebanese Canadian Fayçal El Khoury, member of Canadian parliament joined the University of Balamand's Board of Trustees in 2019.

“Opportunities for success can be measured by the excellence in education”

MP Fayçal El Khoury

Fayçal El Khoury, a member of Canadian parliament, joined the University of Balamand's board of trustees prompted in part by his desire to serve his home country Lebanon, and his interest to contribute to creating knowledge and helping the youth achieve their dreams through higher education.

Fast-paced and committed in everything he does, El Khoury moved to Canada in 1976 where he completed his studies in civil engineering and graduated from Concordia University (1983).

Only one year after earning his degree in Civil Engineering from Concordia University, he established his own construction company and contributed directly to the residential construction boom in the metropolitan region. Since 2005, he has been a consultant specializing in business relations with the Middle East. In 2015, He was elected Liberal MP in the riding of Laval-les-Îles in the House of Commons of Canada.

One of the objectives of the University of Balamand, he explains, is to establish a network of national and international relations with recognized centers of excellence. Thus, in his capacity as a member of this institution, he wishes to support the internationalization of higher education, by creating a bridge between the University of Balamand and centers in Europe, Canada and the United States.

El Khoury praises the growing quality of education at the University of Balamand, and argues that the opportunities for success can be measured by the excellence in education, and the capacity of the University in forming well-rounded professionals.

He argues that the approach to academics should focus on adapting their curriculum to the rapid technological changes, in order to meet the challenges in higher education, adding that he aims to consolidate the ties between the University of Balamand and recognized centers of excellence.

Known for his dedication to community service and his focus on the well-being of his fellow citizens, El Khoury is pleased to join the University of Balamand's board of trustees, which he is committed to serve.

PROF. RAMI ABBOUD

A SKILLED MULTIDISCIPLINARY SCHOLAR WITH A PLAN FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION AND ENGAGEMENT



Dean of Faculty of Engineering, and Vice President for Internationalization and Engagement at the University of Balamand

Following a distinguished career in Scotland in Biomedical and Rehabilitation Engineering, Prof. Abboud returned to Lebanon since he “was always looking for the right opportunity to come back to his home country.” This opportunity materialized when he met with Dr. Warrak and felt inspired by his vision as the President of the University of Balamand. After meeting with President Warrak, Prof. Abboud immediately recognized the strong foundations of the Faculty of Engineering as well as the potential for future growth and advancement in many specialized and multidisciplinary areas.

Prof. Abboud has started his new dual post of Dean of Faculty of Engineering, and Vice President for Internationalization and Engagement at the University of Balamand.

In 1988, Prof. Abboud graduated with a BE in Electrical Engineering from the American University of Beirut, and then left for the United Kingdom to continue his postgraduate education where he completed a MSc and subsequently a PhD in Biomedical and Rehabilitation Engineering at the University of Dundee, Scotland.

Although he was originally thinking of specializing in Medical Electronics, his fate in specializing in Biomedical and Rehabilitation Engineering, i.e. applying engineering to medicine was his fortune in excelling in a relatively new topic at the time, which made him one of the pioneers in the field. Despite being an engineer, Professor Abboud progressed from a postgraduate international student in 1988 at the Department of Orthopaedic & Trauma Surgery to become the Head of Department after his promotion to Professor of Biomechanics in 2007. Prof. Abboud’s contributions to Biomedical and Rehabilitation Engineering in research, education and clinical services are quite impressive and significant.

At the heart of Biomedical and Rehabilitation Engineering, is the application of engineering to the human body. “The human body is like a device combining mechanics, electronics and computing in a complex structure that requires in-depth understanding of its concerted functions and properties to treat accordingly. This is how we, as engineers, can support our colleagues in Medicine to treat patients and improve their quality of life”, stated Professor Abboud.

“The approach to academia should revolve around the focus on learning and research to promote our expertise and what we have to offer to our society”

Prof. Rami Abboud

In order to apply his engineering knowledge into the area of medicine, Prof Abboud ended up specializing in a very particular area of the human body, the foot. Prof Abboud established the world renowned Institute of Motion Analysis and Research (IMAR), with its main goal to promote excellence in teaching and research and to provide a comprehensive clinical service to forge strong working relationship between engineering and medicine. Professor Abboud has been the Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal, The Foot since 2013. “The foot is a very complex mechanical structure, that recent advances in technology have played an important role to undertake multidisciplinary research to uncover some of its complex functions”, he explains.

As a distinguished scholar, Prof. Abboud is committed to bring his 31 years of experience to the University of Balamand in general and the Faculty of Engineering in particular to promote multidisciplinary.

Prof. Abboud praised the state of the art infrastructure at the Faculty of Engineering which it will be at the core of future developments; the important thing is to channel it in the right direction”.

On the ever present debate and unfavorable comparisons between our institutions of higher education and the western world, Prof. Abboud shared his perspective. “I think what we have here is very comparable to what they have overseas. So it is important for us to internationalize what we have, to let the western world understand that we are working at a par with what is being offered overseas”. As such, the Faculty of Engineering has managed to secure many memorandums of understanding with a number of key higher educational institutions and multinational companies allowing our students and alumni the opportunity to have unique placements.

A recipient of many prestigious awards, Prof. Abboud was recently awarded the Chancellor’s Award for Outstanding Contributions to Teaching from the University of Dundee. He says his philosophy as a teacher is to understand what students need and what the community needs them to achieve, adding that as a mentor and a lecturer, he believes that we should nurture the students’ strength in the right direction and help them achieve their dreams. Prof. Abboud praised the quality of education at the University of Balamand, and argues that the standards for quality education have to be maintained for the institution to continue to grow. “The approach to academia should revolve around the focus on learning and research to promote our expertise and what we have to offer to our society. In his view, the University of Balamand represents an exciting opportunity for him for further growth and progress as an academic, researcher, and a leader. He describes his first visit to the main campus back in strong emotional terms “I simply fell in love with the campus!” and it made him take an important life and career decision to leave behind all that he built and all that was available to him to take on the new challenges that await him.



**Engineering
Accreditation
Commission**

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING BS PROGRAMS RECEIVE ABET ACCREDITATION

The Faculty of Engineering at the University of Balamand has earned ABET accreditation for all its five Bachelor of Science programs:

- Bachelor of Science degree program in Chemical Engineering,
- Bachelor of Science degree program in Civil Engineering,
- Bachelor of Science degree program in Computer Engineering,
- Bachelor of Science degree program in Electrical Engineering,
- Bachelor of Science degree program in Mechanical Engineering.

All these programs have been accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) of ABET, the global accreditor of college and university programs in applied and natural science, computing, engineering, and engineering technology.

ABET accreditation assures that programs meet standards to produce graduates ready to enter critical technical fields that are leading the way in innovation and emerging technologies, and anticipating the welfare and safety needs of the public.

UOB President, Prof. Elias L. Warrak, expressed his deep pride in this great achievement pursuant to the University's mission and commitment to attain academic excellence and perpetual progress; an achievement "that could have never been realized without the relentless efforts, efficient work, and positive team spirit". Prof. Warrak added "I applaud the tremendous efforts of FOE Faculty and Staff for realizing this important objective that highlights the academic value of UOB's Engineering Programs."

In a statement, Vice President for Internationalization and Engagement and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Prof. Rami Abboud, said "I'm thrilled to be joining the Faculty of Engineering at a time when we receive the ABET accreditation at the beginning of the new academic year. I strongly believe that this accreditation is a testament to the quality of our faculty programs and the dedication of our staff. I must take this opportunity to give credit to a unique team of dedicated, motivated, skilled, and driven individuals who have worked hard to get this accreditation." Prof Abboud underlined that receiving this accreditation today means that the Engineering student experience at UOB today satisfies the global requirements of the engineering profession.

ABET ACCREDITATION



“This enables our students to have competitive advantage in the market and paves the way to boost the internationalization of our faculty through adding to our rich portfolio of international academic cooperation initiatives.”

Sought worldwide, ABET’s voluntary peer-review process is highly respected because it adds critical value to academic programs in the technical disciplines, where quality, precision, and safety are of the utmost importance.

Developed by technical professionals from ABET’s member societies, ABET criteria focus on what students experience and learn. ABET accreditation reviews look at program curricula, faculty, facilities, and institutional support and are conducted by teams of highly skilled professionals from industry, academia, and government, with expertise in the ABET disciplines.

ABET is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization with ISO 9001:2015 certification. It currently accredits 4,005 programs at over 793 colleges and universities in 32 countries.

More information about ABET, its member societies, and the accreditation criteria used to evaluate programs can be found at www.abet.org.

The University of Balamand is one of the top ranked Higher Education Institutions in Lebanon that offers high quality programs.

SOPHIE BOUTROS:

How ALBA Shaped My Life

Sophie Boutros' career can be said to have started on its current path following her graduation from Alba with a Bachelor degree in Audio-visual directing.

She chose to study audio visual directing (Réalisation Audio-Visuelle) at l'Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts (Alba) prompted in part by the amazing reputation that Alba had acquired in a very short time, which she says, made it her first choice.

"I knew I am choosing the place that would support me creatively and enhance my cultural knowledge", she says. The Alba '97 graduate had worked hard to ensure that this goal is attained. While in Alba, she recognized the importance of critical theory in art's history in shaping one's creativity, confidence and critical thinking.

Boutros describes her experience in Alba as "valuable". She says it made her seek the philosophy behind things, "in an intellectual yet accessible way". "Back in the time, when our teachers bombarded us with courses related to history and theories, the young student in me who understood that this major is about camera and lights, did not appreciate it. It is only when I became a professional that I came to value what we learned at ALBA", she says. Following her graduation, Boutros entered the TV industry and became director of TV shows, where she worked for over five years. She also directed music videos for A-list Arab singers, starting with Julia's La B'Ahlamak. Her academic background began in 2009, when she joined the American University in Dubai, where she worked with Dean Ali Jaber and set the curriculum of the Mohammed Bin Rashid School for Communication and established connections with state-of-the-art Schools at USC.



Upon graduation from ALBA, Sophie Boutros worked in the television field, directing entertainment, talk shows and others.

She directed a set of music videos for A-list Arab singers, in addition to several TV commercials.

Boutros also started teaching screenwriting and production in conjunction with the writing of her own feature film Mahbas, which she co-wrote and directed, and was released successfully in theaters in Lebanon, UAE, Syria, Jordan, Kuwait, Sweden reaching to more than 130 000 admissions, in addition to its participation and awards won in festivals around the world.

The young director enjoys a very respectable career. One film she is particularly proud of is "Mahbas". When asked about the message she tries to convey in this film, she answered "throughout the many interviews that I conducted upon the release of Mahbas, I never favored putting in words the message behind the film. I always preferred hearing it from people. But one thing I can say, is that Mahbas, as much as it speaks about a major conflict, it talks about love". Adding, "It was a challenge to tip-toe around a sensitive topic but at the same time stay genuine and speak the truth. And I am very happy that both audiences directly affected by the subject matter, the Lebanese and the Syrian, took it very positively".

In all her capacities as a professional, Boutros seeks to enhance the integrity of whatever she is producing. A recipient of many awards, she considers it a heartfelt, and enjoyable experience to be working with a dedicated crew who are so passionate, talented and generous, and sees that very rewarding.

A mother of 2, Jad, 13 and Ziad 8, Sophie Boutros is currently writing her new film, that she will soon announce its details.

We wish her all the best!



What I learned at ALBA
shaped me and stayed with
me 22 years later

DR. CAMILLE HAGE

Healthcare in the service of mankind

During his final year as a medical student at the University of Balamand, Camille Hage had the opportunity to complete a clinical elective at Cornell University's Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City. He says one of the reasons he chose Weill Cornell was his desire to work in an emergency department in one of the busiest cities in the world.

In 2018, he graduated with an MD degree from the University of Balamand. The experience, he says, was great, because it provided him with the opportunity to study in a nurturing environment, where he felt like home.

Dr. Hage recently received the Global Health Day award at Johns Hopkins for a project conducted in Lebanon during his Winter break, on the application of health care concepts that tackled refugees.

Dr. Hage aimed through his project to assess the potential that cash transfers have in transforming the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, providing choice and dignity to beneficiaries but also improving local economies.

Thus, Dr. Hage examined the increased access to healthcare by comparing health-seeking behavior, health service utilization and expenditures between those receiving cash and those receiving in-kind assistance. "This project taught me lifelong lessons", he said, adding that "the main thematic everywhere has been the will to keep going and not to lose hope in a better world".

While in Balamand, Dr. Hage had the opportunity to get in touch with the department of international health at Weill Cornell Medical College that welcomes international students for an internship. As it were, he had the opportunity to conduct his training in New York and to get exposure to the U.S. health care system.

As it were, Dr. Hage had the chance to become a visiting international medical student at a U.S. university, where he shared his experience with US news as an international student attending an overseas medical school.

Hage believes that medicine is a universal language; however he says that every medical student should experience it in a different way. Today, Hage is pursuing a Master of Public health in John Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health.

"I got an amazing perspective on how medicine is applied in the States," he says.



In 2018, Dr. Camille Hage graduated with an MD degree from the University of Balamand.

While in Balamand, Dr. Hage had the opportunity to get in touch with the department of international health at Cornell University's Weill Cornell Medical College, in New York City, that welcomes international students for an internship.

His passion for public health was prompted in part by his desire to understand the patient, and to be able to evaluate and regulate the health needs of the public population, and to tackle complex problems.

“My true passion for public health has flourished when I’ve realized that being a physician allows me to treat both the individual and the community”.

To Hage, understanding the patient and not the disease is important in medicine.

Dr. Hage says he is proud of having studied at the University of Balamand and adds that it built the foundation he needed, to go and explore further opportunities.

Asked to offer a word of advice to Balamand students, he says: always remember that you are in good hands at Balamand.

To alumni, he concluded: Balamand allowed me to bestow what I have luckily been gifted with. Always cherish the place that first believed in you!



My true passion for public health has flourished when I’ve realized that being a physician allows me to treat both the individual and the community

STORIES INSPIRE
ACTION, THEY
MAKE US GROW,
INFLUENCE AND
CONNECT

SAMIA MESSAIKE JAMALI

Unleashing the corporate stories

Samia Messaike Jamali joined the University of Balamand in 1989 where she graduated with a bachelor degree in Business Administration in 1992, with an emphasis in marketing.

Currently, she is the co-founder, story marketing consultant and partner in TEAL, a business and education consultancy agency.

At Balamand, she has found the foundations that equipped her with the know-how and critical thinking.

She subsequently pursued a Master degree from Regis University in the United States, which prepared her to enter the marketing world.

While enjoying her experience in the business world, Ms. Jamali worked in companies in the USA and Lebanon, and co-founded Planb (a marketing consultancy agency) in 2008.

Her latest venture is co-founding TEAL with her partner and life time friend Dr. Linda Adra Yamak . Teal which started operating in 2018 goes by the motto “ from friendship to partnership to inspiring organizations and individuals to use their voices so they may inspire action.”

A strong advocate of communication, Ms. Jamali is co-organizing a workshop on powerful communication through purposeful storytelling because as she puts it, “stories inspire action; they make us grow, influence and connect.” Ms. Jamali says that through the workshops that TEAL organizes, “we aim to bring experts in marketing, storytelling, higher education, teaching and learning together for the purpose of opening up eyes to the transformative power of storytelling.”

“In our workshops, we try to use goal oriented stories for different purposes in professional contexts”, she says. The most recent workshop she organized included many topics ranging from: the power of storytelling, the science behind storytelling, the components of a purposeful story, examples of stories that inspire action.

For more information, contact her on info@teal-ns.com



Samia Jamali is the co-founder, story marketing consultant and partner in TEAL, a business and education consultancy agency.

GREEN HOME AUTOMATED SYSTEM

GABY AL ARIDI

Gaby Al Aridi recently graduated from the Issam Fares Faculty of Technology with a Bachelor in Mechatronics Engineering.

He was granted a patent for his project Green- smart home automated system (G- SHAS) from the Ministry of Economy.

Discover his project in this interview.

WHAT IS THE AIM OF YOUR PROJECT?

The main purpose of this project is to change all old homes to Green-Smart and automated without the change of the house infrastructure. Moreover, to facilitate people's life, this project allows people to monitor and control their homes and appliances wherever they are. Besides, this project aims at reducing energy cost by managing and constant monitoring.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHAT THIS MEANS?

This project is a new concept of home automation which allows users to control and monitor their homes and offices in the easiest possible way. They are also capable of setting tasks and linking between sensors and actuators according to their preferences; managing and controlling the energy cost by checking each appliance's power consumption. After a period of time the system can take control of all the appliances.

HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THIS IDEA?

Everything around us is evolving and progressing in quick manner, so in order to be following this wave it was essential to think about updating the home system, knowing that throughout the recent years big number of homes switched to solar energy, yet there were lot of improvement options that could be also done especially by home infrastructure and technological issues. In view of these points, I started building up needed ideas and thinking of a new concept gradually.



Gaby Al Aridi recently graduated from Issam Fares Faculty of Technology with a Bachelor in Mechatronics Engineering.

Gaby is currently working at Mikano International Limited Power Solutions company in Nigeria, and is pursuing a MS in renewable energy engineering at Brunel University in London.



Dr. Rodrigue Imad, Gaby Al Aridi, and Dr. Gilbert Tekly.

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR PROJECT?

In this project, the main concern is to have an Eco-Green house with low consumption and a low cost while still maintaining the same home infrastructure.

HOW DID YOUR EDUCATION HELP YOU IN YOUR PROJECT?

I recently graduated from Issam Fares Faculty of Technology with a Bachelor in Mechatronics Engineering. University courses had important role with the basic knowledge I needed for the development of the project and my professors supported me all the way through. As every project it consisted of theoretical and applied parts, so that the theoretical part was linked to the courses and the applied part was present through set up of all components (sensors, actuators and switches).



The initiation phase of this project was part of a graduation project that Gaby Al Aridi worked on under the supervision of Dr. Gilbert Tekly.

DR. MERVAT EL HOZ

Applying knowledge to environmental problems



A national and international environmental expert, Professor Mervat El Hoz recently received the Iraj Zandi Award for her contributions to the solid waste management field. She received the award during the annual International Conference on Solid Waste Technology and Management, which was held on March 31 - April 3 in Washington D.C. USA.

Professor Hoz has represented Lebanon at a number of scientific conferences, including international ones in Philadelphia, Houston, and Washington USA, in Montreal Canada, Germany, France, India and Arabic countries. In 2015, she received with Dr. Iaali the IconSWM Excellent Paper Award for "Site Location Feasibility Analysis for Undesirable Solid Waste Facility" at the 5th International Conference on Solid Waste Management, India; and in 2012, the Outstanding Paper Award for her paper "Site Evaluation for Olive Mills Waste Composting Facility" at the Sixth International Conference on Environmental Science and Technology (ICEST) in Texas. In 2006, she received the Second Paper Award on "Role of Women in Environmental higher Education" at the Euro-Arab 2006 Conference and Exhibition on Environment, State of Kuwait.

A holder of a PhD in Environmental Engineering from the University of Sydney, Dr. Hoz joined the University of Balamand in 1997, where she is currently the chairperson of the MS program in environmental engineering and where she also teaches courses there. She is the founder and in charge of the university's Environmental Engineering Laboratory and the Water Quality Engineering Laboratory in the Civil Engineering Department.

Author of over 100 scientific publications in international journals and conference proceedings, Professor Hoz's contributions to environmental engineering are clearly impressive and significant. This is witnessed in particular by the fact that she served from 1998 to 2002 as a senior environmental expert at the World Bank Council for Development and Reconstruction in relation to the problem of Lebanon's solid waste and as a senior environmental consultant in EU and USAID projects in water, wastewater, air and noise pollution from 2002 till today.

Her main research interests currently are water resources and waste water treatment technologies, solid and hazardous waste management, air pollution and climate change effects, environmental impact and risk assessment.

We wish her all the best!

DR. CHARBEL DAGHER RECEIVES THE SHEIKH ZAYED BOOK AWARD



Dr. Charbel Dagher won the Sheikh Zayed Book Award in the “Literary and Art Criticism” category, for his book *Modern Arabic Poetry: The Prose Poem*, published by Al Maaref Forum in 2018. The Sheikh Zayed Book Awards were distributed to the winners in conjunction with the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair 2019.

Dr. Dagher, a Professor of Literature at the University of Balamand since 1994, holds two PhDs, in Modern Arabic Literature (1982) and Art History and Philosophy (1996). He has written over 60 books in both Arabic and French.

The Sheikh Zayed Book Award is an independent cultural initiative administered by the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi. The Award, and its associated accolades, are presented annually to outstanding writers, intellectuals, and publishers, as well as young talent whose writing and translation in humanities objectively enriches Arab intellectual, cultural, literary and social life.

MS. URSULA RIZK

RECEIVES THE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MEDAL



Ms. Ursula Rizk, member of the Nursing Program at the Faculty of Health Sciences has been awarded the prestigious Florence Nightingale Medal. This Award is given to individuals who have shown “exceptional courage and devotion to victims of armed conflict or natural disaster.” Moreover, this Award recognizes leadership and service in the areas of Public Health and Nursing Education. Ms. Rizk was nominated by the Lebanese Red Cross and selected by a commission formed of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Council of Nurses.

Ursula Rizk is one of those people who have had an illustrious career. She was the first director of the Nursing Program at the University of Balamand from 1997 to 2018. Ms. Rizk contributed to founding the Order of Nurses, elected and served as the Secretary General from 2003 to 2006, and elected unanimously as a President of the Order for the following three years. Currently, she serves the Order as a consultant. She made her way to academia after a long and significant journey with two major public health service providers: Lebanese Red Cross and UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Work Agency).

Ms. Rizk joined the Lebanese Red Cross in 1973. She served during the most turbulent and tragic years of the Lebanese war. The most physically challenging period of her career with the Red Cross was during the 1978 and 1982 Israeli invasions of Lebanon, when she was in charge of the primary health care centers in the South and head of emergency nursing operations.

Under circumstances of occupation, internal struggle and mounting hostility between militias and communities, she showed her strong determination in establishing and managing five mobile clinics in the city of Saida and its vicinity. These clinics were necessary to respond to the needs of all those who were displaced from their homes and villages, and who took refuge in public facilities such as schools and shelters. Under those extremely turbulent conditions, she organized vaccination campaigns in all the South.

The deep human personal characteristics and the high professional standards of conduct, as well as scientific merits, all integrate to give Ms. Ursula Rizk a distinguished career and to make her a prominent role model to her students, colleagues and nurses in Lebanon and the world beyond.

Our congratulations!

HIGH EARLY STRENGTH BINDER

Civil Engineering students Yara Amine and Aref Awde received a patent for their project entitled: High Early Strength binder. Discover this project in an interview with Dr. Georges Aouad.



HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THIS IDEA? WAS IT PART OF A COURSE?

One of my research activities is the development of new Materials for Civil Engineering. In this context, I proposed to our students a Master project on the development of a new concrete for road repair. The idea was to provide a quick solution for patching and filling holes that are commonly seen on roads in Lebanon. Aref Awde and Yara Amine chose the topic and worked on it for 2 semesters as part of their Master project (GENG 590).

WHERE DID THE STUDENTS WORK ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS BINDER?

The students worked in the Civil Engineering Laboratory (Ciel) of the University Of Balamand.

WHAT ARE ITS CHARACTERISTICS?

The new concrete hardens quickly and at the same time develops strength in a very short time. For this reason it is called High Early Strength.

HOW CAN THIS PRODUCT BENEFIT ROAD REPAIRS? HOW DOES IT DIFFER FROM THE CONCRETE USED IN CONSTRUCTION?

The major difference with concrete used in construction is its compressive strength at the very short term. The compressive strength of the new concrete is 14 MPa after 2 hours while the normal concrete is less than 1 Mpa.

The product has several advantages, among which are:

- Feasible process: no need for complicated instruments or machines.
- Low workmanship: it can be prepared and applied on the road by one person
- Quick solution: the road will not be closed for a long time which will avoid traffic jam

The product can be used for other applications than road repair. For example it can be used for 3D Printing of concrete and for uses that requires earlier removal of forms.

WHAT ROLE DID THE STUDENTS PLAY IN THIS PROJECT?

The students participated in all stages of the project: literature review, testing, and analysis. Yara and Aref have also been very active in writing the patent.

ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

This achievement would not be reached without the support of the President of UOB and the Dean of the Faculty Of Engineering.

ENGINEERING AWARDS



UOB students scooped seven awards for projects presented at the 11th Annual Conference for Engineering and Architecture Graduates in North Lebanon on Saturday July 27, 2019 receiving a third of awards in categories they competed in.

The Annual Conference for Engineering and Architecture Graduates in North Lebanon brings together engineering students from universities across north Lebanon affording them the opportunity to present their graduation projects at the Order of Engineers and Architects in Tripoli.

A total of 123 students presented 83 projects before judges who are field experts and academics. A poster session was also part of the conference. Awards were presented to the best projects in the fields of Civil, Architecture, Mechanical, Electrical, Computer, Petrochemical, and Environmental Engineering.

Engineering students from the University of Balamand claimed the following prizes:

PETROCHEMICAL ENGINEERING:

- 1st Prize Winner: Nijad Ishac supervised by Dr. Jane Estephane
- 2nd Prize Winner: Jane Hayek supervised by Dr. Rima Manneh

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PROJECTS:

- 1st Prize Winners: Dana Shehade, Jana El Ali, and Sandy Mazraani supervised by Dr. Yasmine Jabaly

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING:

- 2nd Prize Winner: Christiane Gebran supervised by Dr. Maged B. Najjar
- Mechanical Engineering:
- 2nd Prize Winners: Gerard Khoury, Maher Madi, Omar Fakhreddine supervised by Dr. Macole Sabat

In the **ARCHITECTURE** category, ALBA Students received the following awards:

- 1st Prize: Wael Borghol supervised by Dr. Joseph Hourani with Technical trends Advisors: Structural: Mr. Redolphe Matar, Mechanical: Dr. Anthony Azar and Electrical: Mr. Mohammad Jamal Maamary.
- 3rd Prize: Michael Jibrine supervised by Ms. Vera Borgi with Technical trends Advisors: Structural: Mr. Eddy Sawma, Mechanical: Dr. Anthony Azar, and Electrical: Mr. Mohammad Jamal Maamary.

In a statement, Professor Rami Abboud, Vice President and Dean of Engineering, expressed that he is truly proud of the accomplishments of UOB students: "Such achievements are a testament to the innovation of our students and the quality supervision they receive at our faculty". He affirmed that research at the faculty and at the university will continue to work to serve the community at local and national levels.

Other universities participating in the exhibition were the Lebanese University, Notre Dame University, Beirut Arab University, City University of Tripoli, Lebanese International University, and Université Libano-Francaise (ULF).

SECOND ANNUAL STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING PROJECTS COMPETITION - 2019



The Order of Engineers and Architects-Beirut, held its Second Annual Competition for Graduate Structural Engineering Projects 2019, organized by the Structural Engineers Association.

Graduate student Shadi Moubayed won the third place award in the structural scientific research category for his graduation project: "Shear Behavior of Cracked Reinforced Concrete Beams Strengthened with Carbon Fiber Reinforced Polymer Rods"

The project was under the supervision of Associate Professor Nariman Khalil, specialist in reinforced concrete structures at the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Balamand.

The award aims to encourage and support talented students specializing in structural engineering. In total, eighteen projects were presented in the competition from various Lebanese Universities in three categories:

- Residential Buildings
- Public Structures such as bridges
- Structural Research Projects.

Vice President and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Professor Rami Abboud congratulated them on their success. Professor Abboud stressed that the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Balamand will continue to be a hub for excellence in engineering research in Lebanon and worldwide.

UNIVERSIADE 2019– SPORTS TOURNAMENT AT A GLANCE



Balamand teams participated in Universiade 2019 – Sports Tournament that brought together universities from across Lebanon, on June 15.

The University of Balamand claimed first place in the men’s futsal , after securing a win against USJ 3-1.

It also claimed victory in the mixed Volleyball after defeating NDU 2-1.

Balamand mini football team ensured the second place in the final game against the Beirut Arab University.

As for the women’s futsal, the University of Balamand claimed third place.

University of Balamand players also participated in Table tennis, where student Anthony Rady claimed second place.

Our congratulations!



LITANI RIVER AUTHORITY AND UOB SIGN AGREEMENT TO SUPPORT NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



With pressing environmental concerns that affect our societies comes the need for innovative contributions that lead to a new wave of environmental protection, and preservation of natural resources.

Within this context, the University of Balamand signed agreement with Litani river authority to the better management of Litani natural resources.

The aim as stated in the agreement is to work jointly on designing the Litani Central administration buildings, in addition to orienting the students' scientific projects to find solutions to pressing environmental matters concerning the Litani river.

The signing ceremony, held at the University of Balamand, was attended by Balamand President Elias Warrak, General Director of Litani river Dr. Sami Alawiye, as well as university deans.

In his speech, Dr. Alawiye stressed the importance of collaborating with the University of Balamand, for the advancement of sustainable development solutions for the Litani basin.

For his part, President Warrak added that this collaboration is important for the wellbeing of the society adding that the University of Balamand is committed to environmental responsibility and community service for the wellbeing of societies.

SAVING LIVES WITH GIS

An exclusive partnership between the University of Balamand and the Lebanese Red Cross



THE OBJECTIVE IS TO LINK THE GIS SPATIAL DATABASE TO THE LEBANESE RED CROSS DATABASE

In a medical emergency, time is of essence. Locating the nearest hospital can make all the difference in saving lives.

As such, Geographic Information System (GIS) can be integral in emergencies specifically for an organization like the Red Cross, whose aim is to be effective in responding to crises and ultimately save lives.

Within this context, the University of Balamand represented by the GIS Center at the Faculty of Engineering signed an exclusive agreement with the Lebanese Red Cross, during a ceremony held at the Sheikh Nahyan Center for Arabic Studies and Intercultural Dialogue.

The objective is to link the GIS spatial database to the Lebanese Red Cross database. This entails mapping local resources like shelters, civil society organizations, health and social services, gas stations, water sources, laboratories, factories and industrial facilities, etc. to be readily available to the Lebanese Red Cross wherever they are. Additional information can be overlaid with these base maps to highlight various risk and hazard related indicators.



President Warrak praised this initiative underlining the significance of the partnership that stems from the mission of the University of Balamand to contribute and support national development and humanitarian efforts. In turn, Vice President for Internationalization and Engagement and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Prof. Rami Abboud praised the efforts behind this memorandum of understanding stating that it is an “important and strategic partnership” to enhance the Lebanese Red Cross personnel capacity in GIS to become more efficient and effective in responding to crises and disasters by providing basic and advanced training aligned with the Lebanese Red Cross system.

For his part, the Secretary General of the Lebanese Red Cross Mr. Georges Kettaneh stated that the Lebanese Red Cross will undertake the GIS project with the University of Balamand via an exclusive partnership adding that this is a vital step to save lives.

Dr. Amal Iaaly, Director of the GIS Center, delivered a presentation about this participatory approach that plays a positive role in the long-term sustainability of such GIS projects. The presentation included a live demonstration of prototype projects within the scope of the collaboration.

UOB SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH DREIB UNION OF MUNICIPALITIES, SKL-INTERNATIONAL AND G8T SOLUTIONS



The GIS Center at the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Balamand signed an agreement with G8T solutions S.A.R.L, Dreib Union of Municipalities (Akkar Governorate) and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions represented by its affiliate SKL-International (SKL-I).

The objective of this MoU is to carry out a digitalization component in response to the strengthened accountability and participation in local governance within the Resilience in Local Governance “RESLOG” project in Lebanon.

As such, the objectives of this project is a transformation toward a ‘digital union’ of municipalities realized through the development of a street addressing system using GIS technology for the Union of Municipalities of Dreib Al Awsat and a GIS touristic map for its geographical area.

The project also includes a component aiming at increasing effectiveness in identification and implementation of service improvement projects through statistical analysis of Information about Individual Status, Family Status, Health Care, Education, and Economic Status of citizens in the municipalities. Vice President for Internationalization and Engagement and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Professor Rami Abboud stated that it is a great honor for the University of Balamand, through the GIS Center, to lead in this unique project, adding that this participatory approach can foster the evolution envisioned to strengthen accountability and participation in local governance.

CLOSING CEREMONY OF TRIPOLI SOCIAL LEADERS' PROGRAM



The University of Balamand celebrated the closure of the “Tripoli Social Leaders Program” project organized by the CSR Division of Al Ahli Holding Group in partnership with Trablous First, Tripoli Entrepreneurs Club (TEC).

The University of Balamand’s career services center hosted all training sessions as well as all the one-to-one meetings between the team and the project managers from CSR Al Ahli group and Trablous First.

The closing event, held at the University of Balamand, Al Koura Campus, provided the opportunity to the two finalists projects to present their ideas before a pitching deck composed of 4 esteemed judges: Dr. Fadi Mikati, president of TEC, Dr Omayya Kuran, from the Faculty of Business and Management at the University of Balamand, and Ms Lina Hourani, director of the CSR Division at Al Ahli Holding Group.

The program saw the participation of 27 youth from the north governorate, who developed a total of 6 social project ideas.

In her speech, CSR Division Director, Ms Lina Hourani stated that the program was “designed to stimulate the potential of youth in Tripoli and activate their role as skilled social and community leaders capable of leading the development and transformation of the city”.

In her speech, MP Dima Jamali showcased her experience as a director of UN Global Compact, and addressed the importance of sustainable development to bring together NGOs and local authorities to implement the UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) .

In turn, President Warrak praised this joint initiative stressing that the University of Balamand aims to serve the community, stemming from the mission of the University that education should strive to solve problems, and serve the humankind.

At the end of the ceremony, the results were announced where “Shabablek” project claimed the first prize.



INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY

The University of Balamand celebrated the International museum day. Read more about it in this interview with Director of the Department of Archaeology and Museology Dr. Nadine Haroun.



WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY?

The international Museum day is celebrated every year worldwide by all museums adherent members to ICOM (International Council of Museums). Every year ICOM, a subcommittee of UNESCO, chooses a theme which is relevant to global issues.

This year's theme is: "Museum as cultural hubs: the Future of Tradition".

WHY DO WE CELEBRATE THIS DAY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BALAMAND?

Being in harmony with its historical roots and traditions, The University of Balamand is committed to promoting national and political unity in a society proud of its diversity and plurality. From within that scope, the collection of the University of Balamand was not built around a pre-existing nucleus, but in response to a clear vision of preserving a long gone common heritage. UOB's Ethnographic Museum became a member of ICOM in 2015 thanks to its scientific research, publications and social activities that it had been conducting since its opening back in 2009.

WHO DID YOU COLLABORATE WITH IN THIS EVENT?

This year we specifically targeted school students to explain and exhibit the relevance of tradition for future generations. Hence the choice of the Hakawati and olive making.

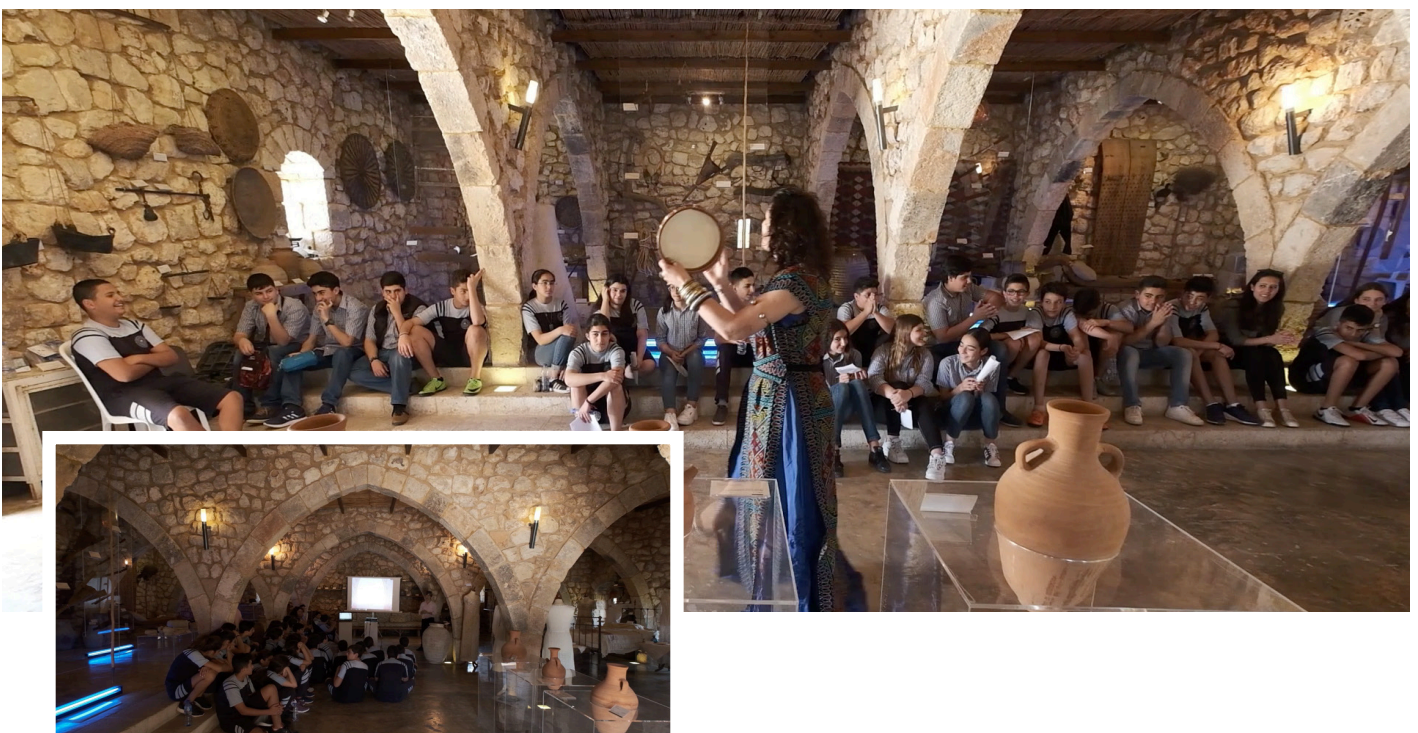
Therefore, we collaborated with Ms. Ghada Salem for explaining and demonstrating the traditional soap making process and Hakawati Ms. Nassim Alwan, performing traditional stories.

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM IN PRESERVING THE HERITAGE?

Ethnographic/historical museums demonstrate the importance placed on remembering, preserving and learning from the past. To reach this end, researchers look at objects and instruments that were used during the time period in question. These could be articles of clothing, such as costumes, jewelry, shoes or household objects such as cooking utensils, bridegroom shaving sets or agricultural tools.

By immersing us in the everyday life and practices of our ancestors, these museums make us a participant in their story, providing an "inside point of view" that yields a stronger connection and deeper understanding of it.

They allow us to study those items which can bear witness to important lessons from our ancestors: perfect adaptation to their environment, intelligent use of local resources, living in harmony with and respectful of nature, skillful use of tools and true artistic creations. It is these modest and discreet human manifestations that give rise to the ingenuity of the local population, granting our traditional life of yesterday, meaning and power.



BALAMAND SPRING FESTIVAL CARNIVAL EDITION



The Office of Students Affairs organized the Balamand Annual Spring Festival on Friday May 3rd, a day full of activities featuring Saad Ramadan, El 3ama, Souk el Akel, Kids' show, music club performances, inflatables, and many other activities.

This year, the well – known comedian Ghayd Chammas hosted the event, where he brought the audience great surprise and joy by his lovely hosting style.

The Balamand Greenfield at the main campus was transformed into the Spring Festival carnival attracting over 20,000 visitors of all ages and interests for games, food stands, and live music concerts.

What made the event successful is that it catered to adults as well as children of all ages, who were delighted by the food stands of Souk El Akel and the live musical performances.



Clearly the success of the Spring Festival made it an annual event attracting the Balamand community and friends.

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