

AUI Internet Issue

# auIBridge

Al Akhawayn University's official student newspaper



2009 Nobel Peace Prize

November 2009

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Fall 2009, Issue 1

## Nass El Ghiwan Rocks AUI Community



## Ten Years with HM King Mohamed VI



## AUI Cultural Diversity



## Get to Know The OIP



## Hoba Hoba Spirit



The cultural make-up of every country in the world is as wide-ranging as the people that inhabit it. Morocco is no exception; even within the same country, multiculturalism is a normal aspect of life.

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According to the AUI website, "AUI is by design and mission an international university. The university's academic programs foster an international perspective and international understanding."

(continued in Page 12)

Who doesn't know "Bienvenue A Casa"? Shame one you, if you don't! The track was downloaded 10,000 times after being available for only one month on Hoba Hoba Spirit's website.

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## Edito

Weeks after Ramadan has ended, I still remember the nice moments I have spent with friends around the « ftour » table at the time of Al Maghrib. Oh, I also still remember that most of my friends and I used to break the fast according to Rabat's call for Al Maghrib prayer instead of Ifrane's. It is because there is no microphone used in the mosque of AUI and because of the sometimes noisy halls around residential areas, it becomes extremely difficult to notice Ifrane's far reached mosques and their microphone calls at the time of the prayer.

One other memory about Ramadan concerns the launching of the new Student Center next to the gymnasium. High expectations were actually held upon this new building. However, one shocking reality confronted by students is about the new student lounge which has no television set. Consequently, many students had to leave AUI campus and go to Ifrane's cafés in order to follow their favorite European football team matches. Apart from this one obvious need, the Student Center seems to feature most (if not all) what students would need for recreational activities and organize extracurricular events.

It is with these memories in mind that I invite every reader of the AUI Bridge to make a step forward and share their experience as a student with our readership. In fact, every member of AUI community is encouraged to talk about any issues, problems, expectations, achievements, and projects they see important and related to AUI in order to reinforce our understanding of our environment and make sure problems about which we complain can be solved with the help of administration. The Student Government Association remains an important body that can help achieve such aim. Despite of the critics that may be addressed about its activism and regardless of its reputation that differs from one student to another, the SGA is meant to serve students' needs and expectations at university life. In this regard, a report is featured in this issue presenting their main achievements as for their current mandate.

I can only hope that more students have faith in their representatives and try to voice their concerns to them instead of complaining in the restaurant queue while they can actually send an email and wait for feedback about their issues. Sometimes, the only appropriate way to communicate is the written way through which every involved party can keep records and expect feedback without delays. May such behaviors become a part of students' habits and make our university yearn for excellence without forgetting about its identity.



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## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor in Chief,

I know that the topic of next issue will be about cultural diversity which I find quite interesting. In this regard, I believe that AUI is a pot in which one can find diverse cultures and more than one religion that all contribute to making it a unique academic institution. I know, for sure, that studying at AUI is an interesting experience for it provides me with the opportunity to meet people from different parts of both Morocco and the world. As a result, I can learn about other people's habits and cultures and enrich my knowledge. I look forward to reading about the article.

Yours faithfully,  
Alae Gamar  
Computer Science junior student

Dear Editor in Chief,

As an AUI student, I have been surprised by the multiculturalism within this university. In fact, it shows how important it is to adapt oneself with different mentalities, and I think it is a noble ability of the human being. For me, I think AUI can be a very good setting for researchers to depict the impact of socializing among people of different cultural backgrounds on their life. It could be also a factor of academic excellence since these experiences enrich our knowledge and improve our way of thinking. All in all, I would definitely love to read about this topic once it is out.

Best Regards,  
Dina Fikri Benbrahim  
Business Administration sophomore student

### NEXT ISSUE'S TOPIC

## AUI Policy Application

Have something to say?

Write us a letter!

Interested in becoming a reporter?

Contact:  
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# The PPP on Campus

KAMILIA CHARKAOUI

This semester, a new wave of Pay-Per-Print printers arrived in the AUI labs. These printers came along with new technology and a new policy to ease the process of printing for students. Their many functions include printing, scanning, and the ability to make photocopies. These new printers are not free, and in order to access them, a student must have a printing account with credit and a password. Many students were happy for this change, due to the many problems they had with the old printers. However, others are still uncomfortable and find them complicated to use. In order to have a clearer idea of how to use these printers, the AUI Bridge conducted an interview with Dr. Tajjeeddine Rachidi, the Associate Vice President for IT.

This technology is important to the university because, in his words, "the centralized printing in which you can send your work from any computer and print it from any printer anytime you want, it is part of the new philosophy of bringing the printing near students." Dr.

**"students have fear of change, especially with machines...we try and help students overcome their fears."**

Rachidi continued, "these printers have many advantages," adding, "first of all, it has better service, you don't have to rush to the printer to grab your work because you can print it whenever you want. The fact that it serves your confidentiality as well, for example there was always a chance that anyone could take your work if you had to leave before the old machine printed it out."

Dr. Rachidi also expanded upon the ways in which this new service is efficient and environmentally friendly in terms of the amount the ink and paper consumed. He also talked about how efficient the machines are in terms of management, since they have the ability to inform the copy center about the amount of cartridges and papers used.

According to Dr. Rachidi, "the only disadvantage for this kind of technology is that students have fear of change especially with machines, which we try to convert to an advantage and help students overcome their fears."

Dr. Rachidi noted that these Pay-Per-Print machines have been used in the university system since 1999 when he used to study in the UK. "In order to adopt these new printers, it took the university about a year of thinking and analyzing," he stated. First of all, the ITS department did a survey for the market in order to get the best offers. Then, the selection committee, which is made up of the ITS department, Business Office, VPAA, etc. made the collective decision based on the printing services, the price of the printers, as well as the price of monitoring the printers. He also mentioned the fact that these printers are quite expensive; collectively they cost the university sixty-five thousand Dirhams. However, they are less expensive compared to the old printers, for which the cost of paper and ink alone were more than the price of the printers themselves.

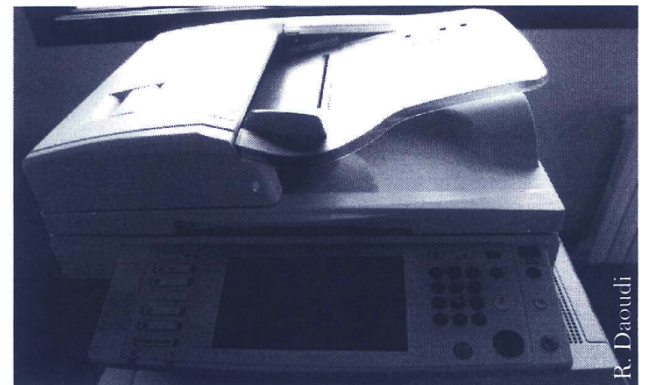
Dr. Rachidi also explained how they came up with the price of 0.40 Dhs per page. "It is the cost of the printer, the amortization of 3 years, cost of electricity, and cost of the assistant who will monitor the printer. Many

students may think that it is expensive but if they compare it with any Cyber Café, which offers printing service for 1Dh per page, they recognize that it is not expensive at all," he said. Moreover, 50 Dhs is the minimum amount of money a student can put in his printing account and it is transferable across the semesters, too. "It is the same as the cash wallet; you can even have a deficit of 10 pages," he added.

About students' feedback, Dr. Rachidi observed that overall students have gotten used to the new printers; however, a few of the printers are still slow which leads to long queues.

According to Dr. Rachidi, "TTS had ordered three other printers and thought of building 38, the new student center, and the downtown residence; conversely, I have talked to SGA about the possibility of getting a second printer in lab 11 since it is the biggest lab. This will depend of course on the queuing time." Concerning lab

8, Dr. Rachidi claimed that this lab would not necessarily contain a printer since it is considered a classroom for the SHSS. He concluded that the goal for these new machines is to make printing easier and more accessible for students.



R. Daoudi

# Nass El Ghiwan Rocks AUI Community

KAMILIA CHARKAOUI

On Friday, October 28, the Office of Student Activities organized a music night featuring the famous Moroccan popular band of Nass Lghiwan. This is not the first time that Nass Lghiwan came to perform in front of AUI student.

In an interview to the newspaper's team, Mr. Omar Sayyid, a prominent figure of the band, mentioned that when they sing to AUI community they feel as if they were singing to the whole Morocco. "People from our age always attend our concerts for nostalgia, younger people who are fanatic and enjoy our shows, and another type of audience includes teenagers who come to discover Nass Lghiwan" explained Mr. Sayyid. In addition, Mr. Sayyid said his group has no problem

if any of the young artists wants to remix their songs according to their own style. "For us, these young artists are like a children of ours" explained the artist.

Also, the artist described the New "artist law" as a very good approach to protect the artists and enhance art in Morocco; however, it did not apply yet.

The artist also mentioned the fact that it is not easy to write a new song every short period; especially that their songs differ from the others since it is written in an original way. Sayyid's last message to AUI students is a warm thank you for inviting Nass Lghiwan many times to perform on campus as they feel very glad to meet young people like AUI students who contribute in the longer lasting of their band.



R. Daoudi



# Record Number of Graduating Students for First Community Service Promotion

ABDELHADI MEKOUAR

This year's graduation ceremony, which took place on June 13, 2009, sets a new record high of graduating students, as the first class to which the community service requirement was applied. A total of 154 students graduated, including 116 undergraduates and 38 graduates.

The ceremony was a major event for the AUI community and a national media event. Moroccan Minister of Industry, Trade & New Technologies, Mr. Ahmed Chami, served as the ceremony's keynote speaker.

Mr. Chami emphasized the importance of working for one's country and of entrepreneurship, both outside and inside organizations. "I feel like an entrepreneur minister," Mr. Chami said. He also quoted late President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, who famously urged

graduates to "ask not what [their] country can do for [them], but what [they] can do for [their] country."

Dr. Abdelhamid Lotfi, Director of the Library and interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, handed students their diplomas. He pointed out that the valedictorians of the three schools (those students who graduated with the highest GPA respectively) were all female this year. The valedictorians in question were Ms. Mouna El Mansouri for the SBA, Ms. Hakima Taoufiq for the SSE, and Ms. Afifa El Bayed for the SHSS.

According to the Development and Communication department in charge of organizing the ceremony, the effort involved "70 staff members and 30 students working in 18 different committees over more than six weeks."



## AA and Economic Pundits Evaluate Current Business Climate

NEWS TEAM

On the occasion of their yearly F'tour Débat (Debate Breakfast), AUI's Alumni Association invited a number of economic actors to the Palace d'Anfa in Casablanca on September 14th to discuss the current business climate.

There was general agreement that today's financial difficulties do not prohibit entrepreneurship, but rather call for entrepreneurs to be more innovative, perseverant, and analytical in their way of managing.

The panel was moderated by Mr. Hamid Belafdil, Director of Regional Center of Investment in Casablanca. The guest speakers were Dr. Driss Ouachia, President of the University, Mr. Mohamed Horani, President of the CGEM, Mr. Faouzi Chaabi, Vice President of the YNNA Holding, Mrs. Boutaina Iraqui, CEO of the Moroccan Association of Women Entrepreneurs (AFEM), Mr.



Karim Tazi, CEO of Richbond and Ms. Fatima Zahra Oukacha, CEO of Transworld Protection and an AUI Alumna.

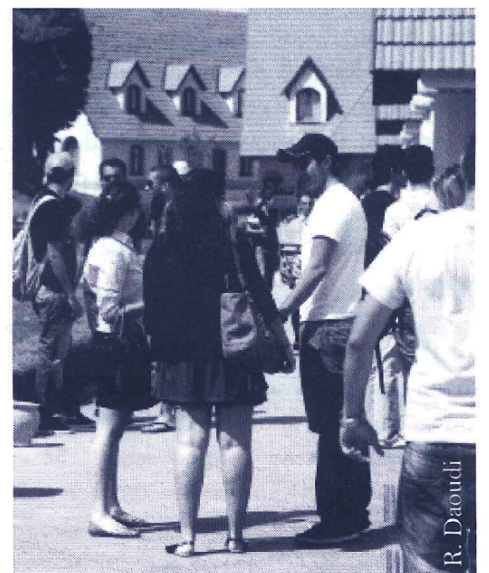
Entitled "Doing Business: Opportunities in Times of Crisis", the conference gathered almost two-hundred people, including around one-hundred and fifty AUI Alumni. Current AUI students, executives, and staff, along with a presence of Media representatives, also attended the debate.

## AUI Newcomers

SALWA NANA

The number of new Moroccan students that have chosen AUI to build the foundations for their future careers is two hundred and forty-one. The newcomers of this semester have passed through a highly competitive admissions process to be selected among more than 1400 tested applicants. In addition, eighty-three international students are attending AUI during this Fall 2009; of which six are transient students and seven are degree-seeking students. The international students come from different countries in the frame of AUI exchange programs with their origin universities located in the USA, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Oman, Sudan and Tanzania. Hence, the total number of the newcomers this fall is three hundred and twenty-four students! This is a high number in comparison to the fall of 2008.

The new students are partitioned by school as follows: 108 SSE students, 90 SBA students and 43 SHSS students. In addition to the student body, the university hired twenty-five new faculty members who come from different countries, notably: Morocco, USA, Canada, England, France, Malaysia and South Africa. The impressive increase in the number of AUI students might raise some concerns about



the limitation of the facilities and services on campus; however, the university has employed all necessary efforts to meet the challenge. Thanks to the Jenzabar system, the registrar office ensured a smooth registration, along with the help of the AUI ambassadors. Moreover, the new Student Center opened its doors, offering even more facilities to students. As for the housing services, a new downtown residence and an annex were equipped to respond to the new residents' needs. All these efforts are meant to make the journey of AUI newcomers a happy and an instructive experience.



## Exchange from AUI

# Warm People in a Cold Place

FATIMA ZAHRA BENNOUNA

We are in the last week of March and it still snows from time to time; sometimes there are even snowstorms! For some, it is great because this means that the ski season is still on. Not that I hate skiing, but I decided that I still need my whole body to be in one connected piece, thanks to Khadija's hint- my best friend at AUI. It can be fun sometimes, to watch those huge Austrian snow flakes fall on the ground. They are so big, they look like some kind of creature invading the place and killing the little hope drawn on the green and brown grass from the days before.

I stayed home for too long after the end of the fall semester and I enjoyed the warm weather and the occasional hot sun back home, and I am sure I will get more of it when I go back. I shouldn't, therefore, mind the bad weather here. This vacation has been way too long for me. I hope I don't get used to it. Compared to my host university, I find that AUI requires more hard work to keep up with the studies and rhythm.

I am doing an exchange semester at a small and young school in Kufstein, Austria. The school is called Hochschule Kufstein and is located in a little town in the middle of the Alpes. Even though it is small, I'm having a lot of fun because

most people believe in "The Student Life," which basically means that students are not only at school to study about history and economics but also to discover life from their own perspective, to meet people and learn from every moment of their day. There is a large international community here so the desire of each person to have fun and make the most out of their stay here swallows racism and prejudice. I have been here for more than two weeks now, and I have only had 2 classes so far. My schedule is very light and the course system here is different. Classes take place less often.

For example, one of the classes for which I registered starts on the fourth of April and ends at the end of the month! I fill my time with German language training, which I do on my own because the class only meets once a week. Other than skiing and snowboarding, the thing to do around here is mountain hiking and biking, but the weather is not good for that right now! My schedule also gives me time to travel to other cities and other countries. I went to Italy (2 hours away) and Slovakia (5 hours away) already, and I am planning on visiting much more!

I'm glad I didn't come here earlier, as it would have been freezing cold and it would have been terrible. In fact, 8 degrees is the hottest temperature we have had over here recently; it makes the days seem longer and pitiful, although we get some sunny days but they don't last long!

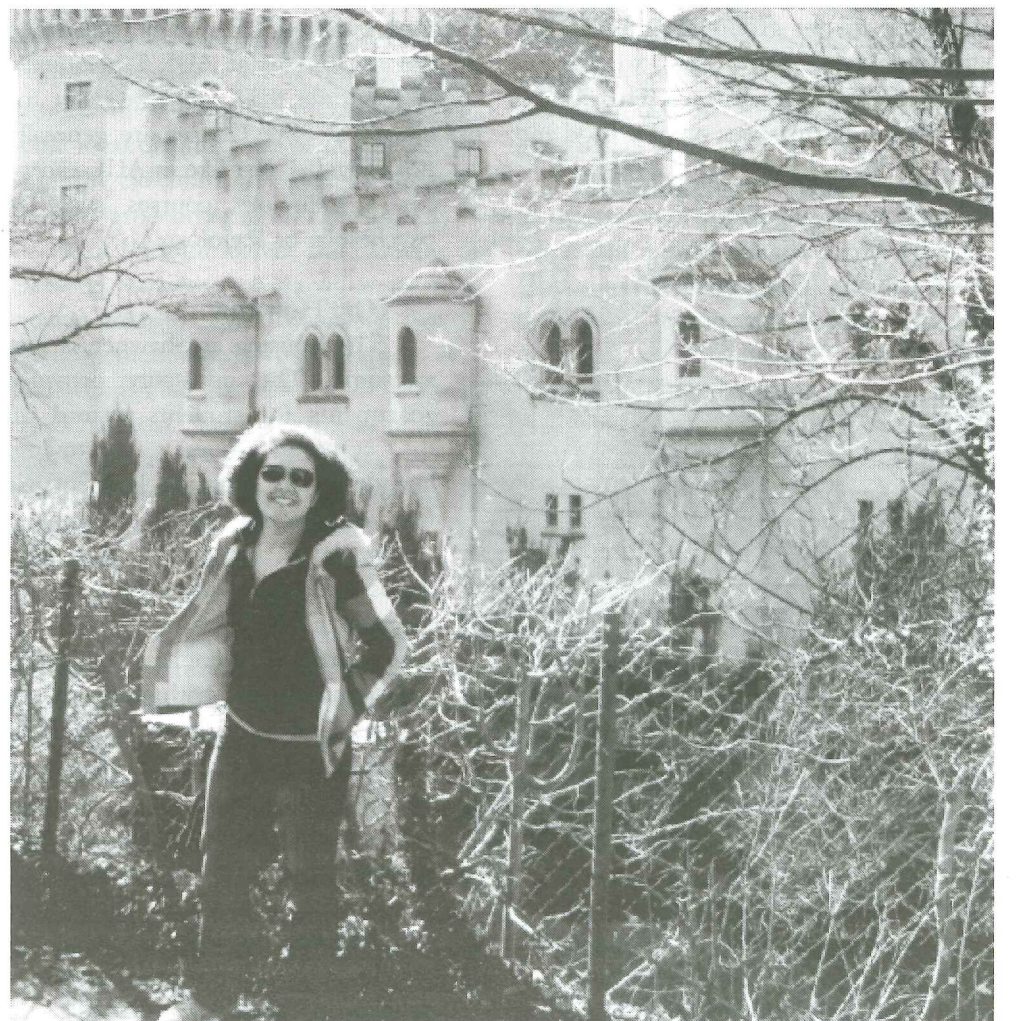
I miss the AUI campus because I was so spoiled there. I didn't have to walk for 20 minutes to the university. Also, the restaurant here is different from that of AUI; back at AUI, the restaurant offers relatively cheap food and is so close to everything and open most of the time. Here, actually, I have to cook my own food. The alternative is to track down the few restaurants that stay open late in the night and offer the same type of food all the time!



I don't know what to think about this place. I've been having a lot of fun, but it seems like everybody and everything is waiting for the sun in order to start moving! I've been learning a lot, though certainly not in class because I've only had few classes so far, but with other students. Through the lifestyle here, I have discovered many facts about myself and

about life in general; some too personal to share in the university's newspaper.

One important difference that I have noticed that has impacted my thinking is that here I am an adult and everybody assumes so. Meanwhile, at AUI/ Morocco I am a student and all the rules make me feel that I am a child. I'd rather live as an adult even if it means much more effort.





*Exchange from AUI*

# The Exchange Experience at Shawnee State University

 YOUSSEF AFKIR

Shawnee State University (SSU) is one of the new North American universities with which AUI has an exchange program agreement. It is located in the city of Portsmouth, in southern Ohio. It was my first choice on the list of the universities I chose when applying for exchange. Why? Because there were five places available, so I was sure I was not going alone. Moreover, I had found all the courses I needed to take the semester after, and they were all very likely to be approved by AUI. My application was accepted, the paperwork started (but it almost never ended), and the more the day of the departure to the USA approached, the more excited I was.

Now it has been two months since I arrived to SSU, and I am really enjoying my time. I have also already made all the possible comparisons between AUI and SSU, and here are the conclusions I ended up with.

## The city of Portsmouth:

It's a small town, but it is definitely much bigger than Ifrane. People of Portsmouth are very nice; it's something that just can't be ignored. Unfortunately, public transportation does not exist in the city. Everyone seems to have their own car, so whenever we need to go somewhere (referring to our group of international students who have no cars), we rely on American friends to drive us. The city has two main supermarkets; one for food and

drugs called Kroger, and a second one that is bigger where we find pretty much everything we need. This latter is called Walmart and is not expensive. There's also a cinema in the city that plays about 7 or 8 movies at a time, and we go there whenever we feel bored or just want to have some fun between friends. There are also all the American fast food restaurants such as McDonald's, Wendy's, Taco Bell, Burger King, Domino's, and some others, in addition to many other fancy restaurants. These restaurants range from Italian ones that serve plenty of pizzas and spaghetti to those of Asian roots that serve seafood. The city is also known for its numerous little antique shops where people can buy some beautiful old objects or old books. After all, it's not really as boring of a small city as I had expected.

## The University:

Shawnee State University is very different from AUI. It does not have a closed campus as AUI; rather, it's spread out through the streets of Portsmouth. However, it is much bigger than what one may imagine. The professors are skilled and experienced. Although there is no strict absence policy, students generally attend classes regularly and on time. I also have to admit that studies at Shawnee are not as hard as at AUI; I personally spend less time than usual to study for my classes at SSU. Classes are generally not crowded, just like in AUI, except for introductory courses such as psychology or sociology.

## The Housing:

The housing at Shawnee is just awesome! The university provides apartments for students instead of the common rooms. Apartments include a fully equipped kitchen that features a refrigerator, a big oven, a microwave, and a table with four chairs. Apartments also include a living room with two sofas and a table. In each apartment, there are two double bedrooms and two bathrooms. There are even some apartments that include a laundry room and a dishwasher in the kitchen. Unlike AUI, students can get into the opposite gender's apartments with no restrictions.

## The Bottom line:

Even though Shawnee is not a prestigious university, I personally



liked it. Studies are not as hard as those at AUI because it is a state university. This is good for an exchange program because students can get more time to experience the new culture and hang out around the host country. My advice to students

who plan to go on exchange is that the best way to take profit of an exchange program is to go in a group of three or four students. It's easier and cheaper to make travel plans in a group rather than individually.





## Exchange at AUI

# My Experience in Al Maghreb

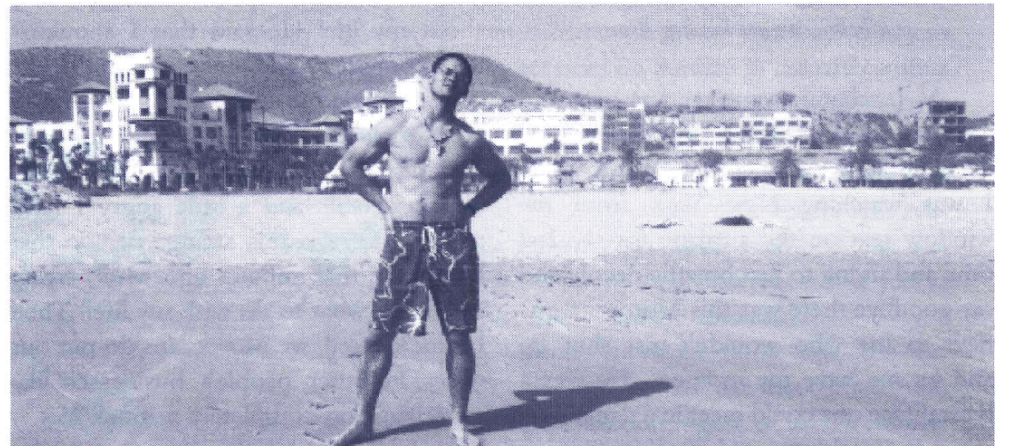
KRISTOPHER KILGROE

When I first came to Al Akhawayn, I was surprised at how quaint the university was, with its Swiss-style architecture and neatly trimmed lawns. It looked like a vacation ski-resort out of an Outdoors magazine. As an international student, I found it fairly easy to adjust to the school atmosphere here, though there were notable cultural differences that I noticed. I found Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting and abstinence, an interesting practice to observe and see its effect at the school. In the first day of matriculation for the new students, an outdoor evening meal called "Ftour" was held which included a hodgepodge of different delicacies exclusive to Ramadan.

I was pleasantly surprised to find a fully stocked weight room, though it was fairly simple and every weight was marked in kilograms; in the United States most gyms carry their weights in pounds, except among the Olympic lifting or power lifting communities. The more impressive piece of exercise equipment I found was the Olympic sized swimming pool. Though I

found it asinine to be required to relinquish your identity card to the front desk, to wear a swim cap along with pocket-less swim trunks (lest the lifeguard bark out the standards of apparel), I found the pool a pleasant distraction from classes.

The quaintness of Al Akhawayn notwithstanding, as soon as the weather in Ifrane turned reminiscent of the foggy, raining, and generally miserable Londonesque climate I was accustomed to in New York, I desired to migrate to other regions and see other interesting places. Morocco has much potential for tourism as I soon discovered in my weekend excursions with friends to such places as Saidia, Agadir, and Essaouira. There is still much to see and experience in terms of the sights and sounds of Morocco. I ambitiously hope to make the most of the time I have here. Overall, with the likes and dislikes that I have developed for Morocco, I believe it's been a worthy investment of my time to matriculate at Al-Akhawayn as an international exchange student.

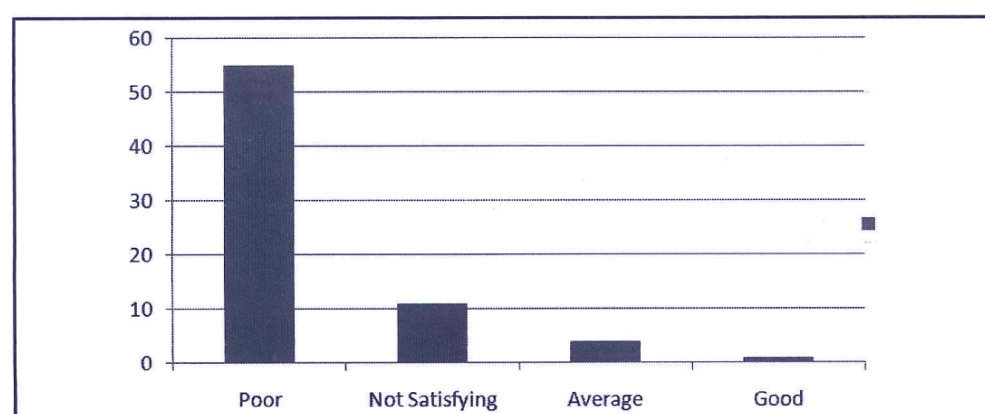


# When will we have decent internet?

MOHAMED NAJIB LAAZIZ

How many times have you tried to reach your Facebook page but the scary "this page cannot be displayed" appeared? How many times have you had to send an emergency email or download homework only to be shocked by the fact that your internet has timed out? And how many times have you suffered from the weirdest internet connection in the entire world? I guess none of us has escaped a single day from this real catastrophe. In fact, I have done a survey, taking as subject: "What do you think of AUI's internet speed?" the sample size gathered 72 students and faculty members. The data was collected through interviews, and the results reflect the average opinions of those surveyed.

The significance of this issue made interviewees go further than just answering the simple question, many of them had additional comments about it. Anas Elghayate, a SSE freshman says: "Akhawayn University has taken into consideration everything, even the library elevator, but how could they ignore our need to have an excellent bandwidth that can contribute in both our academic and social success?" he continues, "When I go



home, I feel a huge difference between my ADSL connection with only 512 kbp/s and LAN in Akhawayn. I feel like I am in an internet paradise, whereas, before I came to AUI, I always thought my ADSL was very slow"

The protestation goes beyond the survey; one AUI student created a group on the social utility website of Facebook called "All against Akhawayn slow internet connection." As of Friday, October 24, 144 members have joined the group to express their anger vis-à-vis this concern. Brahim Chami, a senior SSE student quoted the famous song of El Hajja Hamdaouia: "ila khyabet daba

tziyan" (After rain, the sun comes).

In the last week of September, the Akhawayn community was surprised by an email from the ITS department saying that a new bandwidth will replace the old starting the 1st of October. Everyone was excited and we started dreaming how fast we would be able to navigate and to download files. On the big day, I turned on my computer and started downloading a file from internet. I was like "OMG, that's unbelievable!" The speed was about 2 mb/s which is 10 times the old one. This good sensation started expiring after two or three days, because suddenly, I began (as well as many of my friends) to have some

problems that did not even exist before: connection timing out, firewall blocking some websites, and many more...

Michele Ferraro, an exchange student, summarizes the situation in the following: "Just yesterday I was saying that I had less connection problems in India, where 3-hour blackouts happen 6 times a day, than here!! The ITS previously wrote us they were upgrading the connection and that was why we had problems...I cannot check my AUI account regularly (and how am I supposed to know what to do for class??) I cannot talk to my parents when I want to, and preparing assignments is harder than getting a discount for a taxi ride! We are paying for a service that doesn't exist!"

For all these reasons, the university's administration is kindly invited to show more concern and immediately intervene to solve the problem. I believe that no matter how fast the internet connection is, more students will be bringing 3rd generation modems along with their luggage from home in order to avoid AUI's slow internet connection. I hope this will not be the case.



# The Cultural Shock Journey

## Part 1 of 2

 SALWA AINAQI

*Ladies and gentlemen, please fasten your seat belts... we are landing home!*

My exchange semester was over and after the most mind blowing five months I had to finally journey homeward. While I was watching New York from my window seat on the airplane for the last time and trying to just breathe deeply and say goodbye there was this Moroccan guy next to me who wouldn't just shut up and let me have my moment. He was a typical face one could meet in a dangerous street in Casablanca or better yet flipping burgers at a Burger King restaurant... he kept talking and asking questions while I tried to answer shortly so I wouldn't engage into a conversation I did not want, it didn't really work.

After asking me several private

questions he started to make suggestions about my life! He said that I shouldn't have come back and just stayed in the US, gotten married to an American in order to get a green card! He kept babbling about all kind of nonsense while I felt really uncomfortable and a little angry I have to say... here is this strange person that I met like five minutes ago who's trying to tell me what to do with my life!! Then I remembered, we Moroccans do put our noses in other people's businesses like it's something completely normal! Yes... how did I forget about that... and how did I tolerate it before!? it's an outrage! I remembered that I heard people talking about this, wait... what was that called again? yes... a reverse culture shock! and right then I knew I was going to have a big one!

After eight hours of wondering how things are going to be back home, thinking, but mostly sleeping the flight attendant announced that we were going to land in Mohamed V airport in ten minutes, and if you are still wondering about that guy I did change the seat. Me and my fellow friends waited forever for our luggage but it did not show up. They finally told us that it was lost and now in Paris or something. Not once that happened in the US and we sure did travel a whole lot. We had to report that but first we had to find where that gets done.

After a few hours of wondering around the offices, each one sends us to go see the next... We finally got to report our luggage loss and were on our way to meet our families. Moroccan bureaucracy does not look so good now that I saw how

efficient and fast things get done back in the states.

I have always expected that my parents will be the first faces I would see when I get home smiling with arms wide open and one of my sisters holding a flower bouquet or something. I kept dreaming about that moment and playing that scenario in my minds over and over again but well, guess what... it did not happen that way. There was only my brother in law and my little brother in there, I thought "Ok maybe the flower bouquet was a little too much to ask but where the hell are they?" I was extremely angry when they told me that they were not coming, I kept asking why neither one of them could make it until they told me that my uncle had just passed away and they had to stay for his funeral that day... Welcome home!

# 2009 Nobel Peace Prize... a Prize for a Promise

 GHASSAN ESSALEHI

On Friday, October 9, 2009, U.S. President Barack Obama surprisingly received the Nobel Peace Prize. The Nobel committee, based in Oslo, Norway cited his "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples." The prize-giving ceremony for the peace award is due to take place on December 10, 2009 in the Norwegian capital, Oslo.

The famous Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to recognize efforts of individuals, regardless of their political and social statute, for peace, human rights and democracy. The Nobel laureate - chosen by a five-member committee - wins a gold medal, a diploma and 10m Swedish kronor (\$1.4m).

It is important to mention that the list of potential candidates included the French President Mr. Sarkozy, the American musician Pete Seeger, the Macedonian humanitarian Zivko Popovski-Cvetin, the Austrian children's charity SOS-Kinderdorf International, the Vietnamese religious leader Thich Quang Do, and the American Greg Mortenson for his Asian school-building charity.

I respect Obama's policy, and I think that this award should work not only as recognition but also as a way to encourage him to work for peace for real.

In other words, I see this recognition as an invitation for President Obama to move to action, especially in light of his promising plans of reconciliation for the Americans with countries that Bush was criticized for attacking or discarding from the international scene. Initiating dialogue with the Muslim world, calling Iran to sit on the table of negotiations, and looking for peaceful alternatives to solve world issues are some important aspects that can be drawn from Obama's political agenda.

I think that Obama winning this award makes his agenda more of a reality; getting encouraged by such an important and symbolic prize is a good start for Obama to make his enthusiastic plans a reality. Moreover, this award is surely a strong motivation for Obama to haul unruly nations into line and to voice his opinions to countries that, until very recently, were put away from the U.S. agendas of dialogue.

Some ask, Obama has only been in office a few months, how can he deserve the Nobel Peace Prize? He has not done anything yet to prove his "peaceful intentions". More interestingly, one would wonder how a Nobel Peace Prize can be awarded to a current leader while many other people can deserve it more, having already proved their peaceful intentions.

The Nobel Peace Prize Committee is an extension of the Norwegian Parliament, which is a foreign government. Article 1, Section 9, Paragraph 8 of the United States Constitution prohibits the U.S. President from accepting any "present, emolument, office, or title of any kind, whatever, from any king, prince or foreign state." Clearly, the purpose of such restriction is to insure that the actions the U.S. President are not influenced or controlled by foreign governments.

It is important to mention that the Nobel Peace Prize Committee is an extension of the Norwegian Parliament, which is a foreign government. Accordingly, President Obama is not allowed to receive the Nobel Peace Prize 10m Swedish kronor (\$1.4m) that is delivered along the Diploma and the gold medal. Obama, thus, decided to donate the money to a charity. Nothing against President Obama, but I strongly believe that there are others who have fought the fight for much longer and with tangible results...He is just beginning his way on this road.

The past laureates of the Nobel Peace Prize could only receive such award after they have successfully proven their actions. For this reason, some observers raise voices and say that the decision had



come too soon, before President Obama had made any concrete foreign policy achievement. Creating a new climate for international politics can be hard, but it should be given time before it is judged.

All in all, I believe that President Obama had said a lot of things and made some promises for which he should be accounted. What is sure, however, is that President Obama has only said words, thus far, and should now move to proving his intentions; one should now be expecting deeds that reflect the U.S. President promises and plans. Words can reflect one's intentions and describe a leader's agenda. Nevertheless, it's sometimes better to let actions speak for themselves and deserve recognition.



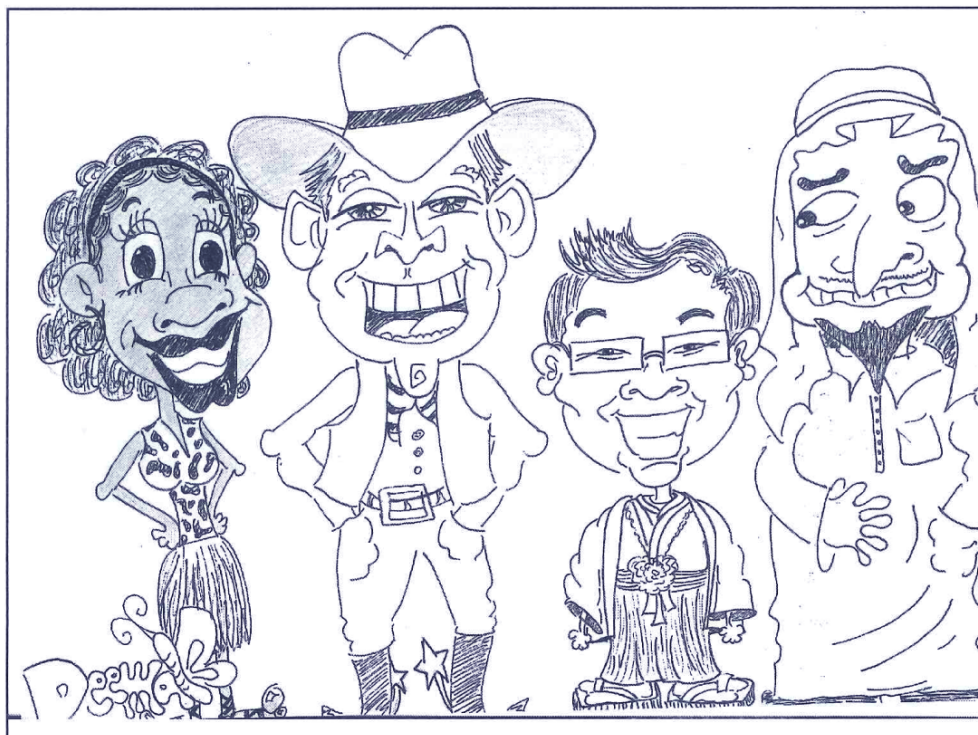
# AUI: A Multicultural Academic Institution

GHASSAN ESSALEHI

The cultural make-up of every country in the world is as wide-ranging as the people that inhabit it. Morocco is no exception; even within the same country, multiculturalism is a normal aspect of life. Al Akhawayn University is a community made up of people from many different walks of life. It is true that these differences are not always obvious, but the existence of diversity at AUI cannot be denied.

Morocco is a spot where many cultures melt to constitute the uniqueness of what one would call "Moroccan culture". To explain, Imazighen (plural of Amazigh, also called Berbers), Arabs, Jews, Muslims, along with a minority of Christians have long defined the lines of cultural traits in Morocco. AUI accordingly, reflects such diversity. There is no need to look further than the social habits of the students to find evidence of such diversity.

Clubs at AUI illustrate an array of cultures that are represented at AUI. For example, the Spanish club is dedicated to exploring Spanish culture and offers regular language classes to interested members of AUI community. There are also clubs that deal with some important compo-



nents of Moroccan culture, such as the Agraw Club that promotes the Rif Amazigh culture and organizes activities every semester. The Mimouna Club is dedicated to shedding light on Moroccan Jewish culture and Amicci d'Italia is a newer club focused on Italian culture, which organized a trip to Italy in order to establish

contact with this land and discover Italian values firsthand.

When entering AUI campus, the mosque attracts visitors with its high minaret and beautifully decorated arches. Situated in the center of campus, the mosque is an important component of AUI's Moroccan identity of Islam. However, non-

Muslim members of AUI community can practice their faith without being forced to adhere to this component of Moroccan culture. Christian members can join the services on Sunday in the off campus residences with AUI Chaplain, Mrs. Karen Smith and Jews are invited to contact the Chaplain in order to contact the Rabbi of Fes. Regardless of one's beliefs and religion, AUI community members can feel relaxed about their differences and feel at ease in this diverse community.

Some students think that the exchange students are the most important, and perhaps only, figure of AUI's cultural diversity.

"I don't think that much cultural diversity is present at AUI except the case of having exchange students," pointed out Ali El Kassimi, a freshman student from the School of Business Administration.

All in all, AUI offers a suitable environment for learning that is enriched thanks to its multiculturalism. AUI grants its students with the opportunity to discover other cultures of the world, learn about them, and establish a ground of dialogue and mutual understanding.

## The Dead "Literature" Society

ABDELAZIZ ALAOUI

Many AUI students know Dr. Jamaluddin Connell Monette as the assistant professor of literature in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. However, he is perhaps more famous on campus for his erudite reputation. The professor can read thirteen languages and speak five, including Gaelic, Arabic, and Farsi! His Christian/Muslim name, unusual for the AUI community, is also subject to much scrutiny and curiosity. To satisfy the reader's spirit of inquiry, Dr. Monette generously agreed to answer any questions in an interview with the AUI Bridge.

So who exactly is Dr. Monette?

Born in Halifax, Canada in 1975, Dr. Monette received his Bachelor's degree in Classical Studies from the University of Ottawa, and then conducted a Master's degree and Ph.D. in Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto. A historian by training, he is a specialist in medieval Muslim and Christian literature. Among his major works are a book, "The Medieval Hero", several articles published in "The Journal of Indo-European Studies", and a recent essay published in "Islamic Horizons", the official journal of ISNA which is read by approximately half a million

people. He is also in the process of writing a new book entitled: "North African Literature: an Anthology". As a scholar of history and literature, he is glad to creatively assist other authors on occasion, and has been consulted by North American authors such as Clive Cussler, Grant Blackwood, and Ray Fawkes.

One might wonder how a Canadian raised in the Evangelical Christian tradition became so interested in Islamic studies that he converted to Islam. Dr. Monette explained that his curiosity toward Islam began by chance during his undergraduate years. As part of his degree major, his university offered classes related to Islam and Near Eastern studies. These included studies in the Akkadian (Babylonian) and Arabic languages, and history and archaeology courses that focused on sites in North Africa, Jordan and Syria.

"I was able to do a degree minor in comparative religion, and Islam was especially interesting to me," Dr. Monette said.

He explained his conversion to Islam saying, "When I did my undergraduate degree and studied the history of Christianity, as a historian I had academic com-

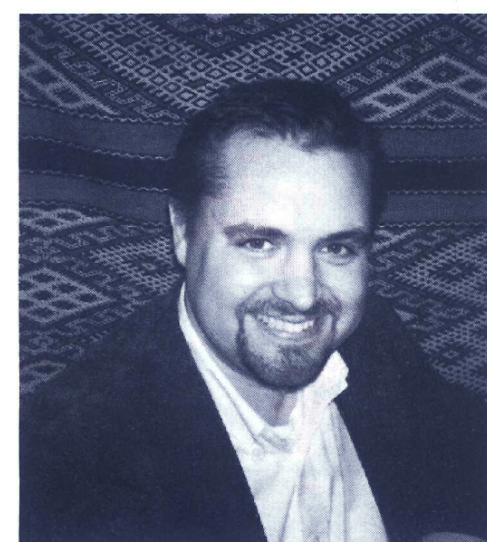
plications with Christianity. After studying other religions, it seemed to me that Islam is the only religion where we know for certain where the holy book [the Quran] comes from."

In 2007, he decided to settle in Morocco, and he chose Al Akhawayn University to share and pass on his knowledge and to continue his academic research. He specifically chose Morocco because he finds it a very suitable place for his research. He also sees Morocco as a country where tolerant Islam is practiced and where people are friendly and open-minded. Today he enjoys life in Ifrane with his wife and daughter.

Among his students, Dr. Monette has a very good reputation as a professor. "Dr Monette is an amazing professor; every class is enjoyable with him," said Ghita Benabbess, a third year BA student.

Aside from his qualities as a teacher, he is held in equally high esteem among those students who have encountered him outside of the classroom

"Dr. Monette is the advisor of the Islamic Art and Culture Club and he is an excellent advisor. He is a very nice person and he really supports the club. I



wish I could have him as a teacher," said Mohamed Ali Nair, a senior BA student.

Dr. Monette is an appreciated professor among students and his peers not only because of his great knowledge and way of teaching but also for his human qualities. It is well-known on campus that Dr. Monette has made students enjoy the study of Literature, much like the English teacher John Keating in the movie "The Dead Poets Society". He has truly made learning an enjoyable experience that students want to partake in.



# Ten Years with HM King Mohamed VI

GHASSAN ESSALEHI

When in July 1999, King Mohamed VI of Morocco ascended to the throne, the expectations for change and progress were such that many of the world's observers questioned the possibility of making a real and positive change in a country that was much marked by the famous "Years of Lead" and political oppression some of its political parties have undergone. The inspiring reign of the young monarch - a man with a purported reputation of benevolence, generosity for all of his people and compassion for the poor, in particular - is a major factor which cannot be dismissed when analyzing this new era, often described as "the developmental era of King Mohamed VI".

The 45-year-old king is credited with increasing press and political freedoms. In this regard, it is important to mention the setting up of the "Haute Autorité de la Communication Audio-visuelle" (translated as the High Author-

ity for Audiovisual Communication) which provided for a ground to reform the Moroccan national broadcasting scene. Moreover, the HACA is an independent body which is meant to be separate (though not necessarily separated) from the government's political agenda in order to be able to promote freedom of communication to the benefit of cultural diversity and pluralist political landscape of the country. Also, thanks to the creation of new press codes, the rate of closing newspapers and organizing media repression demonstrations has significantly dropped than the one that existed in the 1990s.

HM King Mohamed VI earned praise from different political stances and religious influencing discourse, especially liberal quarters for the new family legislation. The Moudawana has actually raised marriage age to 18, improved women's rights in situations of divorce and custody, and made it more difficult for men to take more than one wife.

King Mohamed VI has also proceeded with wrapping up Morocco's dark history regarding the oppression of the regime opposing political parties and the many disappearances of their figures. The setting up of "Instance d'Equité et Reconciliation" (i.e. The Equity and Reconciliation Commission) came as a courageous initiative that was first regarded with much scepticism. This Commission aimed at probing three decades of rights abuse, including killings, disappearances and torture, between 1960 and 1999 of the reign of King Hassan II. It dealt with 16,000 cases, of which more than 9,000 will be eligible for compensation, and resolved the fate of nearly 600 missing persons. The King's decision to set up such a commission, which reported back to him after a series of investigations and opening



of mass graves around the country, was the first of its kind in the Arab world.

The creation of the National Initiative for Human Development ("l'Initiative Nationale du Développement Humain", abbreviated as the INDH) has achieved many benefits to citizens nationwide. Today, the initiative is described as a unique project that embodies many notions of cooperation, rural development, and sustainable growth all over the country.

Another major achievement recorded for King Mohamed VI is the establishment of "l'Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe" (IRCAM), or Royal Institute of the Amazigh culture. This Institute reflects the country's awareness for the need of safeguarding and the promotion of the Amazigh culture. The main mission of this institution is to provide advice for the monarch in matters that would best preserve the Amazigh culture, its languages, and how to promote them in everyday life.

With such initiatives, Morocco can be the first Middle Eastern and North African country to genuinely embrace a process of full democratization with a clear separation of powers, and with the aim of establishing strong and independent institutions. Such changes would definitely need more time for application but, at least, they reflect the understanding for their importance. The painful and tumultuous past was to be confronted; people would end up reconciling with the establishment and with the monar-

chy. The Press is now getting freer; the taboos are being smashed one after the other, and the multicultural society of Morocco is becoming more valued in the government's agendas.

Seeing the bright side of the economic and "social" achievements of King Mohamed VI era is important to get a clear image of the advancements made by the young Monarch. Today, Moroccans are proud of their march toward the establishment of new and modern models of democracy. Many achievements of development can be observed across

the kingdom. A liberal and democratic country has emerged and gave birth to a new generation of reforms and projects. In an air filled with high expectations and, sometimes, extravagant hopes, King Mohamed VI has proposed a more prosperous future and an inspiring perspective for his people. Such characteristics can undoubtedly provide more flourishing to the country's developing

political, economic, and social situations.

The new reign of His Majesty King Mohamed VI and his prominent engagement in various aspects of Morocco's projects clearly reflects the right track followed by Moroccans. All fringes of society applaud the King's initiatives which also receive a massive encouragement by the international community. Morocco's monarchy has long been the major symbol of unity and progress of their country. More than any other time, Moroccans now feel blessed for having such a leader.





# New Student Dorms: A New Way of Living?

YASSINE MAJDI

Sometimes change is not visible to the naked eye. This is particularly the case today at Al Akhawayn University. Many students returned to AUI without noticing any change, except for maybe the new Student Activities Office, located near the football ground. However, this change is minor compared to the appearance of a new building outside campus. In fact, this is the big change, this semester: there is a housing building outside campus, located near the Banque Populaire. Many questions arise about this building: How do we get there? What are the rules? Is it worth living there?

This outdoor campus is now the fresh home of 79 male residents (still searching for females). According to Hamid Nouamani, housing officer, these students are not secluded from the Al Akhawayn main campus.

"A shuttle goes there every hour to pick students. Next week the shuffle will pick students every half-hour," said Mr. Hamid Nouamani (this article was written on 15 September).

Off-campus housing doesn't mean new freedoms or new outdoor experiences. With regard to hall directors, the protocol is the same as every other building.

"There are five hall directors who shift," Mr. Nouamani stated. "There is also a curfew in this building. The housing regulations also apply for these buildings. And for students who want to leave the AUI main campus late, they should warn the security people at the main gate when they leave, so that the security at the new buildings is able to receive them," he continued. There are also future projects in store for this new building. "There is an empty space which is convertible into a cafeteria," revealed the Housing Officer.

This is the information given by an AUI Housing Officer, but what do students who have lived in the outdoor building think about it?

"The rooms are small, and it is far from the main campus. On the other hand, the building is very calm which allows students to focus on their work. Concerning the transportation, it is true that it passes every hour, but you have to plan things in advance, especially when you need to wake up early in the morning. Everything has to be planned and it is pretty tiring," declared Yasmine Bennis, a freshman SSE student.

Al Akhawayn Housing rooms have a reputation of being very comfortable, especially considering the myriad of

services that are provided for the students in the main campus. However, according to Bennis, the comfort in the outdoor campus is not comparable to the one in the AUI main campus.

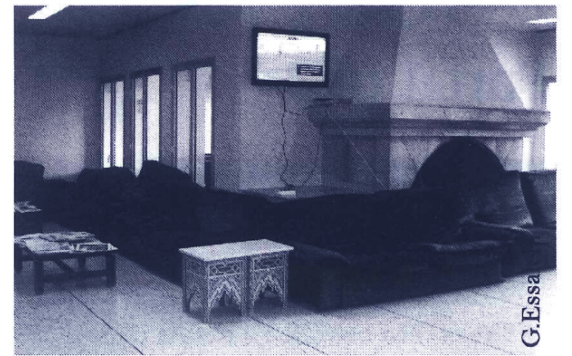
"The toilets and the showers are shared. There is a lack of intimacy and that is quite bothering. There are no mirrors in the rooms, which is pretty troublesome for a girl" said Yasmine Bennis.

Now that we have seen two perspectives on the Outdoor Campus, the focus shifts to the effect of this new campus on the main campus.

"I didn't stay for too long in the outdoor campus. Life was too hard and I really missed the AUI main campus and the life there. Al Akhawayn allowed me to move into building 33, in a three-person studio," Yasmine Bennis said.

Yasmine's case is isolated, as Building 33 is part of the female dorm. Some others weren't that lucky, which triggered many moves in the campus. One of these displaced students is Mehdi Bekhti, junior SBA student, who originally lived in Building 20.

"I really had a hard time at the beginning of the semester. In fact, to get



into building 20, I waited for a long time and had to talk a lot with my roommate's previous roommate and the housing services. When I finally moved in Building 20, I stayed there only for a while because I had to move to Building 32. The Housing Services orchestrated this move in order to allow girls to settle in all the rooms of building 20's ground floor" declared Bekhti.

Love it or hate it the new outdoor campus is there. Some may appreciate it for its calm and quiet, and its distance from the AUI campus. Meanwhile others may hate it for the exact same reasons. But still, Al Akhawayn is changing and the Housing Services does its best to do its duty for the students. In this case, that seems to mean extending Al Akhawayn grounds in Ifrane.

# Get to know your Resident Assistant

YASSIR KHADEMALLAH

AUI students may face a variety of daily problems while living on campus including roommate conflicts, disrespect for quiet hours, alcohol and drug abuse, phone harassment incidents, and just plain messy rooms. These situations decrease a student's ability to concentrate on their studies and perform to the best of their abilities. After several student complaints, the Housing Department recognized how important it would be to add more members to the Resident Assistant (RA) team, and thus create a campus environment wherein respect for others forms the cornerstone.

Most students remain woefully uninformed about the jobs and duties of an RA and how the RAs can be helpful. An RA is a student whose job is to facilitate an environment conducive to academic, social, and personal success for each student living in the residence halls. The RA also serves as a peer advisor, a person who can help students acclimatize to the unfamiliar university setting. It is critical that everyone who applies for this position is honestly interested in the well-being of the students. They also work to facilitate activities that are designed to build community between residents and encourage

them to excel in their academic and personal careers. In addition, RAs are supposed to ensure a safe transition from high school to the university lifestyle for newcomers, in the hopes that they might avoid stress and depression at the onset of their first semesters.

The RA training process varies from one college to another, depending on the facilities and the resources available. The core of the training process is formed by two powerful types of exercises; the first serves to simulate conflicts as they would occur on a daily basis and the manners to overcome said conflicts; the second type deals with team-building and constructive attitudes in a variety of forms.

Resident assistants in AUI go through a four-day training outing in which they learn how to handle many issues. Included among these is suicide prevention and detection, conflict resolution, counseling, and any other tools necessary to maintain a safe and secure environment on campus.

The RA team is composed of eleven students spread across multiple buildings on campus in order to ensure a good management of their afforded resources. Every Resident Assistant looks after the

building in which he or she lives. There is; however, an exception in the event that a locally assigned RA is absent, which permits intervention by a different RA to settle local disputes. All in all, the RA assures the execution of residence life policies and procedures in a respectful way.

Mrs. Yasmine Bahaji, the Director of Housing Services, consented to an interview in order to express the causes behind the implementation of this program. Mrs. Bahaji explained that this kind of program exists in most North American universities, and that since AUI is adopting the North American educational system, the idea of a program at AUI made sense. She added that the goal of this program is to give students the opportunity to contribute to any achievements concerning the welfare of the residents, and also to create a good environment that could promote personal and academic growth. She stated that the main objective is to build a community in which people interact and learn from one another.

"We started this program last semester and it was like a monitoring beginning. We will try to generalize the program over the other buildings, which lack Resident Assistants, but not before at least 1 year

depending on students' work, the resources available and more importantly, students should be convinced about the important role of this group of students," Mrs. Bahaji said.

"I like the idea of assigning students to almost every building to assure that students will not be disturbed and irritated. However, RAs have a hard task that lies in their ability to intervene to solve student's problems and stay neutral" said Iliass El Assal, a junior BA student.

Jawad Mabrouk, a sophomore student majoring in Human Resources, added to the student perspective saying, "I think that it will help us as students living in the same building in terms of networking to know each other and to create a good environment for studies. In addition, I think that the program will not be so powerful in the beginning since it is not very known, but I believe that it will become more popular, and students will get interested in it. However, all this depends on the RAs contribution to make it a success."

Finally, we hope that this program will meet its goals and give the best experience to the residents who are in need of such initiatives that aim to enhance the quality of life inside the campus.



# The OIP: How much do you think you know about it?

## Part 1 of 2

GHASSAN ESSALEHI

According to the AUI website, "AUI is by design and mission an international university. The university's academic programs foster an international perspective and international understanding." Hence, the mission of the Office of International Programs (abbreviated as OIP) is categorized into five main goals. The first and most known goal, at least for AUI students, is about advising "AUI undergraduates about study abroad and exchange programs". In other words, this goal consists of providing consultancy for students to go on an exchange program.

Nevertheless, some AUI students seem to have a very limited knowledge about the mission of the OIP and the details about its tasks. First, one has to begin asking questions about details about programs established by AUI's OIP with other OIPs of internationally recognized academic institutions. For sure, the mission of OIP is not limited to providing an exchange experience to interested AUI students, but it also expands to looking for a ground for interested members to take part of study abroad programs, get an educational leave or help launching educational programs between one AUI school and another one at a second institution abroad.

Apart from what interested students can get to know from OIP's mission when asking the assistant in its office, in bldg.10, students seem to only ask others for the best choices to make when going on an exchange. In fact, "word of mouth" can be the best and most credible source of information to consider. Sometimes, this has been proven to be the least credible way for one to get an informed opinion.

First, it is important to mention a few facts about the Director of the OIP. Mrs. Amy Fishburn, who is quite famous among AUI community for her open door office and welcoming smile, is an American lady who finished her graduate studies with a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Administration from Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington after having worked for the Peace Corps for two years in Ouarzazate, teaching English in the lycée. Mrs. Amy Fishburn joined King Saud University in Riyadh, KSA where she worked for six years and gained extensive knowledge about many aspects of teaching skills and communication strategies within a culturally diverse society and international university faculty.

During her professional experi-

ence in KSA, Mrs. Amy Fishburn met her husband and joined Morocco in order to settle down after the first Guld war in 1990. Once in Casablanca, where her husband is from, Mrs. Fishburn was recruited as Human Resource Officer for Citibank Maghreb and thus obtained a new knowledge; experiencing the Moroccan corporate financial sector. After two years in the banking sector, Mrs. Fishburn was an administrator at a Moroccan private school in Casablanca. Education, in fact, seems to be the field that has long attracted Mrs. Fishburn and would still be consider this as one of the biggest choices of her life.

In February 1996, Mrs. Amy Fishburn joined AUI and took on several roles. The first of her tasks consisted of developing the Office of International Programs, in addition to taking care of the students' insurance, auditing accounts of the restaurant and looking after textbook orders. When Mrs. Fishburn first came to AUI, only 3 institutional agreements had been signed and the exchange programs had established. Given the inspired mission AUI had established when it was set up, AUI staff members and executives had to work hand in hand, along with Mrs. Fishburn, to get more partnership programs approved and to be sure about the qualification of courses as well as their transferability. The curriculum alignment, too, was a major goal on which Mrs. Fishburn had to consider in order to improve the academic life of AUI and meet student expectations.

Today, 13 years after Mrs. Fishburn launched the Office of International Programs, the number of active exchange programs is estimated to be at 40, which also include study abroad programs and educational leaves of which students can take part. It is important to mention here that the exchange programs are "about students and not money", as Mrs. Fishburn stressed. In fact, when it comes to these programs, AUI students have to pay the home institution (AUI) to host one ex-



change student who would then provide a seat for the Moroccan student to go to the other host institution. Study abroad programs, on the other hand, consist of having AUI students directly paying the host institution and thus the costs may be more expensive than expected. The life expenses and standards of living abroad may be higher than those in Morocco and thus one should expect such expensive rates when deciding to study abroad.

**Today, 13 years after Mrs. Fishburn launched the Office of International Programs, the number of active exchange programs is estimated to be at 40 which also include study abroad programs and educational leaves of which students can take part.**

When applying to take part of an exchange program, the OIP considers one major criteria for the selection; the Cumulative GPA (i.e. CGPA). In fact, for the OIP, the CGPA is the only major indicator on which they can base their selection concerning having a student stay at AUI or,

otherwise, be selected to go and enjoy one or two semesters on exchange. "Because the exchange programs are fundamentally academic programs, the CGPA is very important" explains Mrs. Fishburn. Normally, a student with a CGPA that is

equal or higher than 3.00 should be able to be placed at any given program. However, students with a CPGA that ranges from 2.75 and 2.99 "can be easily and fairly placed", added Mrs. Fishburn.

When asked about students' involvement in AUI clubs and organizations, Mrs. Fishburn made it clear that such activities surely develop one's personality and enhance their communication and other skills. As a result, compared to students who are not members of any club, it is recommended to be active in one or more clubs since they will have more opportunities to overcome any problems of adaptation and cultural adjustment when they are abroad. References, provided by students when submitting an exchange application, are also considered for selection since they can "often flag some aspects of students' personalities and skills which need to be investigated". Mrs. Fishburn added that these references "usually tend to be good" and can only reflect a student's relevance to take part of an exchange program.

Next part will shed light on the different partnerships that AUI has with other university networks, the faculty exchange programs, and how these are important to AUI. Also, the next article part will discuss the issue of having students who like to go on exchange with their partners (or in couples: a friend and their boyfriend/girlfriend, brothers, sisters, and cousins). Course transfer issues will also be included in the article.

Stay tuned!



# The Liga With a New Flavor

YOUSSEF EL BOUKHARI

As the first days of the Liga begin, the major protagonists get ready to test their squads, all of which have been altered during the summer mercato in varying degrees. Of course, by major protagonists, we are referring to the two most outrageously shining stars of the Spanish league: FC Barcelona and Real Madrid C.F. This summer, under the direction of their freshly elected president, Florentino Perez, the "Casa Blanca" spent almost 300 million Euros on the transfers market to the capital. Crisitano Ronaldo, Kakà, Benzema, Raul Albiol, Granero, Negredo, Arbeloa and Xabi Alonso all joined the Royal Club. "A real gathering of stars," affirms Michel Platini, "but I really don't want to be in the shoes of Manuel Pellegrini." Indeed, with all these incoming players, the new Real Madrid coach, Pellegrini, was faced with a need to eliminate some players from the club. Here is where the mistake was made; there were rumors that Lassana Diara was a probable transfer out of the club. For those who don't remember, it was he who reigned

on the midfield during last season and reminded the fans of his compatriot Claude Makelele. However, the true politic of Real Madrid subsequently emerged when Arjen Robben and Wesley Sneijder made their way respectively to Bayern Munich and Inter Milano. Fans have begun to doubt the know-how of Pellegrini. In light of the last Classico against Barcelona, how could he dispose of such a crucial player as Robben? As the greatest managers and coaches have affirmed, "it was a mistake from Perez to gather such a pleiad of stars without considering already those present in the squad!" said one football fan (quoted from the online forum of Kooora.com).

The club's eternal rival made its new selections from other leagues, with Maxwell, Ibrahimovic and Chygrynskiy as the newest FC Barcelona recruits of this summer. Not to be forgotten is Pedro Rodriguez from youth team FCB B; nor the other potential arrivals from the same system in the forms of Jeffren Suarez, Jonathan Dos Santos and Gai Assulin, all

aged between 17 and 20 years old. They made an impressive showing during the FCB tour in the US, but apparently they did not live up to Coach Pep Guardiola's expectations. The latter confirmed that, even with the arrival of the striker Ibra and the defender Chygrynskiy, a remake of last season's performance is practically unfeasible. Despite this acquiescence, he still maintains the goals that he has always set as most important: the Liga and the Champions League.

This year's Liga is slated to be extremely challenging and we, as fans, hope for plenty of goals and exciting soccer. Football is the most illogical science and expecting either Madrid or FCB to win a title would be just

a fan shouting for the glory of his favorite; however, a more cool-headed person would just enjoy the upcoming days waiting for the giants to meet up again!



Google images

# Hoba Hoba Spirit: Leaders of "haiha" Music

AYOUB EL MAMOUN

Who doesn't know "Bienvenue A Casa"? Shame one you, if you don't! The track was downloaded 10,000 times after being available for only one month on Hoba Hoba Spirit's website. You've never heard of Hoba Hoba Spirit? Ok, then go and look for another article! ... just kidding, of course you can stay and enjoy the reading!

Their story begins in 1998 with an engineer (Reda Allali) and a banker (Aboubakr Zehouani) who were just having fun by singing reggae, gnawa and rai in their spare time. Aboubakr had to quit and was replaced by his younger brother Anouar. After being joined by Adil Hanine, Othman Hmimar and Saad Boudi, the group took part in many cultural events in Casablanca, before they successfully broke into the mainstream and "rocked" the Essaouira Gnawa Festival in 2003. Their first album was a set of Gnawa-Reggae songs that inspired and motivated the band to compile a second album in 2005 entitled

"Blad Skizo".

Hoba Hoba Spirit's songs are about social problems and issues and the Moroccan youth's expectations and needs. By mixing Rock, Reggae, and Gnawa, and by singing in French, English, and Moroccan Darija, the Hobas are accessible and irresistible to Moroccans. Hoba Hoba Spirit expresses the oppression, anxiety, and the schizophrenia of modern society. Thus, it is no surprise that their concerts are attended by huge crowds and their songs downloaded at high rates.

2007 saw Hoba Hoba launch their third album entitled "Trabando". Fhamathor, Tiqar, and Goulou Baz are not just tracks, but musical reflections of some of society's dysfunctions. In the same year, the Hobas performed in Building 17, (yes here at AUI) and anyone who was there cannot say anything less than "Fabulous"!

One year later, a fourth album was added to the band's discography. Given the title

"El Gouddam", the 10 tracks are about freedom (Hyati), our educational system dysfunctions (Jdoudna Kanou Shah), and Moroccan women (Femme Actuelle). The song Wakel Chareb Na3es featured the Moroccan violin legend Abdelaziz Stati. Later that year, the band traveled abroad to perform in Washington D.C and France.

Seventy thousand people attended Hoba Hoba Spirit's Casablanca performance in July 2009 at the Casa Music Festival. Not only was the massive crowd watching and having fun, but they were also moving, singing, and expressing.

Reda Allali says that the style of music doesn't matter, and that what matters the most is showing what is wrong with the society and fixing it. He fully believes that music can act better and reach more audiences than many other methods of social change. This amazing musical story is to be continued...



**HOBASPIRIT**

Google images





Sudoku

EASY

7							8	
5	8	1	6	4	7	3	2	9
			5					7
8	4				5		7	
9	7		4		6		1	8
	5		2				6	4
4					3			
6	9	5	7	1	4	8	3	2
	1							6

MEDIUM

		3		4	9	5		
2					1	7	8	9
	9		2	7	5	1		
4			7			8		1
3		7			4			2
		6	1	5	3		7	
7	2	5	9					4
		1	4	2		9		

DIFFICULT

	1	7	9					
	5				7			1
	2			6				3
6		5				8		2
	7	2				1	4	
1		9				5		6
5				2			8	
7			1				2	
					8	3	1	

Jokes

Death Bed

A man was lying on his death-bed in a hospital when suddenly he began flailing his arms and making motions as if he wanted to speak.

The priest, keeping a bedside watch, leaned towards the man and asked, "Do you have something you would like to say?"

The man nodded affirmatively. The priest handed him a pad and pen. "I realize that, in your condition, you can't speak. Here, write a note on this pad of paper and I'll pass it along to your wife. She's in the waiting room." The man gathered his last bit of strength and proceeded to scrawl his message on the pad of paper. He then quickly handed the note to the priest. Moments later, the man died.

After administering last rites, the priest left the man's bedside to break the sad news to the wife. After some consoling, the priest handed her the note.

The wife tearfully opened the note which read, "Get off my oxygen hose!"

Good Choice

An engineering student is walking on campus one day when another engineer rides up on a shiny new motorcycle.

"Where did you get such a rockin' bike?" asked the first.

The second engineer replied "Well, I was walking along yesterday minding my own business when a beautiful woman rode up on this bike. She threw the bike to the ground, took off all her clothes and said "Take what you want."

The second engineer nodded approvingly "Good choice, the clothes probably wouldn't have fit."

Three Old Ladies

Three old ladies are sitting in a cafe, chatting about various things.

One lady says, "You know, I'm getting really forgetful. This morning, I was standing at the top of the stairs, and I couldn't remember whether I had just come up or was about to go down."

The second lady says, "You think that's bad? The other day, I was sitting on the edge of my bed, and I couldn't remember whether I was going to bed or had just woken up!"

The third lady smiles smugly, "Well, my memory's just as good as it's always been, knock on wood," she says as she raps on the table. Then with a startled look on her face, she asks, "Who's there?"

Resume Mistakes

These are from actual resumes:

"Personal: I'm married with 9 children. I don't require prescription drugs.

"I am extremely loyal to my present firm, so please don't let them know of my immediate availability."

"Qualifications: I am a man filled with passion and integrity, and I can act on short notice. I'm a class act and do not come cheap."

"I intentionally omitted my salary history. I've made money and lost money. I've been rich and I've been poor. I prefer being rich."

"Note: Please don't misconstrue my 14 jobs as 'job-hopping'. I have never quit a job."

"Number of dependents: 40."

"Marital Status: Often. Children: Various."

RESUME BLOOPERS

"Here are my qualifications for you to overlook."

REASONS FOR LEAVING MY LAST JOB:

"Responsibility makes me nervous."

"They insisted that all employees get to work by 8:45 every morning. Couldn't work under those conditions."

"Was met with a string of broken promises and lies, as well as cockroaches."

"I was working for my mom until she decided to move."

"The company made me a scapegoat - just like my three previous employers."

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

"While I am open to the initial nature of an assignment, I am decidedly disposed that it be so oriented as to at least partially incorporate the experience enjoyed heretofore and that it be configured so as to ultimately lead to the application of more rarefied facets of financial management as the major sphere of responsibility."

"I was proud to win the Gregg Typing Award."

SPECIAL REQUESTS & JOB OBJECTIVES:

"Please call me after 5:30 because I am self-employed and my employer does not know I am looking for another job."

"My goal is to be a meteorologist. But since I have no training in meteorology, I suppose I should try stock brokerage."

"I procrastinate - especially when the task is unpleasant."

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES:

"Minor allergies to house cats and Mongolian sheep."

PERSONAL INTERESTS:

"Donating blood. 14 gallons so far."

SMALL TYPOS THAT CAN CHANGE THE MEANING:

"Education: College, August 1880-May 1984."

"Work Experience: Dealing with customers' conflicts that arouse."

"Develop and recommend an annual operating expense fudget."

"I'm a rabid typist."

"Instrumental in ruining entire operation for a Midwest chain operation."



## Jokes

### A Business man And a Programmer

A programmer and an Business man are sitting next to each other on a long flight from Los Angeles to New York.

The programmer leans over to the Business man and asks if he would like to play a fun game.

The Business Man just wants to take a nap, so he politely declines and rolls over to the window to catch a few winks.

The programmer persists and explains that the game is real easy and is a lot of fun. He explains "I ask you a question, and if you don't know the answer, you pay me \$5. Then you ask me a question, and if I don't know the answer, I'll pay you \$5."

Again, the Business man politely declines and tries to get to sleep.

The programmer, now somewhat agitated, says, "OK, if you don't know the answer you pay me \$5, and if I don't know the answer, I'll pay you \$100!"

This catches the Business Man's attention, and he sees no end to this torment unless he plays, so he agrees to the game.

The programmer asks the first question. "What's the distance from the earth to the moon?" The Business Man doesn't say a word, but reaches into his wallet, pulls out a five dollar bill and hands it to the programmer.

Now, it's the Business Man's turn. He asks the programmer "What goes up a hill with three legs, and comes down on four?"

The programmer looks up at him with a puzzled look. He takes out his laptop computer and searches all of his references. He taps into the Airphone with his modem and searches the net and the Library of Congress. Frustrated, he sends e-mail to his co-workers--all to no avail.

After about an hour, he wakes the Business Man and hands him \$100. The Business Man politely takes the \$100 and turns away to try to get back to sleep. The programmer, more than a little miffed, shakes the Business Man and asks "Well, so what's the answer?" Without a word, the Business Man reaches into his wallet, hands the programmer \$5, and turns away to get back to sleep.

### What just happened here?

A military cargo plane, flying over a populated area, suddenly loses power and starts to nose down. The pilot tries to pull up, but with all their cargo, the plane is too heavy. So he yells to the soldiers in back to throw things out to make the plane lighter. They throw out a pistol. "Throw out more!" shouts the pilot. So they throw out a rifle. "More!" he cries again. They heave out a missile, and the pilot regains control.

He pulls out of the dive and lands safely at an airport. They get into a jeep and drive off. Pretty soon they meet a boy on the side of the road who's crying. They ask him why he's crying and he says "A pistol hit me on the head!"

They drive more and meet another boy who's crying even harder. Again they ask why and the boy says, "A rifle hit me on the head!"

They apologize and keep driving. They meet a boy on the sidewalk who's laughing hysterically. They ask him, "Kid, what's so funny?" The boy replies, "I sneezed and a house blew up!"

## Movie Review

### The Hangover: the Best Bachelor Party Ever ...or Not

In the United States, Las Vegas and South Beach Miami are the most popular bachelor party destinations. In most cases, the rite of passage from bachelorhood to more responsible marital life usually involves taking part of a bachelor party. Traditionally, the task of organizing the party is assigned to a male sibling of the bachelor or to the best man. In fact, many bachelor parties in the US entail huge consumption of alcohol, and the hiring of a stripper, and generally the bride is quite reluctant to let her future husband in the hands of a stripper even for a few hours. But today, our bride and her family are pretty cool and let the future groom enjoy his last free time with his buddies, and here comes the story of *The Hangover*; one of the funniest movies of the year.

Imagine one day you wake up and find a tiger in your bathroom, a baby in your closet and your friend's tooth is missing. What would you do?

Doug is about to be married to Tracy, and two days before their wedding, his friends Phil, Stu and Alan who will soon be his brother-in-law take him to Las Vegas for a bachelor party. Tracy's father lends them his car and pointed out that Doug is the only one allowed to drive the convertible Mercedes. At that moment starts the story of *The Hangover*. The fellows get a suite at Caesar's Palace hotel and couldn't wait to start their weekend; they sneak on the roof and toast to the night ahead.

The next morning they wake up with no memory of the previous night and find their hotel room in complete disorder and the groom is missing. The groomsmen have no idea what happened the night before, but they do have some clues abound: a tiger is in the bathroom, a baby is in the closet, Stu is missing a tooth and has a \$ 800 receipt, one of the suite's beds is on a statue on the roof, Phil found a hospital bracelet in his wrist, and finally, the valet of the hotel brings them a stolen police car they supposedly dropped off the night before.

The following scenes keep the audience in suspense, as the groomsmen try to get their memory back while driving a police car in order to find where the groom was. They first head to the hospital where a doctor informs them they had traces of roofies (a drug used for sexual assault) in their blood and that they came from a wedding in a chapel. They find the chapel and learn that Stu, the most serious guy, was married to a stripper who turned out to be the mother of the baby in the closet. They got arrested for steal-

ing a police cruiser and Phil negotiates their release in exchange for volunteering as targets for a Taser (a weapon that uses electrical current) demonstration. As the story goes, many other awkward scenes occur and Alan has an amazing revelation; he admits he is sort of responsible of what happens, by putting in the drinks they had last night what he thought was ecstasy, but realizes the drug dealer must have sold him roofies instead.

When they came back to their hotel suite they found former boxing champion Mike Tyson who was looking for his tiger...The next scenes I'll let you enjoy them if you haven't watched the movie yet, but if you did you certainly know there are loads of other hilarious scenes to come.

Although *The Hangover* does not have a Jim Carrey or an Adam Sandler to rely on to bring in the crowds, instead, it has been forced to build buzz the old fashioned way: by being hilarious. Thus, the relative anonymity of the characters is precisely what makes the movie work.

None of these guys overshadow the film with their own established personalities, and instead they create a dynamic that is natural as a group of friends involved in a bachelor party gone crazy in Las Vegas.

One of the movie's greatest strengths, one would argue, would be the way in which the story is told; the shared state of confusion between the audience and the characters help the movie to add more hilarity. Though there isn't any one actor whose individual performance makes the movie, Zach Galifianakis (Alan) seems to steal the show with his weird sensitive moments; there is no question that this is going to be a breakout role for him.

However, out of all the scenes that had the most potential, I felt that Mike Tyson's scenes felt a bit unexciting, maybe because Tyson is funnier in real life than in a scripted comedy. But overall, *The Hangover* is a great movie to watch with a crowd and there is a good chance that the movie will end up being the biggest comedy of the year.

Finally, the hangover also proved to be very successful financially benefiting from positive word-of-mouth; it actually earned a worldwide total of almost half a billion dollars, and thus one of the best blockbusters in the history of the US.

So, go and watch the movie if you haven't yet, and make its most hilarious scenes your best friend after the mid-term exams when it comes time to relax.





## Movie Review

## Sicko: The Cost of (healthy) Life in America

ZOUHAIR MAAZOUZ

During registration for my exchange program in the United States, the first thing the Registrar asked me was whether or not I had health coverage. Thinking that I took my precautions in Morocco, I confidently replied, "Of course." However, these precautions turned out not to be enough, since the insurance provider had to be American. Furthermore, I had to be administered a vaccine that we do not need here in Morocco. In brief, two shots in the University's health center cost around \$200. Oh believe me, I tried all kinds of tactics a Moroccan can think of, including missing doctor's appointments and ignoring reminders, among others. Finally, one day a hold was put on my e-mail and storage space. Only then did I resolve to incur the high cost of being healthy in America.

46.3 million Americans, about 15% of the US population, live without health insurance today. In a country where the overall health care system is managed by private insurance corporations, pharmaceutical companies and powerful statesmen-buying lobbies, 15% of Americans are in a constant risk of falling ill (or even dying) without anybody intervening to save them. To a foreigner like me, that fact was shocking to say the least. How could a nation put a cost on human life? The reader would be surprised to learn of

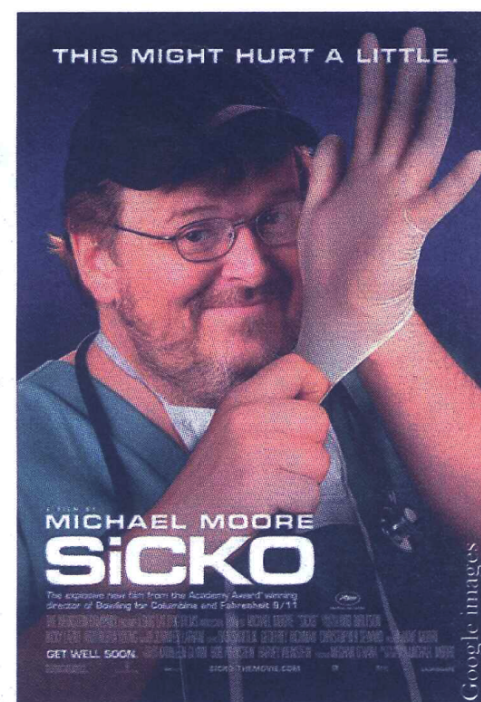
the proportion of Americans who actually defend such a system. Advocating the private option, Republican Mitt Romney once argued, "Government can't match consumers and markets when it comes to lowering cost, improving quality and boosting productivity. Compare the U.S. Postal Service with UPS and Federal Express. Stack North Korea against South Korea. The right answer for health care is to apply more market force, not less." On the other end of the ideological spectrum, influential Liberal opinion leaders are launching a crusade for the nationalization of the health care system in America. Michael Moore is one of these crusaders. In a time when Health Care dominates almost every political debate in the United States, watching Moore's *Sicko* (2007) is a cultural must.

Moore begins his investigation by talking to American citizens who have been denied coverage by their insurance companies either because of a preexisting condition, or because their illness does not fall into the range of "usual" conditions covered by insurers. He then decides to examine the problem at its root, within the corporate milieu of health insurers. The statements of former health care employees serve to shock the audience. Moore proposes that the likelihood of pay raise and promotion within health insur-

ance companies increases proportionally with the number of treatment denials to sick patients. Profitability, instead of coverage, appears to the audience as the main motive of the whole American healthcare industry.

The filmmaker attends to the main argument that American policymakers have advanced for decades as a reason for not adopting a universal health care system: Communism. Although the Cold War is over, it seems that the ghost of Communism still haunts the thoughts of US decision-makers. There still exists the fear that a government-sponsored health sector would lower effectiveness, curb productivity and put a bureaucrat between each American citizen and their doctor. To ironically discredit such claims, Michael Moore travels with his crew to Canada, France and the United Kingdom, where for some reason, the universal option seems to work perfectly for doctors and patients alike. And to prove his point even further, he takes a number of 9/11 survivors to the Communist nation of Cuba, where surprisingly, they are not denied treatment for their post-traumatic conditions, despite being foreigners. All this for free. Moore's scrutiny of his country's corporate greed reaches its peak when he asks, "What have we become?"

*Sicko* is a clear example of how self-



criticism can lead to the questioning of archaic ideas. The movie cost Moore nine million dollars and increased his already huge unpopularity among American conservative think-tanks. But it also contributed to a progressively rational debate on the existential issue of health care, aside from partisan loyalties and ideological differences. For its reliable material and constructive methodological approach, the editorial team highly recommends watching it!

## He's Just Not That Into You!

WIAM MAHMOUDI

"He still didn't call me back!" "Don't worry, maybe he lost your number or he is out of town." "Why doesn't he want to marry me?" "Don't worry; he just isn't ready for that kind of responsibility." Do any of these conversations sound familiar? Finally, a movie that explains it all!

This movie takes the cases of nine characters whose love lives complicate their existences. Gigi (Jennifer Goodwin) just wants to find a man who says he'll call...and actually does! In her circle of friends there is Beth (Jennifer Aniston) who is impatient to hear from her boyfriend (Ben Affleck) the big proposition of Marriage; meanwhile, Janine (Jennifer Connelly) feels that her marriage is in danger because of trust issues with her husband (Bradley Cooper), including the fact that he is not insensible to the charms of Anna (Scarlett Johansson). Add to all this

a bar owner (Justin Long) who seems to have mastered the in-born science of dating, and you obtain the perfect romance for St. Valentine's Day.

The rumours surrounding "He's not Just that Into You" announced that the girls in the new film would be a "cliché" of those of the "Sex and the City" movie. Fortunately, this is not the case. Rather, it is about a touching romantic comedy where "clichés" are unfocused, which makes it a good movie for both men and women. In addition, the charming and tender person-



alities of the characters allow the events surrounding them to be very approachable. There are no bad guys or girls, but real men and women who involuntarily get themselves into romantic trouble.

They are normal individuals to whom it is possible to become attached. Moreover, during the movie, random people come to support what was stated in the film ("if he does not call you back", "if he does not want to get married", etc.) by telling their own stories.

Many critics emerged against the movie, asking that in the 21st century, what more can be added about the relations between men and women? However, this did not prevent the scriptwriters Abby Kohn and Marc Silverstein from transposing the popular novel of Greg Behrendt and Liz Tuccillonto onto the screen in a new way that attracts an audience of both genders. Between Mars and Venus, there are always complex roads that continue to fascinate and urge film directors and scriptwriters to write and present these kinds of movies.