

Interview with AUI President, Pr Rachid Benmokhtar



President Benmokhtar speaks about such issues as accreditation, his recent working visit to Japan Moroccan cinema and much more. See page 12

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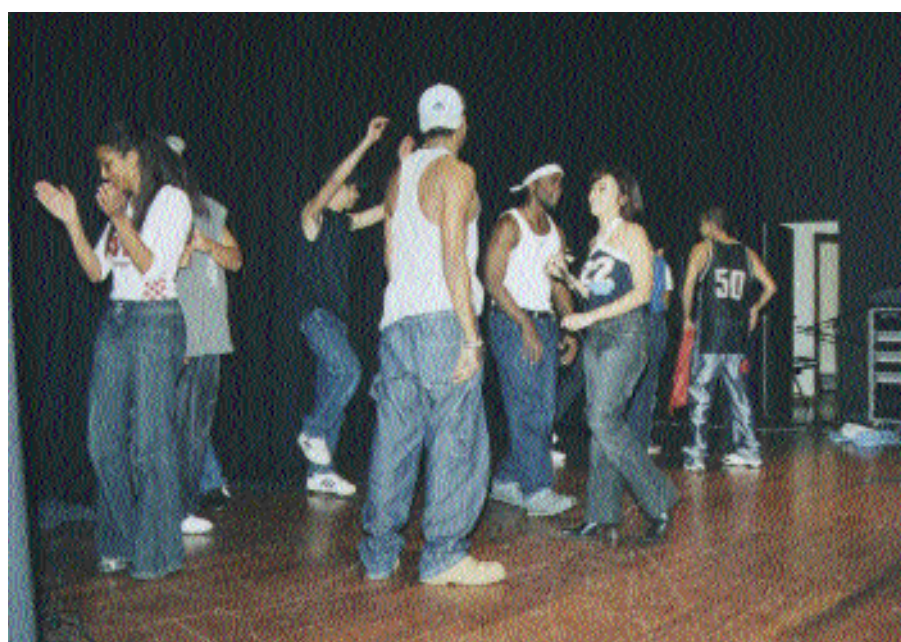
AUI Organizes Moroccan Film Days

The AUI community was in luck to have watched and enjoyed four Moroccan films shown on campus this Ramadan. Over a period of six days (23 to 28 Nov.) some of the best and most recent Moroccan films were projected within the framework of Moroccan Film Days organized by The School of Humanities and Social Sciences in collaboration with the Department of Development and Communication, and Student Activities.



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Unforgettable Rap Concert



students who are still with us at AUI, but didn't participate. But anyway, fun, leisure, and pleasure were there to entertain us and let us forget that we are in Morocco. (just kidding!)

Continued on page 2

Tuesday, December 3rd is the day that no one of us will forget. In fact, every thing was there to make the Rap concert a total success, and actually it was. The Sticky Greenz Family (Yaz, Gus, Janta and Ghita) were formidably excellent in their performance of some of the most difficult songs that even professionals find hard to imitate, but our Sticky Greenz did it. Congratulation guys! Maybe it could have been better if some alumni took part in the concert, not to mention some

A Day for Environment

By Taoufiq Elouali

As it has become a habit every semester, the CEIRD (Center for Environmental Issues and Regional Development) along with the AUI Environmental Club and l'Association de l'Environnement pour Tous (a regional association), organized the Middle Atlas Regional Environmental Day on Friday, October 18. The theme of the day was "Protecting the Middle Atlas Forest: A Responsibility of All".

All day long, numerous activities related to environmental issues were carried out. In the morning, presentations were given to a considerable and interested number of people coming from different places. In fact, the audience was diverse and comprised AUI students, faculty and staff, students and teachers from nearby schools (Lycée Militaire, Ecole Nasr, Ecole Ryad, Ecole Bir Anzarane, Groupe Scolaire Zaouia, Lycée Al Arz, and Nouveau Lycée), and many

inhabitants of the Ifrane region.

The schedule of the presentations was as follows: Dr Bachir Raissouni, representing the CEIRD, tackled the objectives of the day as well as the importance of environmental awareness and education for the inhabitants of the Middle Atlas region in general and the Ifrane region in particular. The representative of l'Association de l'Environnement Pour Tous, Mr. A. Hajarabi, introduced the audience to the activities and perspectives of his association. Mr. Abdelaziz Kheraouch, the General Secretary of SMART (another regional association) presented the objectives of his association and the role it plays and intends to play for the benefit of the regional development. The Moroccan Foundation for Nature and Man, led by Mr. Rachid Benmokhtar, presented its strategy, goals and future perspectives.

Then, a video on Ifrane regional environment was broadcast. The movie shows the

imminent danger with [RTF annotation: with] which the environment of the region of Ifrane and the forest of the Middle Atlas are confronted. Then followed the presentation of the Environmental Club's activities, presented by Mr. Fayçal Khalid and Mr. Nizar El Ouarti, both active members of the club, and a presentation on the use of renewable energies for water saving and security. There was also an exhibition of some environmental equipment, like selective bins, wind/solar energy generator, etc.

In the afternoon a cleaning campaign was scheduled. Along the forest road leading to Ain Vittel, a group of people – AUI students, students



In the cleaning campaign

from nearby schools and high schools, etc – helped clean Ain Vittel trail, forest and the surrounding area. Departure was given from Ifrane downtown (Atlas Lion) to Ain Vittel then back to AUI Campus. At the end, the closing ceremony witnessed the distribution of honorary certificates to the devoted students, who took part in the campaign.

In sum, the objective of the day was to make the population of the Ifrane region aware

of the necessity to protect the Middle Atlas forest and to care for its cleanliness. The aim was also to prepare today's youth for the respect of our natural resources. At the end, one should not forget to mention that without the great work and devotion of Dr. Bachir Raissouni, the director of the CEIRD, and the assistance of the university as whole, the day could not have witnessed the success it achieved.

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By Mouaad Ibriz

Not only those, but there was also a "duo de shock" I mean Moussa and Annas who are, according to some, the shining talents of AUI. Another group, but this time external, contributed effectively to the success of the concert: The Meknes Dogs, or simply The Dogs, as some may call them, who came straight from Meknes. They succeeded in amazing us with their Moroccan Rap style. However, this time the new thing was the amazing dance performed by the talented Amira, Leia, and Heather, without forgetting the break-dancer Amine for his *breathtaking* performance. Moreover, the night was the night of all the talents: Dhuhhan, who performed a poem for Palestine; thank you, man!

Unforgettable Rap Concert at AUI



AUI rappers and fans

Rajaa and Kenza at the end of the concert showed us that even in Morocco we have at least two J.Lo's. Last, but not least, we had the opportunity to discover a new MC: the awesome Mr Tyrell who, besides introducing the singers and their songs, also participated in many of them.

Thanks to you all for your formidable performance. I have one personal comment for the Rap Club and its communication committee, which concerns the notices that we saw announcing the concert: you could have, instead of putting the picture of the Rappers, put the pictures of

Gus and friends. We are proud of you, for your participation and for your cooperation with our friendly exchange students who really contributed considerably to the success of this unforgettable night!

We Can Do Better!

By Mouaad Ibriz

The recent fashion show was indisputably wonderful in spite of some little lapses. It was



great, that's true, but please don't compare it with Caftan 2002, because if you do you will be really disappointed at all levels. However, on a smaller scale, the Fall 2002 AUI Fas-

hion Show was a success. The models, were they hired from the TV program Top Models or from where? I'm just kidding. In fact, all the models, in my opinion, were wonderful despite the fact that some of them needed some training before engaging themselves in such "great" events.

But as I said earlier, overall the show filled its contract except that it could be better if the organizers made it longer in time. The dresses were wonderful, ranging from the most traditional "Djellaba" to the most modern "Something with Sfifa." I don't know if you would agree with me, but it was very modern. Qods and the other models did a

good job, for the most part.

The show took place in Building 17, in the middle of the so called Chaabi Night animated by the very well-known Khalid Bennani, who in his turn did a very good job in trying to entertain the audience. However, as soon as the Fashion Show finished, two-thirds of the audience left the auditorium almost empty for Bennani.

You would ask yourself why, and I would tell you: for me the only explanation lay in the fact that, in AUI, we have an audience that is becoming more and more complex. Poor Abdessamad! Maybe if some students volunteer to do a research on that



subject, it would be beneficial to know what are the preferences of the highly complicated AUI audience. I also know some teachers

devoted to the university and its development who would accept to supervise it. Just a joke, but why not?

Dee-plom-I-see !

By Qods Benjelloun

As I lately joined the world of international studies and diplomacy after few years struggling in engineering, I started to get myself involved in the field by taking part in all activities related to it. Frankly speaking, there are things in this field that I still find ambiguous, and the concept of diplomacy itself is one of them. That was one of the motives that led me to attend the talk given by Mr. Hassan Ali Al-Anbari, the Counsellor of International Affairs at the Institute of Diplomacy in Amman. Unlike previous talks I attended, this one was the most enjoyable as Mr. Al-Anbari presented diplomacy in a very engaging and entertaining way. He started his talk by asking who among the audience agrees with a famous British ambassador's claim saying that "A diplo-

mat is a honest man sent abroad to lie in the interest of his country". As he seemed to expect, many people raised their hands acquiescing. According to him, there is a strong misunderstanding among people about the concept of diplomacy, which is a tendency to believe that it is to do and say the nastiest things, in the nicest way. This concept in fact opposes Machiavelli's saying, "the end justifies the means". Mr. Al-Anbari affirmed that the shortcut to success is sincerity and credibility, and that diplomacy should be the peaceful conduct and alternative to conflicts. As a matter of fact it is a practice that finds its origins deeply rooted in the old Babylonian, Pharaonic, Chinese and Arabic ages, where nations used to send messengers abroad. One of the best examples is that of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) who turned out to be a great diplomat. Diplomacy evolved

through two stages: pre-modern diplomacy in which diplomats used to travel around the places, and modern diplomacy in which there is a inclination for diplomats to reside in the capital cities of the areas of interest. Mr. Al-Anbari assured that this discipline, which started in 1815 during the congress of Vienna, is an integral profession just like carpentry or medicine, and that it is a very tough job contrarily to what many people think, since it implies bearing a huge responsibility and a great amount of vigilance about all actions, sayings and personal life. People also tends to mix between diplomacy and foreign policy. Whereas foreign policy is the strategy of a government, diplomacy is the means of how to carry out this foreign policy. Both have shared objectives such as the protection of national security, economic well-being and finding

legal, ethical and moral ways to solve conflicts.

Mr. Al-Anbari made also many analogies to explain to us what is going on around the concept of terrorism, and the American-Iraqi conflict. Some nations use terror against civilians to impress their enemies, but that is an evil way, and you cannot achieve a noble cause through evil means. The United States of America was hit in the heart of its pride and strength, and decided afterward to persecute terror everywhere, raising the problematic issue of a common definition of terrorism, jeopardising a lot of stable relations features. As for the American-Iraqi crisis, there are many decisive factors such as the new features of the American national security strategy that opposes some U.N charters, as well as the American public opinion factor to answer why the US is so determined to strike Iraq

and would want to change its government. The influence of Arab countries equals to zero. They talk a lot, to say a little, probably by fear of American sanctions and anger. Mr. Al-Anbari summarised that by citing the harsh Qatari government words saying, "They only thing we can do is to beg Israel and the USA". The question-answer session that followed gave many of us an additional backing about some more ambiguous and specific points.

The AUI News
reserves the right to
reject, edit and
condense all
submissions for
content, style and space
considerations.

Trip to the South

By Fatima Brown

The trip to the south was a great success, with 35 members of the AUI community traveling. The group set out for the south on Saturday morning leaving snowy, cold Ifrane behind. Driving through the mountains, we stopped in the exceptionally beautiful Ziz Valley and then continued on to drive through Errachidia. The highlight of the day was the camel ride at the Merzouga Dunes. After struggling not to fall off the camels while riding along the dune slopes, we

ate f'tour under the tent.

The next day we drove through Erfoud then stopped in the huge Todra Gorge, which is truly an amazing geological formation in Morocco. Then we drove on to visit Ouarzazate and stayed overnight in Ait Ben Hadou. The next morning some of the group walked across the dried river to tour around the historical structures of the Qasba.



We then set out for Marrakech with a long drive through the High Atlas Mountains. After viewing a wide variety of products and activities in Marrakech, we set out on our long bus ride back to Ifrane.

home to Ifrane from Marrakech, if I'm not mistaken! Atlas Mountains. After viewing a wide variety of products and activities in Marrakech, we set out on our long bus ride back to Ifrane.

Kraftfoods Talk

By Qods Benjelloun

Within the framework of the Placement and Career Orientation activities, Mr Zakaria Rbii, the Human Resources Manager of Kraftfoods Morocco, and Ms Sanâa Lyamouri, the Training and Recruitment Manager of Kraftfoods and AUI alumna, gave a talk on the Kraftfoods company on Thursday, October 10th. Ms Lyamouri was the first to talk and presented the Kraft and Kraftfoods Morocco Group.

The Kraftfood Group is owned by Altria, the new name for Phillip Morris Corporation. The group is ranked as the second food and beverage company in the world after Nestlé, and number one in North America and Canada. "The Kraft Group is the Harvard School of Career managers" Ms. Lyamouri said, explaining that the group has the most devoted managers, some of them with up to 20 years of loyalty and commitment to the Group. Kraftfoods Morocco counts some 300 employees in Morocco (7 of whom are AUI alumni/ae), and has several manufacturing facilities. Some of its products are Tang, Samar, Carte Noire and Cafés Gaouar.

In the second part of the talk Mr. Zakaria Rbii talked about the human resources strategy and approach within the group, insisting on some important notions that center around the concept of performance. The talk was followed by a question and answer session wherein Kraftfoods executives answered students' questions about the company and its human resources strategy.

AUI Represented in Portugal

By Mouaad Ibriz

"Our participation added a new perspective to the conference and allowed us to represent our university and our country in a way that was heavily applauded and warmly welcomed by all participants [...]" (Abdellatif A.Filali). This statement was made by one of the two students who were chosen to represent the Al Akhawayn University in the Mediterra-

nean Federal project; the theme of the conference was "The Enlargement Role of the European Union in the World and its Importance towards the Mediterranean Countries." That took place in Lisbon, Portugal from November 7th to 11th.

In fact, the participation of Mounia Tagma (SBA) and Abdellatif A.Filali (MAISD) added a new perspective to the conference and allowed them to represent their country and especially their university in the best imagined way. Miss Tagma Mounia successfully presented a paper in the

Urban Development workshop showing an excellent grasp of the topic. The very known Abdellatif A.Filali centered his paper on the Scientific Research in Morocco with an emphasis on Al Akhawayn University.

Moreover, the forum gave them the opportunity to interact with other people from other cultures, religions, values and norms. They were invited to participate in the Youth Interchange workshop. Besides, the House of Byron showed a great interest in establishing a partnership with our university, and other invita-

tions for participation in conferences, forums, and workshops due to the excellent impression they left in the forum. Similar interest was showed by the University of Athens, Greece; and Heifa University, Israel. All that without forgetting the gift and the University brochures that Mr Rahid Slimi, Executive Director of the Development and Communication Department, had given them allowed them to provide most delegations with clear ideas about AUI, the thing that showed a high level of professionalism.

The AUI Pride

Mohammed Chanaoui

Almost all members of AUI community will agree that the AUI sport complex is another pride of Al Akhawayn University. Once back at AUI, I was completely overwhelmed by the magnificence and the convenience of the AUI sport complex, especially since there has been an overhaul in its structure, design and the quality of its service. This complex offers many facilities for the AUI community in order to create a sport

culture inside our university. The gymnasium provides a roomy atmosphere for all kinds of collective sports such as handball, volleyball, basketball, etc. Moreover, the two weight rooms are equipped with the new weight lifting machines in order to efficiently work out all your body parts. The multipurpose room is hosting many sports such as taekwondo, aerobics, judo and yoga, the most recent sport in the AUI community. Moreover, the swimming pool is regarded as our national and international pride, which is specifically designed to host Olympic

swimming competitions, and which grants us the privilege to practice swimming while enjoying the beauty of the landscape, even in cold weather.

The locker rooms and shower rooms are additional facilities present in the sport complex that provide convenience and practicality to the users.

On behalf of all AUI community, let us express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Adil Kaman, Mr. Mohammed Khalifa and all the sport complex staff for their courtesy, patience and personalized assistance.

NOUVEAU À IFRAN

DOCTEUR A. LOUKILI

À LE PLAISIR DE VOUS ANNONCER L'OUVERTURE
D'UN CABINET DE CHIRURGIE DENTAIRE
À IFRAN

RÉSIDENCE du BOLING

EN FACE DU COMMISSARIAT D'IFRAN

Sur rendez-vous
GSM : 061.21.64.41

Editorial

By Qods Benjelloun

Stress level is increasing while cash wallet funds are decreasing. No more rush hours in computer labs for now they turned into big waiting rooms where people are lingering, hoping for a station to be freed, and where the inner temperature is so high that you almost forget the frosty weather that awaits you outside. These are the final exams period symptoms. For some, it is not only the end of a semester, but also the end of years of hard labor, when feelings of relief mix with feelings of worry and fear of the future. For some others it is the end of their first AUI experience, but for those who are halfway, it is just the end of a cycle like any other.

Ramadan and the cold weather didn't seem to make a delicious cocktail, but one cannot deny that it had its good moments too. That period had a particular spiritual atmosphere since it almost coincided with thanksgiving, celebrated by the Christian community, and Halloween, enjoyed by most of the students.

Even though most of us were disappointed that the Talent Show didn't take place this semester, it has been compensated by other entertaining events like the Chaabi Night, the Caftan Night, the Rap concerts and the Nass-el-Ghiwan performance, to name but a few. A new custom was born this semester, that of hosting Moroccan film days. That was very successful since it attracted big audiences who were excited to see the latest movies and meet the most famous actors/actresses and producers.

Our catering company made noticeable efforts to improve the quality of its service and food variety. We finally had the chawarma, and even sandwiches "mahlaba-style". I let you now find out about major events thoroughly covered in this issue. May God help you all with your exams. keep on working *hard rah ma bka waloul!*

Students Are Teachers too

By Leigh Robertson

Tuesday October 21, I had the privilege to participate in the most exciting and provocative class here on Al Akhawayn Campus. Dr Willis offered an evening session for his North African politics class in which he screened a BBC program on Islamists and politics within Morocco. The discussion that ensued after the video provided the opportunity to hear views of articulate students on their country's policies. The impressive nature of this

class lies within the students who comprise it. These students have a dynamic chemistry within the class that stems from their abilities and motivation to voice their opinion in an intelligent compassionate and respectful method.

Although I have taken graduate and undergraduate classes at Al Akhawayn for three semesters, I have not experienced this level of fervor, discussion or depth in a class previously. I wanted to tell those students that you impressed me and I thank you for the education.

Letters to the editor

Dr. Paula Pratt, SHSS

With respect to the article/interview with Dr. Dahbi, there is a serious error in the "sub-headline" indicating that he "held the same position from 1995 to 1998."

I beg to differ. I joined the AUI faculty in January, 1997. At that time, Dr. Dahbi had left the university the previous December (1996). Dr. Mustapha Hogga was the Acting Dean, followed by Dr. Moncef Lahlou in the same position, until Dr. Driss Ouaouicha joined SHSS as Dean in the Fall semester, 1999.

It seems that the date would have been an easy fact to verify before printing such

misleading information.

Brahim Ouzineb

My concern here is the article written by Fatim Zahra on The Other Side of the Ocean. Well, the article is a pure orientalist prototype as it has got all its elements. It starts with the usual glorification of the exotic nature of the host culture; "I was expecting Morocco to be a country different than mine". Striking stereotypes repeat themselves; food, clothes and hospitality. After having forgotten about the knowledge that power exercises on a new supposedly subaltern

culture, the article takes us back into that dichotomy. Ms Fatim Zahra has delved in a rather constructed image of Morocco guessing that she has learned all about Moroccan culture but she disregarded a major thing. It is that the melting pot that Alakhawayn university constitutes is a real proof of our exposure to a rich culture. This culture which has always been vaunted for its readiness to accept the other cultures and embrace them. Therefore, saying that learning about Moroccan Culture is not liable to Alakhawayn University is pushing ones prejudices too

far. I invite Ms Brown to get to mix with people on campus more; she will be surprised A LOT! !

Dr Samira El Atia, CADS

There were errors printed in the paper this morning about the new faculty of CADS who were badly misrepresented. I was referred to as: "Samira El Atia, MA, Moroccan, Assistant Professor". huh!!!?????. I actually hold an MA (from Illinois state university) and a PhD (from the University of Illinois in Applied linguistics and testing).and there was no mention of Robert Taferner at all who is also a new faculty in CADS.

The One Man Show

By Brahim Ouzineb

Morocco has witnessed great changes lately. Despite the deferment of some major problems, people really start to regain hope of a better tomorrow. Undeniably, the stumbling blocks are very numerous; still, several measures taken by our King have been welcomed and applauded not only inside the country but among all the different neighbors of Morocco. The elections held lately were considered by a large number of people as the first major rendezvous with democracy, not only in the Arab world but among the Third World countries. Edward Gabriel, former US ambassador to Morocco, qualified these elections as "representing a cutting-edge experiment in the Arab world." For this reason the AUI Diplo-

macy Club organized its first long-awaited activity. It has left echoes all round the interested university community, a great positive acquisition. The club gave us the chance to see influential people like Stephen Hughes who has been a specialist on Morocco since he lived here 47 years and worked as a correspondent for BBC. However, any wise or sane people would stop and think about the content of the discussion panel which was a sheer heresy. people left the auditorium with unclear views of Morocco post-elections and there had been only a slight reference to the major themes mentioned in the email. The place was too small as if the organizers underestimated the topic and the untamed desire to learn on the part of Al Akhawayn students. We had witnessed all the defects of a discussion. There had been dual discussions and a

monopoly of talk, and the worst part was the bad organization. People were given the right to speak even though they had raised their hands at the last minute. Others were silenced for wanting to take part in the debate. The Diplomacy Club has the right to censor anything not desirable but had there been prior planning of the panel discussion, none of these incongruities would have cropped up.

I am not here to teach anybody a lesson or to tell people what to do. I am just as a member of AUI TV which was supposed to cover the event, but unluckily some problems did not allow us to show this to our students. Our camera was not there but our observers were there and it is their standpoint (and that of the AUI students we saw afterwards) that gave us this sense of what happened

Experiencing the Experience

By Tyrell Hughes

I still remember the first day I arrived in Morocco and in particular as I stood in the Rabat-Salé airport. It was overwhelming: I was fearful about being in an unknown place where I didn't know how to communicate with others, nor what to expect. But at the same time I had a deep feeling of excitement because I realized I was really in Africa.

When I arrived at AUI I took my bags to my room to get settled in and once there I phoned home to my family in the U.S. to let them know I had arrived safely in Africa, my destination. For those reading this closely, I know you're thinking I am about to give you a day-to-day recollection of my experiences here. I am not, but this situation regarding my arrival here was a very important aspect in my adjustment here and becoming comfortable as quickly as I did.

Now back to the story. When I called home and heard my sister's voice as she picked up the phone, I began to cry. I knew immediately why I was crying: I was so far away from my family and everyone and things with which I was familiar. I feel comfortable telling you all about this because I needed to cry, I needed to let myself know that it was ok to be worried, uncertain and scared. Crying is very healthy for me and true to my feelings.

At the end of that initial conver-

sation I had with my family, I walked away feeling secure after hearing my mom and what she told me; her honesty gave me security. After I wiped my face, I got up and went outside and began to get a feel for this new place I was in and where I would be spending the next few months of my life. Okay, now that you know that emotional piece about me I can begin to explain my experience here in Morocco a little better knowing that I have given you an honest insight to me and my thinking process.

During AUI orientation I made a close bond with 3 Moroccan female students, adding to 2 other Moroccan students and a classmate I had met before arriving at AUI. I had met them at my home university in Charlotte, North Carolina. The orientation sessions were very helpful, let that be known. They gave me a chance to not only meet the other exchange and international students but to begin mixing among the Moroccan students. The 3 Moroccan female students I mentioned earlier have helped me to adjust a great deal. We went into Ifrane for a meal occasionally, and they showed several of us how to take a Grand Taxi (which I still don't really know how to do... thanks a lot guys... Just playing!). They also showed me probably the most important lesson I needed to learn at the time, which was that I can communicate with Moroccan students and more importantly they were willing and able to help me. I was and

still am very thankful for that. Excuse me if I happen to switch the subject unannounced but when I am writing I tend to just express what comes to me as it comes to me. Well, I have been accepted by everyone here at AUI, but more importantly by the students, since the first day I arrived in Morocco. Everyone welcomed me with open arms and was willing to interact with not only me, but I believe every other exchange and international student. That sense of acceptance was very new to me because coming from the U.S. where there is still much racism or little to no acceptance amongst many, most individuals generally stick to groups or areas where they share the same ethnic background, race, sex, or religion. That may be a very contradicting statement for some Americans to accept but I believe it to be true in all honesty. I asked a friend here whether or not he believed we would have experienced this type of interaction (intercultural relations) with one another if we were still in the U.S. and we both said "no." That is one of the aspects I love so much about AUI. The amount of interaction amongst different races and different religions, whether you are black, White, Moroccan, Japanese, French, Spanish or any other nationality for that matter. At AUI we have a sense of unity and acceptance for one another which is something that I greatly needed to see; and I am thankful I got the chance to experience it.

In terms of the academic dimension of my experience, including studies, and faculty and staff, I believe wholeheartedly that AUI does more than enough to meet students' demands and expectations. For instance, the use of the suggestion boxes; they are everywhere and each department responds to the suggestions and comments and attempts to find, if possible, a solution. Another example is the campus Maintenance Department: it deals with problems faster than anything I ever seen at my university back home. Generally, matters get handled the same day they are reported. Student Activities also do a wonderful job of keeping events scheduled and encourage interaction amongst the students. All the clubs, and in particular the sports teams (Go AUI Ice men!) have all done a great job of providing something positive with which students can associate. Well I know some students are probably thinking now that I am speaking too highly of campus life! However, I'll admit that not all is perfect, and in particular in areas regarding food and lack of co-ed facilities (for interaction between the opposite sexes). But we need to keep in mind that there are certain rules put in place because of religion, tradition and overall campus appearance and image.

Well I have had a great experience not only here at AUI but in Morocco in general. I have traveled and seen so much that I will never forget any of it, Ins-

allah! I have met so many good friends and families both on- and off-campus. I know that it comes as a disappointment to some of you that I have decided not to come back next semester. However, I'd like you to keep this in mind: my decision to not return was not based upon not liking Morocco in anyway because I love it here, honestly. I based my decision on my eagerness to return home to see my family and friends there and spend time with them.

If there is one thing that I didn't like during my stay here it is that I couldn't communicate with you as much as I would have liked to. But in time, I will learn and be able to have better conversations with you all. When I return home, I hope to inspire many people and open up their limited thinking and fragile acceptance, and I am very thankful that I've learned enough to go back home and help them to experience what I have experienced. What I have experienced here is Love, Peace and Happiness. Thank you all for making my stay here enjoyable and I am sure I will be back for visits, Inshallah. For those of you going abroad to the U.S. next semester or anytime anyone one of you chooses to come to the U.S., I promise that I will try my best to make your stay there as enjoyable as you all have made my stay here. If you want to travel to Albany, New York you all are welcome to stay in my home with open arms! Take care and good luck!

Thinking Allowed

Mohammed Chanaoui



A Spiritual University

Al Akhawayn University is experiencing an emerging trend of students dedicated to active spiritual activity. In fact, this activity is shown clearly by the students' deter-

mination to attend the prayer sessions in the AUI mosque, regularly and on time.

Upon my return to AUI, I was really amazed by the increasing number of students assisting on time at the prayer sessions, discussing Islamic rules of their concern, and frequently attending the Thursday lectures of Mr. Sulimane Khanjari. This phenomenon shows clearly that Al Akhawayn University has always been a Moroccan university belonging to the great Islamic civilization, the civilization that

has contributed enormously to the development of past civilizations. Thus, AUI will remain an environment where students can develop not only academically and socially but spiritually as well.

Departure of Professors

Al Akhawayn University is experiencing a serious phenomenon characterized by the sudden departure of most prominent professors from the three schools. In fact, this trend generates many impli-

cations that jeopardize the challenging objective of academic excellence.

AUI is a technology driven university aiming for a competitive position among the top universities in the globe. Thus, its competitive advantages has to rely mainly on its capability to attract outstanding faculty from inside and outside the kingdom, its willingness to provide fruitful environment for creativity and research by establishing state of the art laboratories and Research centers, and its determination to maintain its

strategic assets through the implementation of their innovative and breakthrough pedagogical methods.

These decisions will enhance the professors' creativity, boost their professional development, and contribute efficiently to the academic development of the students.

AUI is an emerging university that needs the pedagogical know-how of the most leading professors in order to provide updated knowledge to the future leaders of our beloved

Moroccan Films on Campus!



Saad Chraibi



Hassan Benjeloun



Rachid El Ouali

By Mohamed Ouakif

The AUI community was in luck to have watched and enjoyed four Moroccan films shown on campus this Ramadan. Over a period of six days (23 to 28 Nov.) some of the best and most recent Moroccan films were projected within the framework of Moroccan Film Days organized by The School of Humanities and Social Sciences in collaboration with the Department of Development and Communication, and Student Activities. The Days featured four films: *Soif* (Thirst) by Saad Chraibi; *Et Après* (And then what!) by Mohamed Ismail; *Jugement d'une Femme* (A woman's trial) by Hassan Benjeloun; and *Ali, Rabia et les Autres*

(Ali, Rabia and the others) by Ahmed Boulane.

The fact that film directors and actresses such as Mona Fatou, Rachid Ouali, Saad Chraibi, Naima Lamcharki, to name only a few, attended this event gave it considerable appeal and was definitely an attraction factor resulting in big audiences. In fact, throughout the Days the building 4 auditorium, where the films were shown, was so packed that some students watched the films sitting on the stairs or standing up. This if anything, can only mean that the AUI community is thirsty for films that speak their language and touch on issues of their daily life.

After the film showings, discussions were held and the audience raised questions or made comments which gave

students, in particular, the opportunity to interact with professionals. In addition, the discussions helped students get a better understanding of the films. The treat came when students had the opportunity to get autographs and take photographs with Moroccan film stars. All in all, students got the opportunity to immerse themselves in Moroccan cinema culture both as spectators and participants.

This successful event was organized following students' request to watch Moroccan films on campus. Indeed, Some students complain that almost all the movies broadcast on campus are American. The request is fair: variety of movies, with a range of cultural backgrounds. And for the sake of the international community, films should have English subtitling.



Film Review *Et Après?!*

By Kawtar Messat

Can the money be the key to all the existing problems in this world? And can we escape all problems by emigrating? Well, this movie was meant to make people aware about the illegal emigration that is expanding in our country in recent years. The film director, Mohamed Ismail, was intelligent in choosing the topic because it is an existing social issue that Moroccans can not deny. In this film, he tackled some deep problems of Moroccan society, such as

wed also some contrast, since we realized that Mustapha's mother was a very good woman because she was praying and taking care of her house and children, though she was obliged to commit some illegal acts in order to gain money. The other contrast was when the hero was doing some things that he had forbidden for his two sisters, like having a relationship and going out at night. Concerning the setting of the movie itself, the director selected the northern region of Morocco. The actors perfected the region's customs, traditions, and people, while the characters



unemployment, divorce, and the period of adolescence. Therefore, the implication of all these constraints was to emigrate illegally. The above was interpreted through all the characters that existed in the movie. In addition, the director represented all the situations where a person can emigrate. For example, Mustapha, the hero, wanted to emigrate in order to escape the police. His older sister went out of the country to escape from people's perception of her divorce. His younger sister wanted to emigrate because of the reputation she got through her experience with an older man. In addition, the hero's friend wanted to go out of country and find a job in order to gather money like others had. The movie sho-

reflected that the director knew the place and what happens in it very well. An analysis of the movie also shows that the language was very good and understandable. Another important point is that all the characters in *Et Après* were well known actors, not minor ones. In other words, the director gathered several well-known Moroccan actors in this movie. Mohamed Ismail succeeded in sending the message to the audience and we could see it through the way he ended his film: he gave us an "open-ended" situation which meant that illegal emigration is not good and it only depends on luck. He also ended his movie with a very sensitive sentence: "Nations don't die from hunger but die from?"

Film Review

And Then What?

By Wadia Ait Hamza

Sunday 24th November was marked by the showing in our University of the latest Moroccan movie 'Et Après...' by Mohamed Ismail. The film deals with some problems that the north of Morocco suffers from such as drug smuggling and prostitution, and especially raises the problem of illegal immigration to Europe. The approach to such important themes was done in an intelligent way.

The movie reflects the reality of hundreds of Moroccans who sacrifice

chandise smuggled from Ceuta and brought in through the dangerous mountains. In fact, the mother is the prototype of the venerated being as her name is constantly preceded by Lala, which is a sign of high respect. Mustapha –the son- dreams of another life elsewhere but is not ready to take the risk of losing his life by traveling illegally as his friend dreams of doing. But as life would have it, family problems and the police-chasing push Msutapha to join his friend and his adventurous idea.

Mohamed Ismail, the film director, was successful in showing the

Laura. She is his only means of fulfilling his dreams of immigration to Spain. The Spanish woman is ready to make Mustapha's dream come true only if he gives it all to her: his youth and his unconditional love. The other example is Laila, the daughter of Lala Khadouj, when she came to Morocco, and hid her relation with Miguel, the owner of the cabaret where she works in Spain. Btissam, the younger daughter of Lala Khadouj, also changes her look, dressing style and her behavior between the street and the house.

In my opinion the movie was a success. The director Mohamed Ismail knows how to show the bad reality of the north of Morocco, where the risks and dangers are many. The spectator is also lured with beautiful sceneries of the north and also the fun poked at by actors like Rachid El Ouali. Along with the hope of finding a better life and future on the other side comes the risk of losing the life that already exists for them in their home country.

The tribute that the movie paid to the Moroccan women cannot be neglected. The mother Khadouj makes all the efforts to give her children an opportunity to have a better life. The absence of the father figure cast all the light on the mother who does all her best to sustain her status. However, the children's failure gets prominence over her might. It is indeed a condemnation of the old social system which cannot do anything to stop youngsters' fascination with the lights of

the other shore. Through his movie, Mohamed Ismail wants to advise all people willing to cross the sea illegally to think of the life that they will lose, and also to think of their country which needs them now more than ever.

I also loved the end of the movie when Mohamed Ismail shows the awful end where approximately all the persons died except Btissam. This will obviously discourage people who have in mind the idea of traveling illegally. Mohamed Ismail ended the movie by the great saying: 'People don't die of hunger but they die of humiliation.'

Just as the movie tackled these issues or touched upon them, Mr Ismail has cast a blind eye on other points, if I may take issue with the director on some elements. First of all, millions of Moroccans leave their country looking for a better tomorrow, but many of these people are literate; in fact, some are engineers and others are doctorate holders, for example. Second, movies and the news always tell us that the other side is lethal but never really show the stance of people on the other side. Once they cross the borders they are forgotten and their complaints and anguish

never find a listening ear. Even in elections, their vote is not done unlike other neighboring countries. Mr Ismail did not give us a solution to this issue. I know cinema is supposed to unearth a hidden issue but the people know about these miseries as it is seen in flesh and blood by their family members. What would have been wise is suggesting a way out. Telling dejected people that Spain is bad and hazardous does not deter them from trying it out since anyway, they die everyday slowly in their country while nobody in the higher ups cares much.

The successful step that

the director took in this regard should be taken into consideration by other Moroccan producers in order to produce quality movies. Let's not deny it: the film was a masterpiece and so far, the most expensive Moroccan movie made. It has met a wide audience and addresses all kinds of people who relate to its sensitive issues and richness. Economically speaking, the movie decentralized the movie industry in our country as it was centered in the Rabat-Casablanca Axis. Such initiatives would get the north out of its marginalization.



their life in order to reach the "light" as presented in the movie. As an example, there's the family that loses the father and whose mother works in order to get money to survive, but the children don't care much for their aim is to get the money and have a good time, while their mother kills herself everyday selling the mer-

terrible reality that was "out of sight and out of mind" for a long time and about which people did not want to talk. He was also successful in showing how people change their behavior depending on the situation. An example: Mustapha's life changes and the opportunity of starting a new life opens up. He uses his charm and manages to seduce



The Opinion section welcomes contributions from all members of the community. Submissions can be directed to The AUI News Office (Bldg. 2, upstairs). The Office can be reached at 2013, or via e-mail at aui-news@alakhawayn.ma.

Jugement d'une femme a Woman's Trial

By Mohamed Ouakif

Violence against women and marriage problems, among others, are the main issues tackled by *Jugement d'une femme* (A Woman's Trial) by Hassan Benjelloun. In this film the director sheds light on some of the social problems facing women in Moroccan society, such as divorce, child custody, violence, women working outside home, etc.

By and large, the movie touches on the conjugal relationships of different kinds of couples within Moroccan society. The modern and educated couple, represented by the interpreter and her husband, and the relationship of Touhfa, the prototype of the poor, naive and uneducated woman, who is ignorant of her rights, with her avid and violent husband. By a lesser degree, the film highlights the happy life led by the old couple neighboring the interpreter and her husband. They are the example

of good companionship.

In addition, Hassan Benjelloun brings up some "cultural" customs in some parts of Morocco, customs that are common in the city as well as the countryside. The interpreter tells the lawyer the story of her marriage to Tawfiq. The latter had to cut himself to stain the pants with blood, which he later gave to the family members, an act which serves as a sign that the bride is virgin. When the French lawyer expresses her shock at this practice, the interpreter tells her, "You should not look at our traditions from a western perspective." Significant as it is, this response can by no means tell us for sure what Hassan Benjelloun thinks of this "custom."

The film director seemed to paint a dark picture about the problems of "modern" women in Morocco, mainly through two characters: Touhfa and Malika, the interpreter. Though from different backgrounds, both seem to have failed to reconcile their work and personal life. Touhfa was badly treated by her husband



mainly because of her work as belly-dancer in a cabaret. Moreover, she doesn't seem to have anybody to take care of her daughter while working. She therefore brings her child with her to the cabaret. As far as the lawyer is concerned, she dedicates more time to her work at the expense of the convenience of her husband and son.

However Benjelloun occasionally sends indications implying that "the evil is there but the good too." An example: the happiness that the neighbors of Tawfik's enjoy. The old man brings his wife two little birds as a present for their wedding anniversary. Another case in point is the conversation that takes place between Malika and her

mother after her dispute with Tawfik. The mother tells her daughter about the good life that women of her generation enjoyed, unlike the "women of these days". The mother advises her daughter to go back to her home, an attitude which might be interpreted as the secret of the longevity of marriage in the past.

Attach

By Abdellatif Filali

We are in 1954 and the story takes us to a dry land in the south of Morocco. The inhabitants of the village are all on a quest for water that symbolizes life, death, friendship, love, and above all freedom from the French occupier.

It is *Attach* (Thirst), a Moroccan movie directed by Saad Chraïbi in the framework of the Moroccan Film Days organized by the school of Humanities and Social Sciences in collaboration with the Department of Communication and Development and Student Activities.

Inspired by Moha El Ayd's novel *Les années des vaches noires*, Chraïbi smoothly gathers

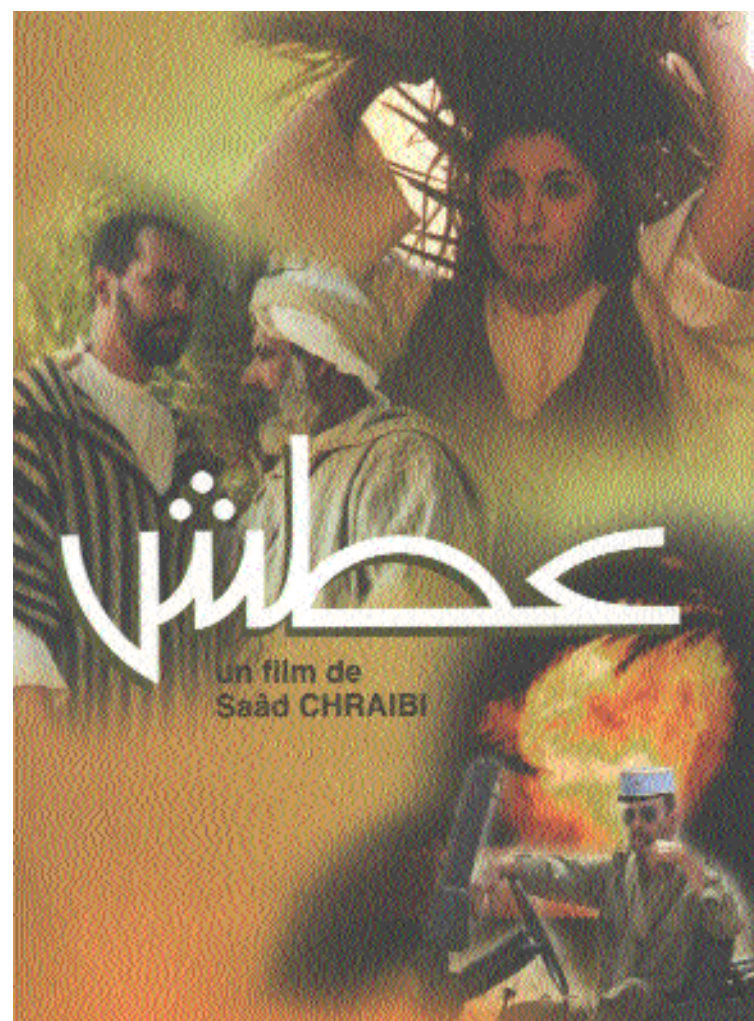


the different components of a remarkable period in the history of Morocco. Unlike the rest of the Moroccan movies that depict the struggle for independence in the urban areas, Chraïbi chooses a different setting. It is the countryside that is at the center of focus in its uprising against colonialism. The villagers are shown equipped with meager weaponry but a strong will and *Attach* for

their freedom. It is recognition of the Moroccan film industry to all Moroccan villagers.

Catalogues of films of Saad Chraïbi

- Ashes from the farm
- The hundred days of mamounia
- About the life of a village
- Words and expressions
- Absence
- Report about a normal life
- Fabula
- Five movies of a century
- Women...and women
- Thirst





Unaware, Blind or Indifferent?

By Qods Benjelloun

A few weeks ago, a sexual violence awareness campaign took place on campus. I was delighted to see that such an event finally took place at our university, the same way it takes place everywhere else around the world. The two days included a wide program of talks, pledge signatures, ribbons, discussions and movies; also, there were clotheslines with scarves and sheets adorned with expressions of emotions related to sexual assault. Something else, however, caught my attention and interest: the way I heard many people around me talk about the event. I was surprised to hear them claim that they don't understand the usefulness of such an event at our university, and in our country. Being nosy, I asked some of them to tell me more about their perception of the event. All I obtained were statements like "*Malna fel Mirikan*" (We are not in America), or "Come on, this is too exaggerated, it doesn't deserve all this stuff; sexual violence is extremely rare", and also "Pff! Women are again complaining about us (men)". I sincerely hope that the statements I heard are not representative of the way most people look at this issue, because that would be another serious issue. For those who still think that sexual violence in Morocco is a topic of no concern, I would like to state a few facts regarding women, men and children and sexual violence. Sexual violence against women happens at an alarming rate, at times of peace and during armed conflict during which millions of

women throughout the world are sexually abused and therefore deprived of their fundamental human rights for no other reason than that they are women. Combatants and their partisans in conflicts, such as those in Sierra Leone, Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, and Rwanda, have raped women as a weapon of war with near complete impunity. Men in Pakistan, South Africa, Peru, Russia, and Uzbekistan beat women in the home at shocking rates, while these governments alternatively refuse to intervene to protect women and punish their batterers, or do so arbitrarily and in ways that make women feel culpable for the violence.

Law enforcement in many countries is still erratic, and legal assistance is not always available to the victim. In some countries non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide the only reliable source of legal advice. Similarly, although there have been moves to lift professional confidentiality in cases of sexual abuse identified by medical professionals in the region, there is very limited reporting by doctors as a result of ignorance of the law and poor coordination between medical and judicial sectors.

Pr. Said Louahlia MD, the Director of the National Institute of Forensic Medicine and Pathology in Casablanca, carried out a study to find out and inform doctors about their roles to examine, support and protect victims. "Doctors take on the duty of forensic examination, neglecting the psychosocial and physical impact on the woman or girl. The doctor-patient

relationship is ignored and sadly, ethics are forgotten," concluded Pr. Louahlia.

Also, women are often silenced by the stigma attached to sexual violence, even though now they are increasingly speaking out and demanding accountability for these crimes. Police and other law enforcement authorities are quick to dismiss rape and other forms of sexual violence as unimportant crimes provoked by the victims themselves. Undeniably, it seems that there is cultural resistance to addressing the problem because the subject is largely taboo and the issue is very often dealt with more generally under headings such as 'violence' or 'trauma'.

Children are largely silent on this issue because sexual violence and abuse within the family is rarely reported. Laws in some of the countries also make reporting by children unlikely. For example, under the Jordanian penal code, complaints from a child can only be accepted if the parents or guardian support them. Complaints from third parties like teachers and social workers are not accepted. Morocco and Yemen recently established telephone hotlines for children at risk of or suffering abuse. Between January 2000 and September 2001, the Moroccan hotline received more than 200,000 calls, 40,000 of which came from children. As a result, 728 case files were opened, of which 48 involved cases of sexual abuse. The NGO Bayti (Children on the Streets) has developed targeted approaches to the needs of children, reinsertion alternatives, parenting programs and

case management of children. ADFM (the Association of Women's Rights in Morocco) and Ennakhil have established many centers for women and children suffering sexual abuse. If such actions exist, it is because these organizations are aware of the significance of the problem.

As for males and sexual violence, because most reported cases of sexual assault involve male perpetrators and female victims, not much is known about males as victims of sexual assault. Much research and clinical experience suggest that males are most likely to be sexually abused or assaulted as children or adolescents. Males who live in certain restrictive settings, such as detention centers and prisons, are more likely than others to be sexually assaulted either by peers or by those in authority. Though there are fewer reports of males being sexually assaulted by females, we cannot assume it does not happen. These instances might be subtle and probably would involve stereotypical assumptions about male sexuality that make it difficult to identify them as sexual assaults. Awareness-raising campaigns and activities are rare, probably because of the taboo nature of the subject, but meanwhile, millions of victims are suffering. It is as important to find ways to fight sexual violence as to provide great support and protection for the victims. The facts are here, and the numbers are still rising; these victims might be your relatives, your friends, or siblings. So until when are we going to stay in a state of denial?

Ramadan and Students' Performance

By Hidaya Labioui

Ramadan, the most important month in the Muslim calendar, is a time of inner reflection, devotion to God and self-control. Muslims think of it as a tune up of their spiritual lives. Besides being a month-long period of fasting, it is a time of intensive prayer, giving to charity and exercising strict control over one's tongue, eyes, ears and thoughts, and doing every possible thing to seek God's pleasure.

Here at AUI, it enjoys a special importance, and the entire AUI community collaborated to make it a special event. The restaurant service improved a lot in order to meet the needs of students for fine Ramadan dishes. The mosque organized the *Ttarawih* prayers every day. The Student Activities Office held many important events to promote student performance and help them enjoy Ramadan more than any time before. However, the students, on the other hand, don't seem to benefit from these privileges. They always look tired and unwilling to work, which is obvious in the students' scholastic performance.

Teachers complain that students are always sleepy and extremely exhausted, perhaps due to a psychological factor more than to a physical one. Students misunderstand the time change that occurs in Ramadan, and don't manage to adjust to it, tending to stay up late more than usual. They postpone doing their homework till late hours, which results in a weak participation in class. To make sure that this is the common case, I interviewed some teachers about their students' behavior during this holy month. Their responses differ, but

the majority agreed that there was a decline in the students' performance.

Dr. Gail Rathbun (CADS): "It is not difficult to understand some changes in behavior among students. My colleagues and I notice in our morning classes that it now takes about 15 minutes to really get the attention of students and to get them working. In 8 a.m. classes it seems that the student brain simply refuses to function. Students seem less motivated to do work outside of class, too. This is unfortunate, since there is still so much course material to cover. It seems as if some advance schedule planning could be done since one can predict when Ramadan will come in the next several years. Perhaps we should start our fall semester a little earlier. Or perhaps we should regularly schedule Saturday classes, so that we have MWF and TRS classes. That way we could ease up during Ramadan and still cover the course content."

Dr. N. Hottel (SHSS): "I can tell you that it varies: some are very efficient during this time. Others are efficient in getting assignments in but are a little subdued in class. I have never had any student ask me to postpone any assignment or make a special dispensation for him/her because it is Ramadan. That's about all I know."

Dr. Samira El Atia (CADS): "Well, there is definitely a big change in student behavior in Ramadan. The energy level is very low. The students are tired all the time, I think they are lacking sleep. They also seem to be postponing their work and it clearly shows from their weak preparation in class and the quality of homework and assignments. In the class they are a lot quieter than usual which affects their participation."

Interview with AUI President, Pr Rachid Benmokhtar

By Qods Benjelloun

Question: AUI is currently working on a process of accreditation. Would you please tell us what steps have been made so far and what is still needed to be done as well as the importance of the accreditation for the university?

Answer: At Al Akhawayn, we decided to be a part of the international institutions, and our university has now a strategy of development. We have fixed some rules like excellence and identity.

Now to be in this context, we need some kind of benchmarking. We have to rely on evaluations done by external institutions because it is very important to have an international collaboration as we want to be a part of the international education system.

This process has two objectives, one is the process of accreditation itself, and the second is the improvement, meaning that through this process we have assessments, and we will be discovering weaknesses and strengths that will make us able to solve the problems, to reduce weaknesses and maintain the strengths. You may ask: why now and not before? I consider the first three years as a trial period. I think that 99% of the problems have been solved. We started a process that is in fact based on two visions. The first is the quality insurance process, and the second is the accreditation process. Both of them lead to the same objective which is quality education.

We have another project with the United Nations. It is a program launched for the Arab world by the UN. They decided to make a total quality insurance system for 16 universities from the Arab world. The first part is self-evaluation, and after that you have to make a report and send it to the committee of quality insurance established by the UN, and then they evaluate everything.

We've received the first information about their assessment; and I have to say that we've passed this first step. They said that the university has very good schools. We have met the six criteria they fixed. The only point we still need to work on is the formalization of the process of quality insurance. They said that we have it but now we have to take a pen or a computer and start formalizing



all of this in writing it and have it like university procedures that need to be established and sent to all the actors, maybe the faculty and staff. As for the second step Dr. Bel Fekih and Mr. Janati were sent to Jordan to find out about how the assessment will be done. They came back with all the information needed and we started working on our own assessment. We will have a visit from a team within the framework of the UN project.

The State University of New York, which is one of our partner universities, offered to be our godfather in the way to present the university for accreditation. We started the process exactly in the same way we described it for the process with the UN, but this time the accreditation of the university and not only the SSE. This process will assess not only the academic aspect but also the research and the management, the administration and finance and everything, and even the law and legal aspects of the university.

In January we will receive some experts from some of our partner universities. After that, we will start the self-evaluation. Each of the schools now is working on the preparation of the documents and information. Europeans don't have the same accreditation process but they have some process specifically for Engineering and the Business School. So we started this question, and last week we received some people from the European Foundation for Development. So the foundation sent us two persons who held talks with some of our faculty and students, and made a proposal to AUI to join the European Foundation. Their board met two weeks ago and we've been informed that AUI

has been accepted. The second step that will start in January is the accreditation by the foundation. They have a system called « LEQUISS »; it's a system of accreditation for European Business Schools. It's a process that takes from 20 to 24 months.

Question: So it means that AUI will be accredited at the international scale and not only the American?

Answer: Absolutely. We will have this accreditation with the European Association for our business school. Among the members of the foundation there are some strategic members or leaders and according to them, there is something very important that they discovered here: it is our vision of the future of the university. They found that we are really in a way in advance about planning for the future, and that we are doing what the others are starting to think about. This would enable us to attract faculty members from abroad and more exchange programs and people coming for seminars. That is a part of the quality that we'd like to implement in this university. So I think that we have a comprehensive view of the actions we are taking within the process of accreditation.

Question: My next question is about the status of the university. Do you think the AUI should be considered as a public university or a private one?

Answer: The university is in a way a public institution, why? Because the university has been created by a Moroccan law, the *Dahir Charif*, and thus it is a public university. But its management is private, meaning that we don't have the same regulations that the other Moroccan universities have. We are not under the direction of the Ministry of Higher Education. So we are in a

way public, but an independent institution. We have our procedures that fix the way we manage the university, the way the university is controlled. We are a public institution but with a private management.

His Majesty the King is one of the links we have with the state as he is the Honorary President of the university. He is the one who appoints the president of the university. He accepts or refuses the members of the board; and he receives all the activities and audit reports. This status gives us flexibility which allows us to be more creative and innovative. The control of the university is done through the board of directors and not through the state.

Question: Could you tell us what has been achieved in Japan in terms of partnership?

Answer: We have partnerships with three Japanese universities: Osaka University, Meijo University and KanSai Gaidai University. This partnership was concluded during the last three years with Meijo, but we started earlier with Kansai Gaidai.

With Osaka University we have a partnership dealing mainly with research. We have a common program that allows to create a lab in photonics. Dr Sekkat is in charge of this project as he is at the same time professor at AUI and also at Osaka University. What we've discussed also is how to extend this cooperation.

Then we have Kansai Gaidai. It is a university that shares many of the aspects we have at AUI like international faculty and language center materials that are the same as the ones we are working with here. I met some of our exchange students there. We spent a Sunday together, they were very happy and really enjoying their stay. They are learning Japanese but also taking other courses in the Asian Studies department.

As for Meijo University, we started discussing joint projects between our two schools of science and engineering. The first contact was to establish a research partnership in the area of civil electricity. So there are two projects which we are planning to carry out together. The first one is about the impact of magnetic field created by high voltage cables on the human body. We also discussed the extension of exchange programs.

Starting January we will start exchanging students between our two schools of science and engineering. It is a very outstanding university with very advanced research programs.

Qods: Our university held the Moroccan film days, I also heard that you attended the film festival of Marrakech, what do you think of these events and the evolution of the Moroccan film industry?

Mr. President: The festival of Marrakech was for international and Moroccan films. It was in my opinion a good festival; there were many interesting films, but also workshops, discussions and lectures. So it was not only the films but also a kind of intellectual meeting. Personally, I was impressed by the quality of the Moroccan films they showed here.

There is a progress of technical quality, good scenarios, good actors and I think that this cinema in fact deserves a good support because it is something that will probably make some change. It should be encouraged because it is also a way of education. That's why I really support the idea of the Moroccan Film Days. I hope our faculty will try after the discussions to find out some issues that may be subject to deeper discussions. For example, I heard different points of view about whether we have to show some explicit scenes. I think it is an important issue that should be discussed and analyzed by everybody. But, in my opinion, the problem is not to react to this by principles that close the doors. This is not the way a discussion should be. What is important is to find out if it has any effects, or may be how to adapt this to the Moroccan culture as a whole.

For two movies shown, the producers had a reason to show those scenes. They wanted to show the society as it is without hypocrisy. Of course we have to accept each opinion, but organize discussions to share opinions and views, and at this moment these will be enrichment for everybody.

What we should reject is those people who want to decide for others. Here at this university, it is a place of openness and tolerance, people should have open minds and respect the opinion of other people and be ready to listen to them.

Sara's letter

A letter from Haverford College to all AUI students going on exchange



By Sara Ait Lmoudden*

Dear Friends,

I hope that my letter is going to find you well, and I hope that you are all ready for an exchange adventure. However, I would like to begin by sharing my experience with you, which I think you might like to take advantage of. I am sure that most of you are already starting to think about yourselves in your respective host universities and hoping to make it a good experience. Then, yes, if you think positively, you are definitely going to enjoy your stay abroad, so thinking about yourself already in the USA. Just remember, you are about to have a wonderful experience that you will remember all your life!

I've been at Haverford College for almost three months now and I can already tell that even in such a short period of time, one is able to learn a great deal, get to know many people and make friends everywhere. And trust me, it is worth experiencing the USA from an educational perspective, as we are all still students; while at the same time getting a closer look at one of the leading nations in the world. I advise you then to draw as much as you can from this unique life experience, and use it in a way that serves your interests!

As an exchange or international student here, I have felt very welcome everywhere I've been. America offers the perfect mix of ethnic groups - you will be amazed by

the number of ethnic groups that work together, so chase away those ideas that because you are an Arab and September 11th, people will look at you differently. Simply forget about that! It is true that September 11th was a turning point in the history of America and that many aspects of life have changed enormously as a consequence. However, that does not mean that your life is going to be threatened, absolutely not! Just be yourself and enjoy your stay as much as you can.

As most of you will be experiencing your first big move alone, be self-confident and do not be shy about asking questions; there will always be answers. Avoid getting too stressed out about things because everything is going to work out right, although you might not notice it right away. Give yourself a little bit of time and learn how to appreciate things - things aren't always perfect but if you relax and think about everything, then there shouldn't be any problems. Also, keep in contact with your school advisors who are of a great help and can encourage you. They are definitely there for you, if you face any kind of trouble in your studies, as you might experience a new environment with native speakers - which can end up being a good experience! The hardest part is being able to cope with studies at the same time as appreciating your stay. Not an easy balance, for sure, but you can do it! It will take a while, so do not forget to write about any

"The hardest part is being able to cope with studies at the same time as appreciating your stay. Not an easy balance, for sure, but you can do it! [...]. The exchange program is, by definition, not made to make life harder for you, therefore take it easy!"

primary concerns you may have and ask for advice. The exchange program is, by definition, not made to make life harder for you, therefore take it easy!

Now, allow me to address the real issue behind my letter: how it first felt to be here. Most students noticed quickly that I had an accent and were curious to know where I came from. When I said Morocco, the majority thought I was from Monaco, Canada! However, those people who had met my friend, Marouan, knew what I was talking about and they all shared nice memories

with me and spoke of the good time they shared with him!

Thanks to Marouan, since he was the first one to come here, his friends knew about the country. But back to the vast majority who did not know... that somehow annoyed me. I had to tell them that Morocco is a Muslim country, and it is not only a desert, it snows and rains as it does here, and women have the total freedom to drive, and to travel - I can prove it, I am here and I represent this country.

So, back to the first idea, expect people to confront you with the stereotypes of other Arab countries. However, my mission did not end!

One day, I had an appointment with the Dean of the Study Abroad Programs, and she asked me to represent AUI and Morocco in the Study Abroad International Fair. I was overwhelmed with the opportunity

they gave me to let people know about Morocco by taking part in such an important event.

As soon as I said "yes," I realized that there was a lot of

work to be done. Firstly, when I checked the records about the AUI, I did not find anything other than academic catalogues. I was slightly disappointed, especially when I compared it to all the other European, Asian and Latin American schools that regularly send new

"My message to all of you is, dear exchange students and ambassadors of Morocco, if you are interested in presenting a good image of both your university and country, consider bringing some pictures and documents with you"

documentation to the office with all necessary information to ensure that more and more people enroll in their programs. So, I thought that it was time for a change here because although students are willing to experience something new, if the program itself is not very encouraging and not well documented, nobody is going to pay much attention. So I realized that something needed to be done about it. Although I had brought some pictures and documents with me, it was not enough compared to the other schools, so I sent an e-mail to the Internal Communication Officer asking for help. And YES, the Department of Development and Communication agreed to help me and sure enough, one week later, I received all the support material I needed. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the whole team for their work!

Thank you so much for making it happen and for the great job you continue to do inside and outside Morocco.

I received the material and started working on my presentation. The

day was full of excitement for me. The nice pictures I got were the best part of my presentation, and most Haverford students commented that our AUI has modern architecture

and looks beautiful when it snows! To attract more attention, I was wearing an AUI T-shirt also sent to me by the Department of Development and Communication. I also played typical Moroccan music during the event, and with all the new material (logo, pictures

and brochures of the three schools), I seemed to attract more people who enquired about the programs. Although most of them had already chosen their programs, at least now they know more about Morocco. I still think that the exciting experience, although not a total success, was not a total failure either. I feel as if the event marked the beginning of a long partnership between Haverford College and Al Akhawayn University...

My message to all of you is, dear exchange students and ambassadors of Morocco, if you are interested in presenting a good image of both your university and country, consider bringing some pictures and documents with you (but make sure that they are not too heavy!). Let people encounter your wonderful and diverse culture - you can not imagine how proud I felt when I spoke with the students here about my country and the University, and how well you do that, from my own experience, should be among your top priorities!

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. Take it easy, and have a very productive and wonderful experience. Ramadan Moubark!

Warm Regards,
Sara Ait Lmoudden

* Sara is an AUI student on exchange

The Festival of Imlchil and the Legend of Issli & Tislit

By Wadia Ait Hamza

Morocco, like other countries in the world, has its own culture and traditions brought especially from old legends and folktales. Among the famous ones is the story of Tislit and Issli, a folktale which came from the regions of Imlchil in the High Atlas. People in this region know this legend and still believe in it. In all the folktales that we know, the majority of them give advice or a moral to us, and this one is no exception.

The story began when the chief of the Ait Haddidou tribe, a Berber tribe in the High Atlas, announced the birth of his daughter, Tislit. The chief declared that a feast would be held and that no expense will be spared for this celebration. When the day of the festivities arrived, the people of the village were singing ancient songs and dancing to the rhythms of the Atlas mountains. The sunset was crossing the mountains, as the people of the tribe were drinking their mint tea and wishing a long and happy life for the new born.

But when the village fortuneteller cut through the crowd, they stopped their festivities. Everyone was surprised when she inspected the baby's slim hand and announced that the girl would grow to be loving and kind. However, then the fortuneteller further declared that the girl would one day be more beautiful than the spring rain. "Surely too much beauty," the people of the village smiled among themselves. Still, no one expected her final words: "This child is destined to marry the son of our enemy." Said the fortuneteller. The singing and dancing abruptly ended; everybody was shocked by the words that the fortuneteller had just said. No one was as shocked as the chief himself who had fought long and hard against his Berber enemies in the south. He hated them.

Immediately, the chief's counselors stepped forward. They advised their chief that Tislit should be killed. A marriage of

his daughter to their Berber enemy would undoubtedly inflame the enemy's interest in their land. Wasn't peace in the region worth the sacrifice of one life? The chief sat in a stony silence as his wife threw herself at his feet, begging for the child's mercy. But just as the chief was about to announce his decision, one of his wife's kinsmen interrupted the discussion and begged them not to harm the girl. The kinsman said that he would marry her as soon as she reached the age of marriage. He promised also that he would take her to any part in the country where they could live in prosperity. This idea would be beneficial for all the parties, the people would be safe from the enemy, and the chief would not be obliged to kill his daughter. After that, the chief announced to the people of the village that he would remove his daughter from the village, and she would live in the high mountains, far from any people, until her marriage day. The feast ended. Slowly and silently, the villagers returned to their homes, unconvinced that even a good and noble chief could face this kind of problems.

For many years, Tislit lived in a cave in the Atlas mountains with only a nurse as a companion. In the beginning, Tislit's mother came to visit every week. Her father came, too, when he was not detained by his duties in the village. As happy as her parents were to see her, the pain of leaving her was very great. Each time they turned to go back to their village, it became more difficult. Unable to bear such sorrow, their visits became less frequent.

Tislit's days were not unhappy. She was a kind and cheerful girl who befriended every flower, every ant, every snake, and every star within miles. One day, when Tislit was twelve, she noticed a white pigeon flying overhead. As she waved to the bird, an arrow flew across the sky, striking the pigeon down to the ground. Tislit ran to the injured bird. She picked it up and took it in her arms. A boy with green eyes showed up from behind a tree. He was a year or two older

than Tislit, and carried a bow and arrows. Tislit asked the boy if he was the one who did it. But the boy was captivated by the girl's beauty, and asked the beautiful girl for forgiveness. And he tenderly took the pigeon from the girl's arm to cure it.

Seeing how sorry he was, Tislit forgave him. And before the day was over, Tislit and the boy, who was known as Issli, were friends. Each day at noon, Issli would leave his village to see Tislit in the mountains. Tislit would also leave from the watchful eye of her nurse, and run to meet him.

One day, just as Issli was climbing the mountain, he saw Tislit appear from her cave. She then

"This legend is similar to the Shakespearian plays [...] such as *Romeo and Juliet*, or even a story from *One Thousand and One Nights*. Those folktales, legends and stories always have a moral or some advice for the community."

ran up to a man who was ascending the mountain from the other side. The man was dressed in the robe of the Ait Haddidou tribe, which was the enemy of Issli's clan. The boy was surprised. With tears in his eyes, he ran back down the mountain, he said that he would never see Tislit again. Meanwhile, Tislit's father took her by the hand. The chief said to the girl that the time had come to marry the kinsman. There she could live in prosperity, and raise a family. Tislit was silent. After her father left, Tislit ran down the mountain, searching for Issli. She could not bear to be separated from him. He was the one she loved. For hours she wandered through the mountains, calling his name. But she could not find him. The next day, Tislit waited for Issli at noon. Once again, he did not come. By evening, she was anxious. Tislit then realized that there was only one thing to do: she had to run away. If she couldn't be with Issli, she would not marry any man. But as she gathered clothes and food for her journey, she heard a familiar sound. Happy as she was, she ran out of the cave and, spotting Issli, threw herself in his arms. Tislit recounted her father's



news of the marriage that was to take place the next day. She said to Issli that she would not marry anyone except him. Issli told Tislit that he had pro-

Issli heard her voice. "Tislit" he screamed back. He knew she was dying. Issli then began to weep with such brutality that the earth opened and he fell into it. The chief watched mystified as the boy drowned in a lake of his own tears.

The chief was surprised and said that Issli had truly loved his daughter. Slowly, the chief walked to where his daughter last stood. The chief stopped beside the lake asking for forgiveness. The chief later decreed that no daughter in his clan should be forced to marry against her desire. In honor of Tislit and Issli, he declared that a bridal festival would be held each year in which young men and women throughout the Atlas

Mountains could come in the hope of finding and marrying their true love. The moussem, or festival, occurs near Imlchil, at the site of the burial place of Sidi Mohamed El Maghani,

the saint of the Ait Haddidou. We can say that this legend is similar to the Shakespearian plays that we often read, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, or even a story from *One Thousand and One Nights*. Those folktales, legends and stories always have a moral or some advice for the community. In this story the advice is for the parents who were responsible for choosing the mate in the marriage. This kind of behavior is spread in the old Moroccan culture, where the parents choose the mate for their daughters and sons instead of letting them choose. The aim of people who created this story is to stop this kind of behavior, and I think that the success of this legend is inevitable. People in Imlchil now respect the choice of their sons and daughters in choosing their companion for life. The significance of their names speaks about their love. Tislit in Berber means "the bride-groom," and Issli means "the bride." Through this legend, the festival shows that the Berbers are aware of the true meaning of love, while the location of it between the two lakes of Issli and Tislit shows and supports this idea.

mised him self to never see her. He then told her about their families' long standing misunderstanding, and explained to Tislit that the two tribes would never allow them to marry. All night, the two planned their escape. They would run to the west, towards the ocean, where they would build a beautiful home.

As the sun rose, Tislit and Issli lay down upon a rock, not noticing that a band of men was slowly ascending the mountain. When Tislit's father saw his daughter asleep in the arms of Issli, he threw himself upon the boy in a blinded rage. But Issli dodged the chief's blows, and ran. The chief wanted to follow the boy and said to his people to take the girl and to live. Tislit was crying very hard. Tearing herself from the kinsman's hold, she ran as fast as she could. When she could go no further, she stopped. But her tears did not stop. Tislit cried so hard that a pool of water gathered at her feet, and the earth began to fall down. As she fell into the wet earth, Tislit screamed out, "Issli" The word echoed throughout the mountains. Within moments, a lake had formed at the spot where she had stood. From far away,

Assignment

By Kawtar Messat

I am trying to write an essay that should be long
 However, I prefer listening to a song...
 Oh my God, I did not start!
 But that's okay, I will eventually start...
 I've sat at my desk for an hour losing a valuable chance
 But time passed in a glance...
 Anyway, I am not a great writer
 But after thinking, I might be brighter...
 I think this is how students waste their time...
 Which they think is fine.

Someone Special

By Kawtar Messat

My friend is a special star
 In the middle of the sky
 But she's always far
 And so easy to cry

She's a melody of a love song
 With her innocent smile
 She's a real dream
 And hopefully, she won't scream

She's a nice flower
 When she takes her shower
 And she is a mouse when she is in her house

This child

By Hidaya Labioui

This child is holding stones.
 He keeps on fighting and never moans.
 He replies to the violent shoots with his simple tools.
 But in this war there are no rules.
 He falls to the ground with his eyes full of hopes
 and irrigates the land with his pure blood that flows
 in all directions like a big flood, that destroys everything,
 but not his forefathers roots, knocking on people's doors
 to wash away the dirt of the black boots.

Alone

By Hidaya Labioui

Alone at the middle of the night,
 I feel gloom.
 Am I really at home?
 Everything seems so quiet.
 Where is moonlight?
 It won't come soon 'cause
 It's not bright in this gloomy room.
 I'm suffering in this endless night,
 waiting for daylight to
 lead me out of this dark sight
 and be no more alone.

My Heart Healer

By Qods Benjelloun

One day I thought it was enough
 So I decided to take my broken heart off
 And hide it, in a secret place no one can discover
 Hopefully, one day it will recover
 I wonder how you reached that secret place,
 And took my heart with amazing grace
 I thought this time I lost it for real,
 But you only took it to heal
 Now every glance at your beautiful eyes
 Remind me when you first took me to the gates of paradise
 For now I am in it, blessed, radiant and blissful
 For that, to God, I am eternally grateful.

To His Coy Mistress

Andrew Marvel (1621-1678)

Had we but World enough, and Time,
 This coyness Lady were no crime.
 We would sit down, and think which way
 To walk, and pass our long Loves Day.
 Thou by the Indian Ganges side
 Should'st Rubies find: I by the tide
 Of Humber would complain. I would
 Love you ten years before the Flood:
 And you should if you please refuse
 Till the conversion of the Jews.
 My vegetable love should grow
 Vaster than Empires, and more slow.
 An hundred years should grow to praise
 Thine Eyes, and on thy Forehead Gaze.
 Two hundred to adore each Breast:
 But thirty thousand to the rest.
 An Age at least to every part,
 And the last Age should show your Heart.
 For Lady you deserve this State;
 Nor would I love at lower rate.
 But at my back I alwaies hear
 Times winged Charriot hurrying near:
 And yonder all before us lye
 Desarts of vast Eternity.
 Thy Beauty shall no more be found;
 Nor, in thy marble Vault, shall sound
 My echoing Song: then Worms shall try
 That long preserv'd Virginitie:
 And you quaint Honour turns to dust;
 And into ashes all my Lust.
 The grave's a fine and private place,
 But none I think do there embrace.
 Now therefore, while the youthful hew
 Sits on thy skin like morning [dew],
 And while thy willing Soul transpires
 At every pore with instant Fires,
 Now let us sport us while we may;
 And now, like am'rous birds of prey,
 Rather at once out Time devour,
 Than languish in his slow-chapt pow'r.
 Let us roll all our Strength, and all
 Our sweetness, up into one Ball:
 And tear our Pleasures with rough strife,
 Through the Iron gates of Life.
 Thus, though we cannot make our Sun
 Stand still, yet we will make him run.

PlayStation Contest

By Abdelmouniim Ouyidir

In the framework of encouraging in-dorm activities and creating a social and a harmonious atmosphere among students, the Housing Services organized a PlayStation contest on Saturday 26th October. Students were very interested and enthusiastic to participate and have fun in the game room of Building 36. They helped in the organization of the game by bringing their PlayStation sets and some of the electric apparatus.

Most of the students opted for the football game ISS. There were two TV sets, one for training and "warming up," and the second for the real contest. The competition started at 10:30, and by 11:45, the game room was crowded and they continued bringing more chairs. At 12:30 the first round ended and students were left with 14 competitors. During the second round there was a break at 2:30 for lunch. The contest resumed at 4:00 and the finals were played at 5:40 by Amine El Jamali, Mohamed Abbad, Ayoub Loultiti, and Saad Belhadfa.

The *Best Player and Scorer* was Amine El Jamali with 6 goals. He helped the participants configure the games, which is not an easy task, and brought the PlayStations. In fact, he helped considerably.

Semi-Final:

Amine El Jamali (1) # Saad Belhadfa (0)

Med Abbad (1) # Ayoub Loultiti (0)

Final:

Amine El Jamali (0) # Mohamed Abbad (3)

Moroccan University Championships

By Taoufik El Ouali

After a series of friendly games, AUI started the National Universities championship in a shaky way. In their journey to Kenitra, none of the AUI teams were able to manage a single win. They lost all games, in all disciplines. The AUI Lions could have won had they been able to avoid silly mistakes. The basketball and handball teams showed the same result. One may say that the Kenitra adventure was not satisfactory.

A week later, AUI hosted Ibn Tofail University and played two games in two different disciplines: women's volleyball and men's handball. The first managed to win, while the second were largely defeated. Two weeks later, AUI hosted Mohamed I University in their 2nd National University Championships round. This time AUI Lions were able to manage a win over their counterpart in a



hysterical game, especially the first half.

In the realm of basketball, the AUI women's team did better than their male counterparts and won 26 to 21. The men's team lost 55 to 49. The same goes for the male volleyball team; they were defeated by 3 sets to 2.

On Thursday, November 28, Mohamed I University welcomed our sportsmen and women in two disciplines: handball and volleyball. The Oujdis won both games.

Here are all the results:

Soccer:

Ibn Tofail Univ. 3 - 2 AUI

AUI 1 - 0 Mohamed I Univ.

Basketball:

IT Univ. 53 - 37 AUI (men's)

IT Univ. 40 - 36 AUI (women's)

AUI 49 - 55 M 1st Univ. (men's)

AUI 26 - 21 M 1st Univ. (women's)

Volleyball:

IT Univ. 3 - 0 AUI (men's)

AUI 3 - 0 IT Univ. (women's)

AUI 2 - 3 M 1st Univ. (men's)

M 1st Univ. 3 - 0 AUI (women's)

Handball:

AUI 15 - 27 IT Univ. (men's)

M 1st Univ. 15 - 11 AUI (men's)

Free Zone

AUI: Reflections on a Six-Year Sojourn



By Paula Pratt

Recently, a conversation with a colleague (while riding on the van from the off-campus residences) went something like this: "So, Paula, how long have you been here at AUI?" "It will be six years in January."

"SIX YEARS?! Paula, how have you put up with it that long?"

My on-the-spot answer included the usual references to how difficult it is to find a job from "abroad," and of course the part about how much I like living in Morocco, being able to contribute to the growth of a new institution, etc.

Later on, in my office, I found myself sharing the conversation by email with a U.S. friend, reminiscing about my having left for Morocco on 12 days' notice back then, and realizing how quickly the six years have passed. As I "spoke" with my friend, two observations emerged: the more things change the more they do stay the same, and sometimes staying in a place is not about "putting up with it," but about being open to possibilities, and waiting for a sign that it's time to leave.

In January, 1997 I noticed the pansies growing all over Ifrane, except on the campus. At that time there was only grass. . . no lovely willow trees in the courtyard outside Bldg. 8, no rose bushes or hedges or other "botanical" niceties. Several walkways have been "concretized" since then, replacing the dirt pathways worn over time. And certainly the

current practice of "welcome packets" for newly-arriving faculty is a huge contrast to the empty refrigerator and cupboards I found when I arrived at 2 a.m., after the long ride up from Casablanca in the university van! It was Ramadan, no food in the restaurant, and only a casual conversation with then-President Kerkour in the middle of a snowy campus helped this puzzled newcomer find some food and supplies.

One thing that is, unfortunately, very similar, is the amount of time we still spend complaining about cold classrooms and offices! I remember wondering, after a month of seeing my breath in my classrooms, just why the university had been built up in the mountains instead of in Rabat! On the other hand, we now have a person at the helm of GM who is willing to listen to those complaints!

We now have a large, distinctive sign at the gate, and the "green men" now wear gray (and have added a few women to the ranks). Other comparisons, however, are less physical, and have to do with the spirit of the place. And these are among the chief reasons why I've been able to "put up with it" this long. . .

One of the "spirit-makers" who's still here, of course, is Abdessamad Fatmi, tirelessly remaining in charge of Student Activities (maybe that should read "Campus Activities," since his good work benefits us all)! His friendly welcome and sensitivity were crucial in my forming a positive impression from the beginning, and that spirit remains constant to this day.

In spite of the many things we could probably think of which would improve life at Al Akhawayn, the overall "feel" of the university is consid-

erably more positive than it was six years ago. An "advisory council" has been formed, and faculty seem to be trusted to do the job according to our own "style" and pace. And of course some of us have slowly had the pleasure of watching our students mature and go on to new phases of their lives, and become friends and colleagues in the world of work!

Most of all, I would have to say, one of the basic reasons I find it difficult to consider leaving at this point, is that I have found some very dear friends - family, really - right here in this tiny mountain town. There's something about sharing this sort of adventure, and especially over a few years, that creates a unique sort of bond. The friendships I've experienced here, with folks from different countries and cultures, are irreplaceable. Of course some of those friends have gone

on to new jobs, something that's part of the package. On the other hand, the mix of old-timers and newcomers and the ones in between guarantees that things usually don't get too boring!

When I signed my first "temporary" six-month contract and faxed it back across the Atlantic, I thought I'd never stay more than two years at the most. Six years into my sojourn, I now find it futile to predict when I'll leave. I've just finished reading *The Alchemist*, so it seems appropriate to say that I think I've been on a similar "journey," all the while staying in this one place, waiting for an omen, listening for the call to move on. Until then, with a Moroccan son-in-law back in Baltimore, and extended family in Sidi Slimane, Morocco will always be one of my homes.