

FIRST  
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# AL AKHAWAYN CHRONICLE

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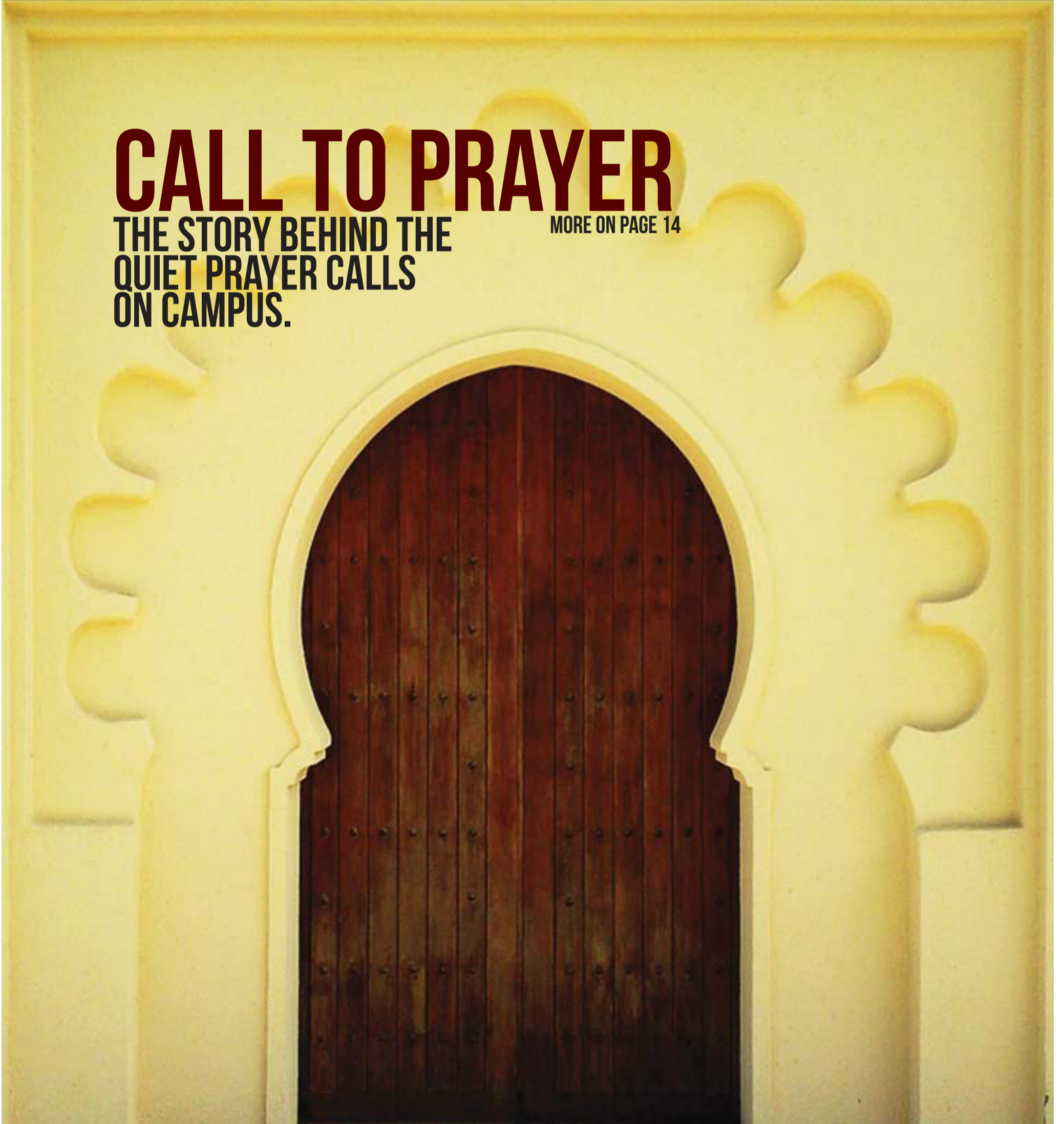


THE OFFICIAL ENGLISH NEWSPAPER OF AL AKHAWAYN UNIVERSITY IN IFRANE

## CALL TO PRAYER

THE STORY BEHIND THE  
QUIET PRAYER CALLS  
ON CAMPUS.

MORE ON PAGE 14



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A special thank you to Rajae Saidi and Nate McGinnis from the Department of Development and Communication for their articles.

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# INTERNATIONAL INTERACTION

THIS SECTION IS DEDICATED TO ALL THE INTERNATIONAL VISITS AND EVENTS THAT GIVE AUI STUDENTS TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

## JAPANESE AMBASSADOR VISITS ON JAPANESE DAY

By Nate McGinnis

In an event sponsored by Al Akhawayn student-run Japanese Circle in collaboration with Nipponia student club from Ecole Nationale de l'Architecture in Rabat, the Al Akhawayn community celebrated "Japanese Day" on April 11, 2013 at Al Akhawayn campus in Ifrane. A litany of activities were made available to students, staff, and faculty throughout the day, including a workshop in flower arranging (ikebana) and origami, a demonstration of Japanese calligraphy (shodo), a traditional tea ceremony, an introduction to Japanese language, and a demonstration on how to make miso soup. The celebration also included a visit by Yanagiya Toshinori, the Japanese Ambassador to Morocco. Toshinori gave a brief speech during the beginning stages of the event that highlighted the long-standing relationship between Morocco and Japan.

In addition to touching on the connections between the two countries, Toshinori also highlighted Japan's continued interest in the African continent as a whole. In June of this year, Japan will be hosting the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, an event in which 54 African heads of state are expected to participate.

"Our future is with Africa," said Toshinori. "That is why we keep on making every effort to further deepen our relationship with African partners, and to realize dynamic and sustainable development in this continent."

Japanese Day was one of several cultural programs this semester designed to welcome visiting foreign dignitaries and promote cross-cultural awareness among students at Al Akhawayn. Events such as these help to promote Al Akhawayn as an internationally focused university that affords students the opportunity to be introduced to foreign cultures firsthand.



Japanese ambassador Yanagiya Toshinori presenting his speech on Japanese Day.

Picture by Rajae Saidi.

## HIGHER EDUCATION BRIDGING THE WORLD

By Rajae Saidi

Academic and cultural events brought the Malaysian nation to the Al Akhawayn community recently with a the two-day program April 8-9, 2013, organized by Al Akhawayn's student-run Writers' Circle in collaboration with the Malaysian Embassy in Rabat.

"This was an exceptional opportunity to promote cultural exchange and tolerance in which we believe strongly," said members of the student club.

In attendance at the program were Jamal Bin Hassan, Ambassador of Malaysia to Morocco; Hj. Md Yusnan Hj. Yusof, Education Specialist at the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) in Rabat; Tengku Sirajuzzam Tengku Mohamed Ariffin, Counselor at the Embassy of Malaysia in Rabat; Hj Su'aidi Dato' Hj. Safei, Education Counselor-cum-

Director at the Embassy of Malaysia in Cairo; several Al Akhawayn officials and students, and more than 50 Malaysian students in Morocco.

In addition to music and art shows, the cultural exhibition presented special Malaysian meals and explored academic themes such as "Malaysia: Development, Transformations and Challenges," "Malaysia: Parliament and Political Parties," and "Bridging the World through Higher Education."

"Our two countries have a lot in common: a rich culture, a lot of diversity, fast-growing economies, development in science and technology, and a thriving system of education," said Driss Ouauicha, President of Al Akhawayn University. "We were happy to exchange with the Malaysian delegation as this falls within Al Akhawayn

University's mission in bridging cultural ties, especially with the English-speaking world."



Picture by Rajae Saidi

# INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION LEADER ADDRESSES AL AKHAWAYN UNIVERSITY

*By Rajae Saidi*

Peter Relic, former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education and well-known leader in international education, addressed Al Akhawayn community in a lecture entitled “A 21st Century Education: Old Questions, New Answers” as part of the University Presidential Lecture Series on February 13, 2013.

Relic shared his experience as an educator and engaged students, staff, faculty, and executive officers present in an interactive lecture. He first examined the 21st century education relating to Al Akhawayn University’s mission committed to educating future citizen-leaders of Morocco and the world. He emphasized the individuals’ capacity to connect in today’s world and the importance of an inter-disciplinary curriculum putting aside the silos approach in education so as to face competition today. Relic also talked about public policy and its role towards citizenship and building leadership; and the human rights in quality education with no discrimination on the basis of religion, race, gender, or physical handicap.

“Within our different communities of scholars and citizens, we live and learn together and so we understand our needs and priorities,” said Relic “We should be part of the dialogue and say how we can do it.” Earlier this week, Dr. Relic met with Al Akhawayn students in a discussion entitled “So you think you have a plan...?” Lecturer and audience discussed the changes in today’s world and the different careers and jobs an individual can have, how society also changes, how to be a productive citizen and help improve the lives of others, and more. “It’s up to you to provide the participation and the leadership to continue to contribute to society ... and realize the contribution of your University’s mission to this,” said Relic to Al Akhawayn students. The Al Akhawayn University Presidential Lectures address global issues from various perspectives. In particular, visiting lecturers and fellows discuss with Al Akhawayn students, faculty, and staff the myriad ways in which economic development and dynamically changing cultural identities, especially as a result of evolving new



Students and professors during Relic presentation. *Picture by Rajae Saidi.*

## DISCOVERING KOREAN CULTURE

*By Rajae Saidi*

During his visit to Al Akhawayn campus, His Excellency Lee Tae Ho, Ambassador of Korea to Morocco, and his spouse, met with students and visited the wide array of exhibits organized on the occasion of the Korean Day, on February 27-28, 2013 at Al Akhawayn campus.

Organized by student members of the Korea Discovery Club, the Korean Day is one of the many cultural days held throughout the year at the initiative of students at Al Akhawayn to promote world cultures and traditions. “Al Akhawayn University is an amazing environment for studying, and we [the Korean Embassy in Morocco] will continue to collaborate with this institution,” said

The Korean Day’s activities included exhibits of origami pieces, traditional attire, books, music. The rich program developed by student club members also included food sampling, a Taekwondo show, a movie projection, and a lot more activities. His Excellency Ambassador Lee and his spouse attended a formal evening reception held in honor of outstanding students who made it to the President’s List for Fall 2012. The event, which coincided with the Korean Day, featured the Ambassador as keynote speaker. Ambassador Lee presented Korea and discussed aspects of its economic development, before he took part in the distribution of Certificates of Achievement to students.



Peter Relic during his presentation.

*Picture by Rajae Saidi.*

technologies, are redefining forms of global culture. Dr. Peter Relic has a Ph.D. from Harvard University and a B.A. from Bowdoin College. He was appointed President emeritus of the National Association of Independent Schools for ten years. He served as U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education, and Superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District. He also served as a Trustee for the Council for American Private Education and on the Boards of Trustees for Bowdoin College, The Hawken School and the Kodaly Institute, Hartt School of Music.

Dr. Peter Relic is an independent consultant conducting Board Governance Training for independent, international schools and not-for-profit organizations around the world, currently focusing on the Middle East. Dr. Relic also consults in the areas of strategic planning, administrative team building, faculty professional development in independent schools, charter schools, international schools and associations. He worked in the United States, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Egypt, Thailand, South Africa, Kenya, Botswana, Greece, Turkey, France, Saudi Arabia, Nicaragua, and China.



Korean ambassador Lee Tae Ho and his wife in participating in Korean Day.

*Picture by Reda Aissaoui.*

# CAREERS GATEWAYS

THIS SECTION IS DEDICATED TO AL AKHAWAYN'S CAREER ORIENTED EVENTS THAT HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF STUDENTS

## CAREERS GOING GLOBAL BOOSTING UNIVERSITY GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

*By Rajae Saidi*

*By Rajae Saidi*

Al Akhawayn Career Services recently subscribed to Goinglobal, a leading provider of career and employment information and resources. In an effort to extend the scope its offerings, and through this new subscription, Al Akhawayn Career Services aims at offering its students and alumni an international platform to access career opportunities, jobs, and internships around the world, while getting regularly updated insider information on the different countries, cultures, and employers.

"This opportunity will definitely help our students and alumni get the global careers they long for and be the global leaders they aspire to be," said Ikram Benseddik, Career Coordinator at Al Akhawayn. "Goinglobal platform offers to them an easy access to career openings across the world and a chance to get an insight into the work

culture of different countries as well." Al Akhawayn's subscription to Goinglobal database includes 38 Country Career Guides, employer directories, and worldwide job and internship postings. Students and Alumni will now have access through their Al Akhawayn accounts to available career opportunities in the sectors, companies, and countries that interest them the most, and they can apply online directly. With a refreshed mission and vision, Career Services continues to offer day-to-day career advice and orientation sessions, as well as help students and alumni with job placements through a large network of recruiters in Morocco. Goinglobal is yet one more step to continue enhancing Career Services offerings and expanding the scope of its placements overseas.

Approximately one hundred university students and experts in the field of entrepreneurship gathered at the National Forum of University Entrepreneurship held at the Al Akhawayn University campus on April 12-13, 2013. Under the theme of "Developing Entrepreneurship and Employability at the University," the second installment of the national forum was organized by the Al Akhawayn University School of Business Administration and Groupe Estudiantin National pour l'Innovation et l'Entreprenariat (GENIE), a nongovernmental organization launched by Moroccan students dedicated to promoting the spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship. "Our role is also to encourage students to keep abreast of the various entrepreneurial opportunities we offer to them," said Driss Ouaouicha, President of Al Akhawayn University. "We encourage

them to grasp the university prospects built on hands-on experience through student organizations, business plan competitions, community service, and more." The two-day event included the participation of a large amount of students, graduates, policy makers, scholars, and experts from the world of business and entrepreneurship. The conference featured several plenary sessions, including testimonials of entrepreneurs, workshops, roundtable discussions, and a competition for the Best Student Entrepreneur in Morocco. Following the national strategy of economic and social development in Morocco, the forum is a major national event that aims at promoting exchanges between the university and the business world so as to meet the challenges of job creation and the fight against unemployment among young graduates.



# ALAKHAWAYN SPORTS

THIS SECTION IS DEDICATED TO ALL THE SPORTING AND ATHLETIC EVENTS THAT AUI STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN

## STUDENT ATHLETE COUNCIL TIME TO MOVE FORWARD

*By Mohamed Nidal Ouazzani*

It is “the betterment of athletics at AUI”, as the council’s new president – Iliass Ikhanjal, described it. While student athletes may very well be aware of the existence of this council, most of the AUI students are not. The council wasn’t very active in the past few semesters, and that probably explains the lack of awareness our community has over it.

The council itself is currently made up of a board – representatives from every sports team. It is in the process of being revived, renewed, and re-established as the strongest student-led body that represents and speaks for every student athlete on campus. The Student-Athlete Council is back to renounce itself as the responsible entity that is in charge of motivating student athletes to better their athleticism in order to make athletics at AUI more competitive – as well as address all the concerns that student athletes may encounter in

their athletic years at AUI. The ideas being currently discussed are brilliant, and the council’s president has very high hopes and expectations in terms of where he is heading with the council.

The structuring of the Student-Athletic Council is still being constructed – but I got a few insights on how things will work. The whole purpose of this council is to build a student athlete community – where student athletes will belong to a special community – a student athlete community, and hold a special status for their hard work. The goal is to build this community to reward and motivate our student athletes. After all, they all work hard to make our university victorious in many events – but other than being part of a team, they really have no concrete compensation. Some ideas that have risen include the creation of a unique card for student athletes, as well as the possibility of giving



student athletes pick their upcoming semester’s courses ahead of time in order for them to have a schedule that best fits their athletics and academics altogether. The idea here is to

unite the student athlete community and grant them a concrete status in the university. However, everything comes with a price. The price one has to pay in order to remain part of the student athlete community is more than reasonable. One should focus and practice his/her sport seriously, and attend

all the practice sessions. It was suggested that a student athlete may lose his/her position in the SAC if he/she surpasses three unexcused absences in the practice sessions. These are ideas that are still being worked on, but the results could be stellar. Student athletes will take their sports more seriously, and attend all their practice sessions. This would result in better performance of our teams, and make us a lot more competitive. This new

level of competitiveness would make us play more, better games. The AUI community would be more impressed in our teams’ performances, attend more games, and raise its level of team spirit to a whole different level. We could even reach a point where games could return revenue. Tickets could be sold to those who want to watch the games. The SAC could therefore improve the state of athletics at AUI by miles. Even the idea of athletic scholarships was brought up. The most competitive student athletes who exercise individual sports may be awarded an athletic scholarship, and help enhance both their athletic and academic careers. The SAC has a massive potential in raising AUI’s athletic bar up to a whole new level. As Iliass Ikhanjal put it, the SAC is starting small, but it definitely has the potential to reaching something big – and that is what he is shooting for.

## WHAT SOME STUDENT ATHLETES HAVE TO SAY >



“Athletics are okay in general, but they can be improved. Soccer is the sport that is looked out for the most on campus, and there’s no doubt that we have the highest number of newcomers at the tryouts – which is good. There is some good structure in the way we practice and play, and attendance is good for the most part. However, players don’t show up sometimes and it’s usually due to their studies taking place during our practice sessions. I think we need to work on making the schedules better so that everyone can show their true level of commitment. For example I had a lab that was rescheduled, and it was rescheduled for the same two hours I have my soccer practice in. Sometimes professors don’t accept to give an excused absence for a case like mine, and sometimes they give us a hard time – but other times it’s perfectly fine. Another major problem that disturbs us is the weather. When it’s raining, the water doesn’t go below the surface as fast as it should – it remains on the surface which makes it too wet. Also when it is snowing, we aren’t able to play at all. It would be perfect if the field could be covered somehow during snowfall and uncovered for practice sessions and games. With that said, athletics at AUI in general are alright and they are improving constantly.”

Othman Al Ghanmi - Men’s Soccer

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“After returning from exchange, and having something to compare with, I can safely say that athletics at AUI still has ways to go. There is no communication coming from the athletic department when our teams are about to play. I would love to see more students watch and support us at our games. In my team, most of the students attend, which is great. However, some students at times are missing from practice sessions because they have a rescheduled make-up class or exam. This way I can say that the academic schedule can interfere with our athletic schedule at times. It is also a little difficult to get an excused absence from professors due to a sport event – it is possible, but it always seems to me that not many people take sports as seriously as they should. I am glad that quite a number of newcomers showed up and joined, and I hope that we get to play more games per semester. The constraint we have is mainly the lack of teams around the region that we can play against. This semester, apart from our regional friendly games, we will be participating in an international tournament in Madrid – and we can’t wait! Wish us luck!”

Hajar Noredine - Women’s Soccer

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“I think the basketball team (AUI Wolves) is doing alright even if we face some minor difficulties. Every semester we get some new players after the tryouts and that’s really good – considering that we only need 10 players on a basketball team. One main thing that I have noticed is that in most sports teams there is a group of players that have been part of the team for years, or semesters at least, and those players are the heart of the team. They are more committed and serious about the team as opposed to some newer players who don’t always attend or feel as focused and committed about the sport. However, there are always some exceptions, and every semester we are glad to notice that at least one or two serious and committed players are able to join the team. Scheduling games isn’t a big issue, we usually play many friendly games per semester, and we also participate in some tournaments. Sometimes it is a challenge to get an excused absence from a professor due to a sporting event – and I think that’s because there is a lack in the admiration and support for athletics in Al Akhawayn. I also think the team spirit in AUI is lower than it should be, people in general don’t support our sports teams as much as I think they should. In terms of performance we’re doing alright, and we are getting better as time goes by.”

Ismail Tazi - Men’s Basketball

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“I think that athletics at AUI need improvement and we’re trying. Competition and commitment need to reach newer heights. Exchange students are usually disappointed when they realize that over here we don’t have seasons and play only a few games per semester. Their expectations are also much higher than ours, they expect practice sessions to be serious and rigorous just as they are back home for most of them, but I believe we need to be more committed in order to achieve that. Commitment is a big problem, and could be improved from both the students and the management. There is some favoritism within the athletic department however – bigger teams are usually given more attention. I would like that to change, but student athletes need to be a lot more focus and committed on their sport first.”

Zineb Chouihi - Women’s Basketball

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“As times goes by, athletics at AUI are getting more and more interesting. We are scheduling more events, we are addressing more issues and concerns, and we are creating more and more motivation. One of the issues we encounter every semester is how to motivate new people in order for them to be committed team members that we can trust and rely on. For the tryouts, around 100 new students would come, but only about 10 would stay afterwards. We tried to come up with ways in which to motivate students – by providing them with meals after training, for example. It is always apparent that the older players have spent more time on the team and therefore are more committed. It is also difficult to schedule games – there are no concrete teams around us and if there are, our schedules end up to be a little different, which makes scheduling difficult. We have up to 10 games per semester usually, and I’m not sure if that is enough. Meanwhile, we don’t want to stress our players out by creating time conflicts between their athletic and academic schedules.”

El Mehdi Zrihni - Men’s Volleyball



# ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

THIS SECTION IS DEDICATED TO ALL THE EVENTS RELATED TO ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY THAT TAKE PLACE IN AL AKHAWAYN

## NASA INTERNATIONAL SPACE APPS CHALLENGE

*By Rajae Saidi*

In collaboration with NASA, the Al Akhawayn University School of Science and Engineering and the student-run Astronomy Club hosted the International Space Apps Challenge at the Al Akhawayn University campus over the weekend of April 20-21, 2013.

The International Space Apps Challenge is an international collaboration focused on space exploration that takes place over 48 hours in cities around the world. The event embraces collaborative problem solving with a goal of producing relevant, open-source solutions that address global needs applicable to both life on Earth and life in space. The international challenge was an opportunity for Al Akhawayn students and other participants to showcase their talents as web developers, engineers, designers, and passionate people willing to have an impact on the world.

According to Khalid Loudiyi, Associate Professor of Physics in the Al Akhawayn School of Science and Engineering, the International Space Apps Challenge engaged the untapped, unexpected, and uncharted know-how of thousands of passionate citizens around the world with 182 volunteer coordinators who worked together to lead 83 locations and coordinate with more than 1000 virtual participants.

"The Space Apps enabled 9147 global citizens to contribute to exploration. Amongst them, the Al Akha-

wayn students were allowed to work in a collaborative spirit with different interveners all over the world solving challenges of their choice. This was an opportunity for our students to put what they have accumulated as knowledge into practice and to search about the needed missing links while working on their challenge," he said.

Representing Morocco among other higher education institutions, the Al Akhawayn student team is the local leader of North Africa with three projects receiving local awards. The first award went to students Saad Taame, Hazim Azghari, Yassine Gaimes, Mehdi Diouri, and Ali El Ouafiq for their project "The Blue Marble". The second award went to students Faouzi Jouti and Rim Benhallam for their project "Renewable Energy Explorer". The third award went to Meryem Tanji and Mohamed Nidal Ouazzani for the project "Earth Tiles." In addition, the projects "The Blue Marble" and "Renewable Energy Explorer" have been nominated for global judging by NASA.

"Participating in a competition that required building apps for NASA seemed to me impossible, and while working on my project, which was to design a 'deployable greenhouse,' I learned this big lesson: Nothing is impossible," said Said Alaoui Id-riss, one of the 25 Al Akhawayn students and alumni who took part in the challenge. "I learned that you can do everything and attain any goal you want if you persist and believe in what you are aiming to achieve."

## MICROSOFT OPEN DAY AT AL AKHAWAYN

*By Rajae Saidi*

In collaboration with Al Akhawayn's Information Technology Services, Microsoft-Morocco organized an Open Day at Al Akhawayn University campus on February 21, 2013.

The one-day event attracted many Al Akhawayn students and faculty members. Jalal Alaoui, Development and Platform Manager at Microsoft-Morocco, introduced Microsoft's products and services, such as Microsoft Office 365, a comprehensive messaging and collaboration platform which gives access to a rich feature set DreamSpark, an online platform which gives access to students from partner institutions to download and use all Microsoft products; and ImagineCup, an international yearly IT

competition organized by Microsoft. The Open Day was marked by the recent Microsoft Education Alliance agreement signature between Al Akhawayn University and Microsoft-Morocco. Al Akhawayn University has become a member of Microsoft IT-Academy program, a global IT learning solution that connects educators, students, and communities with higher education and research tools.

"Microsoft is involved in education worldwide," said Alaoui. "We are glad that partners like Al Akhawayn University agree to work with us on a platform that will benefit the educational system here in Morocco, and that will better prepare the students for the future."



During the Microsoft presentation.

*Picture by Rajae Saidi.*

# ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION IN ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY

*By Rajae Saidi*

“Engineering capstone projects help develop educational research and innovation and get students involved with today’s industry,” stated Mohamed Essaïdi, Director of École Nationale Supérieure d’Informatique et d’Analyse des Systèmes (ENSIAS) in Rabat and Senior Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), during a talk entitled IEEE Endeavor for Engineering and Technology Innovation in Academia and Industry, held on March 18, 2013, at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane.

Within the framework of the 2013 Capstone Guest Speakers’ Series initiated by Al Akhawayn School of Science and Engineering, the talk was an opportunity for Al Akhawayn students to learn about the various added-value programs and activities that IEEE develops in cooperation with academia and industry to offer to its diverse stakeholders, and how both university and engineering faculty and students benefit from these programs and activities in order to develop innovative and entrepreneurial technology based

on research and development projects. Essaïdi gave an overview on the organization and described its different components, programs, publications, continuing education, conferences, technology standards, student chapters and branches worldwide, highlighting its professional and educational activities. Essaïdi also reflected on the experience of founding the IEEE Morocco section since 2005 and announced the creation of a chapter by Al Akhawayn students, soon to be affiliated to the main organization.

In a Q&A session following the presentation, students and faculty members present discussed further questions related to the membership of students in the IEEE programs, investment funds, the number of student branches in Morocco, programs targeting women in engineering, and the financial and technical sponsorship of IEEE. The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) is the world’s largest professional association for the advancement of technology with the core purpose of fostering technological innovation and excellence for the benefit of humanity.

# FROM THE DESERT OF ERFOUD TO PLANET MARS

*By Rajae Saidi*

“The next human to go to Mars might as well be studying in an elementary school today in Morocco.” Such were the words that scientist and researcher Gernot Groemer, President of the Austrian Space Forum (OEWf) and leader of the Mars Analog Field Simulation Mission in Erfoud, used to describe the future of the field simulations in the south of Morocco. Groemer explained the details of the Erfoud experiments to a large audience of Al Akhawayn students during a lecture entitled “Expedition Mars: Simulating the Human Exploration of the Red Planet”, held at Al Akhawayn campus in Ifrane, on March 4, 2013. “The choice of Erfoud for our simulation project was based on several criteria, the most important of which is the geological similarity of its terrain with that of Mars,” explained Groemer. “Thanks to its strategic location and its stability, Morocco is nowadays in the radar of the scientific community.” Groemer presented to Al Akhawayn students the analog field simulation project that took place throughout the month of February 2013 in Erfoud (South eastern Morocco), general theories about the planet Mars, and the equipment tested for a mission there in the decades to come. Groemer explained how the northern Sahara as a Mars test area will also serve as an outreach platform to enhance the visibility of planetary sciences.



Simulation carried out in the desert of Erfoud.

“I wasn’t sure of the capacities of Al Akhawayn University before coming here. But now that I am on site, I have discovered that there is a lot of potential for hands-on-experience on several research areas,” said Groemer. The data collected in Erfoud by Groemer and his crew will be analyzed during a scientific conference in a few months in Vienna, and subsequently published. Indeed, following a meticulous and an assiduous research program, the scientists in Erfoud have been able to test a spacesuit simulator prototype, as well as other innovative pieces of machinery that would be used on the soil of Mars. Scientists were not allowed to read anything about Moroccan geology so that they could make their experiments on site in Erfoud as a

This first visit of Groemer to Al Akhawayn University was triggered by an initiative of the student-run Astronomy Club. On February 8, 2013, student members of the Astronomy Club, accompanied by Hassane Darhmaoui, Professor of Physics at Al Akhawayn and club advisor, visited the inauguration of the simulation site in the south of Morocco. Students exchanged ideas with the scientists and astronauts on site and saw first-hand the simulation tests, also attended by Minister of Higher Education, Lahcen Daoudi. first-time terrain, just like Mars would be, all while preserving as much as possible the pristine nature of the the data and samples collected, a process known as “planetary protection”. Holding

a PhD in the field of Exploration Astrobiology and an MSc in Astronomy, Groemer is also a researcher and member of the Space Generation Advisory Council. He is Program Executive Officer of PolAres, a multiyear, interdisciplinary Mars analog research project. Groemer has several publications and research projects in astronomy.

# TALK ON WIND POWER FARM IN MOROCCO

*By Rajae Saidi*

Mohammed El Khalfi, Project Director at the National Office of Electricity and Water, presented at Al Akhawayn University the Wind Power Farm in Taza in a talk organized by Al Akhawayn School of Science and Engineering, on February 18, 2013. "While Morocco knows a fast social and economic growth, the need for more electric energy has increased as well," said El Khalfi. In his presentation on Taza's Wind Power Farm, El Khalfi explained to Al Akhawayn students the project process and phases, its economic and social impacts from creating jobs in the region of Taza to offering touristic and educational visits, and some statistics on Moroccan electric energy. The project, according to El Khalfi, will contribute to the development of the country and its economy. A Q&A session followed with further inquiries and explanations on the environmental impact of the project, the contractual and the development phase, workforce and maintenance, and research activities through the collaboration between the National Office of Electricity and Water and Moroccan universities in related field research. The Wind Power Farm, with a capacity of 150 MW, was developed by the National Office of Electricity and Water within the framework of Morocco's Energy Strategy, and with the objective of diversifying energy supply sources and promoting renewable energies. The project contributes to the implementation of Morocco's Wind Power Program aimed at responding to an increasing national energy demand. The implementation of Taza Wind Power Farm will be outsourced to the private sector; and the production phase is scheduled to start in 2014. Mohammed El Khalfi is an Engineer, graduate of Ecole des Mines in Rabat (Class of 1990). He has gained 22 years of experience at the National Office of Electricity and Water operating high-power networks (high voltage and very high voltage), managing industrial clients using the power networks (OCP, ONCF, factories, and more), handling contractual relations in supplying big cities, elaborating procedures and missions for the corporate entities, and directing the implementation of renewable energy projects such as the Taza Wind Power Farm.

# MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS MARKET IN MOROCCO: HUAWEI

*By Rajae Saidi*

Within the framework of the 2013 Capstone Guest Speakers' Series, Al Akhawayn School of Science and Engineering invited Mohammed Ihsane El Alj, Manager of the Customer Training Department at Huawei Technologies in Morocco, for a talk on "Mobile Telecommunications Market in Morocco: Huawei Experience" on April 1, 2013 at Al Akhawayn campus. "You are the youth of today and you are the future engineers and leaders, and we hope to help you enlighten your ideas in the field of ICT," said El Alj to Al Akhawayn students. Also present at the lecture was Felix Xue, General Director at Huawei Technologies in Morocco, Mariam El Hassani, Huawei Com-

munication Director; and many Al Akhawayn engineering students and faculty. Click here to view the biography of Mohammed Ihsane El Alj. Throughout the lecture, Al Akhawayn students were introduced to the Huawei culture, employees and career paths, market progress, business areas, R&D investment, standards, and more. El Alj explained the Huawei pipe strategy, its ICT architecture, and business strategy as well highlighting the company's social responsibility and its membership to local communities. El Alj also presented the technical trainings and certification programs and portfolios available at Huawei for university students. A Q&A session followed with a vivid in-

teraction between Xue and students on different topics mainly the experience of Huawei in Morocco since it started in 1999 and how it was able to earn in a short period of time a major part of Morocco's telecommunications sector. Huawei is a leading global ICT solutions provider with more than 44% of its workforce worldwide working on Research & Development (R&D) projects. Huawei's vision is "to enrich life through communication" towards bridging the digital divide. Contributing to the sustainable development of society, the economy, and the environment, Huawei creates green solutions that enable customers to reduce power consumption, carbon emissions, and resource costs.

# TALK ON HIGHWAY ENGINEERING

*By Rajae Saidi*

Mohammed Alj, Project Director at Société Nationale des Autoroutes du Maroc (ADM), gave a talk on the Fez-Oujda Expressway Engineering Challenges and Construction within the framework of Capstone Guest Speaker Series (CGSS) organized by Al Akhawayn School of Science and Engineering on March 6th, 2013. Providing an overview on ADM governance mode and organizational functions, Alj explained the overall management of the construction of expressways and outlined the processes and implications of launching international calls for bids to outsource the implementation of selected projects. Alj presented the Fez-Oujda expressway construction phases to illustrate some highway engineering challenges, and explained the design of the road itinerary needed to meet environmental requirements such as preserving Tazga Forest in the Middle Atlas. He also highlighted the management arrangements put in place to accelerate the construction of the highway and to meet the deadlines, and outlined the delaying effects of rainy winters. According to Alj, the geological nature of the region made the construction even more challenging leading ADM to commission a total of 30 studies engaging external expertise to investigate technical difficulties encountered referring to what he called "surprises hidden by nature". "The completion of Fez-Oujda expressway was achieved by the deadline although the region was geologically unstable...

We won the challenge," said Alj. A discussion with students and faculty members followed for further clarification on the socio-economic, legal, and judicial, and quality-assurance considerations in handling highway constructions. Mohammed Alj reflected on his education and the job experience saying that "when

I was a student, I used to wonder on the rationale of mathematics courses, differential equations, etc; but over the years, I realized that working on mathematics assignments allows us to subconsciously learn how to manage equations of life. Project management is also about handling equations." Mohammed Alj is an engineer, graduate



Presentation in auditorium 4.

*Picture by Reda Aissaoui.*

of Ecole Mohammedia des Ingénieurs (EMI) (Class of 1996) in Morocco. He has earned 17 years of experience at Société Nationale des Autoroutes du Maroc (ADM). He started as an engineer in charge of the construction of various motorway sections, such as Khemisset – Sidi Allal El Bahraoui and Meknes-Rabat. He oversaw the construction of toll stations and deployment of toll systems. Then he

evolved into directing the construction of the Fez-Taza-Oujda expressway inaugurated in 2011. He has been managing Fez-Rabat highway toll stations and has been handling contractual relations with respect to Highway Maintenance, Safety & Security, and Local Authorities. Mohammed Alj earned a certification in Project Management (level D) via Association Francophone de Management de Projet (AFITEP).

# ARTS & HUMANITIES

THIS SECTION IS DEDICATED TO ALL THE AUI EVENTS REGARDING HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

## AWARD WINNING BRITISH DOCUMENTARY FILM MAKER SHOWS FILM

By Rajae Saidi

Deborah Perkin, award winning British documentary film maker and former BBC senior producer, talked to Al Akhawayn students on her work experience and shared excerpts of her independent documentary "BASTARDS: sex and single mothers in Morocco" during Al Akhawayn Community Service Seminar on February 13, 2013. Under the theme of "The Role of Civil Society in Moroccan Human Development," the seminar was organized

by Al Akhawayn Community Services as part of a platform for experiential learning where students can draw upon the intellectual challenges that they face in the classroom, reevaluate them within a social reality, and get actively involved in the community. "Being involved in community service is a good opportunity for you to be open to the world in general and to the Moroccan society in particular and reflect on your own individual life," said Per-



Deborah Perkin (to the right) commenting on her film (at the top) as she shows it in auditorium 4 to the AUI community. *Picture by Reda Aissaoui.*

In her opening remarks. "Throughout my personal work experience, I have learnt a great number of things and I continue to learn all the time. What you do here is also impressive and I encourage you to make the most out of it and I am sure you will give a huge contribution to Moroccan society." Perkin presented first excerpts of some of her works namely "Quincy Jones," "Ban the Boss," "My Son the Killer," and "Battle for Wales."

She walked the students through some of the techniques used, how a documentary film is made, and finally the circumstances surrounding the shooting of the touching documentary "BASTARDS: sex and single mothers in Morocco." BASTARDS is about illegitimate children and the fathers who abandon them. By following single mothers fighting for justice, the documentary addresses big social issues through small human stories, heart-warming and heart-breaking stories captured raw.

## AWARD WINNING BOOK: CATASTROPHIC BLISS

By Rajae Saidi

Myronn Hardy, Lecturer of Creative Writing at Al Akhawayn School of Humanities and Social Sciences, presented his recent award-winning book of poems Catastrophic Bliss at the thirty-first installment of Honoring Al Akhawayn Authors Series organized by Al Akhawayn Mohammed VI Library on campus,

on March 20, 2013. "Poetry can be about anything... it can be playful and imaginative, and anything can happen in a poem," said Hardy. "I can spend three weeks or three months on a poem and when I know I finished it glows by itself," he explained. Hardy shared a selection of poems from the book during his presenta-



Myronn Hardy is the author of two previous books of poetry Approaching the Center, winner of the PEN/Oakland Josephine Miles Award, and The Headless Saints, winner of the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award.

*Picture by Reda Aissaoui.*

tion, captivating the audience with his verse and offering them the opportunity to ask questions and delve into the mind of an award-winning poet. Published on January 1, 2013, Catastrophic Bliss won the Griot-Stadler Prize for Poetry and was selected by Natasha Trethewey, Poet Laureate of the United States. The book contemplates the longing to understand connections and disconnections within a world ever more fragmented yet

interdependent. With allusions to Dante, Stevie Wonder, Fernando Pessoa, Persephone and Marianne Moore, these poems move from the tumultuous to the sublime: a pit bull killing an invading thief, two people on a New York City subway playing chess, Billy Eckstine recording in Rio de Janeiro, to imagined Barack Obama writing poems to his father. Hardy's third collection comprises war, place, love, and history all yearning to be reconciled.

# FOCUS

## ON ALAKHAWAYN

THIS SECTION STRICTLY FOCUSES ON STUDENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS IN REGARDS TO THE UNIVERSITY

### STUDENTS VS. CURFEW

*By Yassine El Issami*

It was a normal Sunday, at 11 PM, I finished all the tasks for that day. I went to the gym, did my homework, so it was high time to eat something. On campus, when you are hungry, the only place where you can find something eatable is the restaurant, but that night it was terrible, I could smell the oily fat meals from the door of the restaurant, it was very disgusting. I could not stand it for another minute, the only solution was to go outside campus, but wait it is 11:58 the curfew!! I cannot go out because of this rule. Many students think that this law should be banned because they don't need someone to manage their time, one of them once stated, «In University there is no place for curfew we are enough mature and adult to manage our time.» The curfew for the majority of students equals security problems and health problems. "But how?" You might ask. Well a friend of mine decided to hang out with some friends a Thursday night. After the party he didn't find a place to spend the night, so he chose to stay outside instead of going back to the campus because of the curfew. That night he was a victim of an aggression in front of the lake by three people who took his phone and all his money. This student had a security problem because he chose to stay out and respect the law, come on! A law is for protecting people, not for scaring them. Same story, another person, another place, last semester I lived in the annex of AUI. There is no cafeteria, shop or restaurant whatsoever. When you want to eat something, you should go out and buy food. Once, I was sick, and I had to eat

something to take my medicine. It was 00:15, so I had to violate the curfew. I asked the security guard if I can go and buy what I need and come back without any problems, he agreed. When I came back, he took my name and ID, and few days later I the administration sent me an e-mail to go to the vice president office. Now that this rule is here, the only way to live with is to respect it or the university should make it flexible, another student of AUI, stated "They should make it more flexible and in our favor, then I am sure we will respect it."

Then, I heard that Thursday night many people go out to party, so I went to the main gate, and I was surprised by the huge number of students that leave the campus that night. Approximately 20 cars and 85 students left the campus that night. So Thursday is the first day of the week when curfew problems start. One of the party goers, stated "Thursday is ladies night everybody hang out to party and have fun, we can't stay all the week on campus it is boring, I think the administration should remove the curfew starting from Thursday because many of us spend the night out in the streets." For any university the rules are there to maintain order and protect students, but the curfew is a source of many other problems. So, for us, the only way to live with this rule is to make it more flexible or remove it because university students don't need to be controlled. The youngest student here is 18 years old, so s/he is responsible for her/his acts and s/he should be responsible as how to manage his or her time, we're adults after all!

### WHAT FOR NEXT SEMESTER? NO COURSE!

*By Malak El Bachiry*

The "Add and Drop" period at Al Akhawayn University, represents a huge struggle and stress. Each semester, all students have to go through this period of "Add and Drop" in order to preregister in courses they are willing to take for the next semester. It is in fact a feared period for most of the students. To begin with, there is no clearness. Many students, not to say all of them, have no idea about what is the exact time according to their number of credits, the exact day when they could add their courses. When this period is getting close, you feel like everybody is just lost. "When should I add my courses? What if I have twelve credits? At what time the portal will be open?" These are all questions that even when asked, the responses are not always satisfying, making students annoyed, disrupted and confused. Further, even after knowing the date in which you can start adding your courses, there is still a problem. You wake up at seven and a half in the morning, you are already in the lab, you are at exactly eight in front of the computer screen, you open the website and wait for it to be opened, and you think that everything is going all right. But guess what? You are wrong; it is solely a deceitful thought. Even after rushing and not waiting the slightest instant, your chances of having courses you need, with the instructors you prefer are very low. The fact of being on time, unluckily, doesn't change anything. After

not even a minute, all courses are already full and therefore, you have no way to add all your courses, mainly because of the low number of available sections. It is more than a stressful moment that since it is the sole mean all students have to add their courses, no undergraduate can be spared from it. There is another reason why this "Add and Drop" day is for many students a kind of nightmare. When students are about to add their courses, while they are stressed and afraid of not being able to add courses they have already chosen, the system simply crashes and no one is capable of enrolling in any class. The only solution left is to go to the beloved registration office and wait behind the crowd. It is so full of people, and so noisy that you think all the university students, of all schools are there, waiting for their turn. This turn that could take hours and hours, sometimes even days. After interviewing lots of students, the answers were somehow similar. This period has always been a real issue here, and it keeps being the case. Many solutions have been given in order to resolve this problem that our university is suffering from. The main ones are to add as much sections as it could be enough for the large number of students of the whole university. Also, necessary measures should be taken concerning the system and Internet speed. Hopefully, one day we could make this feared moment a simple and ordinary one.

# CALL TO PRAYER

*By Mohamed Nidal Ouazzani*

Well this issue isn't new to anyone on campus. Everyone is well aware. We all stopped for a second and wondered "wait, I see a mosque, but I hear no Adhan. What gives?" If you have never noticed – well now you know. The mosque on campus does not make its calls to prayer audible by the whole 80 hectare campus. The Adhan is there, but it is mostly only heard from the inside of the mosque, or a few feet away from the entrance at its loudest. Why is that? For the sake of animosity names will not be mentioned. The people in charge of this situation, those who decided that the Adhan should be quiet, do have their reasons. The quiet call to prayer could be viewed as a way to promote cultural and religious tolerance towards the non-Muslim members of our community. It could also be viewed as an illustration of secularism on campus – the separation of academia and religion. Some claim that it may be more practical for people to have an Adhan application on their smartphones and such as opposed to having the whole classroom environment pause for a few minutes while the call to prayer echoes through campus grounds. These reasons alone are based on some sort of common sense – there's no denying it. However, there happen to be many people around campus who would gladly choose to clearly hear the Adhan five times a day. This semester, a petition in favor of regulating the volume of the prayer call had been passed around many students. A lot of signatures had been collected already, but no real change has been observed thus far. From gathered information, it looks like a lot of people are indeed in agreement to having speakers amplify the Adhan all over campus – but why?

Well, let me put it this way – a quick Google search on quiet versus loud calls to prayer led to no relevant results. It is almost as if the two words 'quiet' and 'Adhan' have never existed in the same sentence before. Growing up, we never really saw a mosque that doesn't conduct a regular, loud Adhan – and there are reasons for that. It is considered the duty of a mosque to call its neighboring people to prayer five times per day. The call to prayer is very important in Islam, and holds great significance. Adhan is not just a mere message telling people that it's time to pray - but rather it is religiously viewed as a purifying message, given by an appealing voice, to always remind us to turn to Allah and follow in the footsteps of His Messenger. A lot of the faculty and students on campus grew up to the sounds of Adhan, and thus have always felt a personal and cultural, let alone the religious bond we have with the call to prayer. It's definitely strange to see a mosque, but not hear the Adhan from its minaret. Making the call to prayer quiet doesn't necessarily translate into secularism and religious tolerance for some. To tolerate is to respect and let live per say, and by that definition we could conclude that in a place where people tolerate each other, they would let each other practice what they want and how they want. In this sense, making the prayer calls quiet only opposes the notion of tolerance and produces a feeling of suppression of religious practice. This is why a lot of people are not very comfortable with keeping the Adhan on campus the way it is. Some would say that yes – there is a non-Muslim community on campus, but that shouldn't be the reason why the call to prayer should be kept within the mosque's walls.

After all, everyone has the right to practice their own religion, and that right grants people to practice their religion well – with no suppression or minimization of a specific practice. That is truly how the quiet calls to prayer are seen by some. I wouldn't go as far as to use the term offensive, but it is definitely irritating to some when, in a campus of a Muslim majority, in a Muslim country, a mosque cannot freely exercise the same Adhan that most other mosques around the world are. People on campus have a wide variety of opinions regarding this topic. So far negotiations seem to be at a state of deadlock. It is true that a lot of people have indeed signed that student-led petition, but the exact number is unclear at this very moment. We do have a Muslim majority on campus, no doubt about it – but that doesn't necessarily mean that the majority will sign the petition. For the petition to be seriously considered, the number of people who sign the petition must outnumber the remaining people on campus by a significant amount. Is that possible? Well we will just have to wait and see. If not this semester, we are going to know for sure what decision had been taken in regards to this issue in the following semester. Issues on campus such as this one can only be taken care of by the student body itself – so take part and let others know what you think.



# LONELINESS

*By Ghita Yahia*

It was a random day. I was sitting with two friends of mine near the AUI cafeteria when I saw a group of six maybe seven people walking toward us. They were laughing out loud. They seemed very joyful. But when you stop looking at them as a group and start looking at them as individuals you realize that it is the “group image” or “group effect” that is responsible for you thinking that they are joyful and happy. Two members of the group were looking at their feet, and no sound was coming from their mouth. I could only perceive a kind of empty look on their face. This scene lasted only few seconds -maybe fifteen-, but it still happened, and it led me to think about loneliness. Most of the time we find ourselves driving into a rollercoaster of events that makes us blind and unaware of a common problem. This problem, which is characterized by the severity of its consequences, is surprisingly not often talked about.

I decided to investigate more and had the idea of checking the Facebook page named “Al Akhawayn University Confessions” to see how many posts were talking about loneliness. What is special about this page is that you can post anything you want under an anonymous status. Consequently, the page is full of vain posts and comments, and you can find everything that may go through your mind. The results surprised me. In about forty-three confessions, eighteen talked about the issue and everything linked to it. It goes from loneliness to fake friends, betrayed to trust issues, being sick of selfish artificial people to wanting to make friends and so on. Most people don’t talk about this problem face to face but when having the chance to be anonymous, the possibility of them not having to worry about their image may occur. As a result, they feel more secure and tempt to bring this problem to the surface quite often. I got curious and tempted to ask people questions about this subject to see their reactions, so I did some interviews. I started with a girl who prefers to

keep her identity hidden, so she will be given the name of Sarah. Sarah, a BA student here in AUI, answered me saying that “Even if I know a lot of people and say hi to a big number of them out there, I don’t really know them. I don’t have someone to call, to talk to or to see whenever I want to. I actually feel lonely in this place!” Another interviewee, with a male student this time, gave me a totally different answer “AUI is full of people, and I don’t understand how a person can feel alone here. I personally feel great.” I asked a couple other questions to people I barely knew and others I didn’t know at all. The questions were as follows: From one to ten where do you put yourself concerning the life at AUI in terms of belonging to a community? From one to ten what is the level of loneliness you find yourself in? From one to ten can you qualify the people you spend your time with in terms of them being supportive, present when needed and trustworthy? Do you have real friends here in AUI? The answers were strangely similar. People don’t find themselves linked to this community. They encounter problems finding supportive trustworthy individuals and they do feel lonely. However, a few of them stated having true friends. Being lonely is one thing and choosing to be alone from time to time is another one. Choosing or perhaps feeling the need to be alone sometimes is essential. To stay alone with your thoughts, to comb through what you have done, what you are doing and what you still need to do is what makes you grow as a person. I personally find myself well surrounded overall but still going through some periods of desirable loneliness. Loneliness is a serious issue that may lead to several consequences such as depression, damaging mental and physical health, lack of interest in studies and much more. Yet, it is not a common subject that we can find in discussion. Why is that? Are people too proud? Or is it because they can’t find the courage to face it and start thinking about it?

# INGLORIOUS BUILDING 39

*By Hamza Belaguide*

Welcome to the building 39, in Al Akhawayn University, in Ifrane, Morocco. Everybody was so excited by this new building, along with all the expectations that have students who live on campus. People have been speculating about the characteristics and specifics of this novelty for semesters now.

Here we are, in the famous new building. It is the end of the summer and the early fall, the weather is always so changing, a specific characteristic of this region. I am a regular student, and it is my third semester and I have a room in the “hotel” 39. I guess that the best place to write about all the issues of building 39, is live from my room, Room 101, and building 39 in general, is the place to be to develop this topic.

“Full of problems”, is the first answer I got from one resident as he picks up the issue of painting. For a month he could still smell paint, especially when he tried to sleep. It is “exasperating”. It is not a good condition for sleeping, and it isn’t healthy at all. It can cause allergies to people who get sick quickly. My neighbor is suffering a lot and cannot sleep without opening the window of his room. What about the cellular network? It is just impossible to use your phone without going outside the building. 4 other residents, males and female shared the same concern on cellular network. Regardless of the mobile operator, there is no cellular network in almost all the floors. “I cannot talk on the phone with my parents, my sister or my friends when I am laying on my bed.”, it sums up the real headache caused by the absence of network, and you know how much this generation is on about phones. “The best building ever built by AUI” they said. They never said that maids are always absent since the beginning of the semester. “I saw them only twice since then end of August, they were cleaning the corridors.” An annoyed resident complained. Rooms were dirty and quite disgusting, dust on the desk, the bed, and the storage. In addition to dust, some traces on the floor due to a bad and sloppy finishing. The accumulation of dirt pushes every inhabitant to leave their rooms as soon as possible.

Now on Internet, wireless connection is nowadays a basic service everywhere, but it doesn’t include the building 39 apparently. You can imagine how unbearable and unbelievable it is to live without Internet access, it means that the person is socially disconnected. Residents of building 39 can’t access their courses, slides, e-mails, homework, and assignments because of this enormous issue. It is easy to affirm for all of them that wireless problem is the most urgent. ITS department where are you? Besides all the material and physical issue, there is also a socializing issue, my first interviewee noted a “lack of warmth, people don’t spend time with others in this building, like in the Annex. It was like a family in the spring, but now I feel another atmosphere.” It is just primordial to build relationships on campus in order to have a natural life. It is a prominent issue as depression may be resulting from it. In addition, the risk of depression increases seriously when the door of your room does not want to open. Back to technological problems, and especially about these doors and their electronic keys. Most of people prefer a traditional key to avoid any blocking of the doors. The new generation of key is more improbable than a standard key. Add to this that there is nobody in the building, by night, in order to open for you the door in case of a hitch. The only solution is to sleep in the lounge or hall. Over time, all these problems will be solved. Future residents will find the building improved from what it is now. However, the building can’t be all bad, in fact it has quite positive aspects. My roommate actually said about his bed: “I really appreciate the quality of my bed, it is like a medical bed”. The quality of beds is an important advantage for the comfort of the residents. It determines the quality of sleeping. Another quality of the building is that its environment is calm and quiet. The view from the terrace is just beautiful and relaxing for the mind. In addition to these positive things, as everything is new, you don’t worry about something being damaged from a previous user.

# LES OUSTAD WHO SUIT PAS LES RÈGLES

*By Khalid Thillai Rajah*

“Goultlikoum tsaktou!” The professor howled during math class as he prompted us to get our homework assignments out on the table. He began scrolling down the names to mark attendance. Thankfully, everyone was there as Khalil’s absence last Monday had set a macabre mood for the rest of the class. As the professor began explaining functions of limits, a friend on my left immediately began doodling on his paper, another on the other hand, ironically to my right was trying his best to make sense of what the professor was babbling about. He squinted as the professor continued his explanation of the functions of limits. “La fonction ne touchera jamais had 1 asymptote...” The informal transition of languages startled me and got me thinking to myself, “I am here, at an English speaking university?” We were to master the TOEFL exam to enter the curriculum right away and skip the language center. Why, then, does my professor infinitely switch languages during class? As the clock endlessly turned and twisted, the instructor’s words faded through the ticking; I slowly began forming an analogy of this paradox. At AUI, students are required to take the entrance exam in French and must ace the TOEFL test. These are two different assessments, both served as keys to enter the university. However, if one imagines a gate to the university, other keys logically cannot possibly open it. Only the designated sets of keys compliment the door, following

this reasoning there is no room for French or Arabic in the University. I checked my wrist and glanced at my watch to realize that only nine minutes had passed since the beginning of class. I was to survive another “hour et demi” of his explanations. Nonetheless, I was able to comprehend all the mathematical concepts and participate as much as I could. After finding the slope of the tangent line, the professor asked one of the students to come up to the board and write the final equation, including the known slope. My eyes followed all the steps that the student carved on the chalkboard, we were ready to move on, or not. A new Tunisian student in our class raised his hand asking for some clarification. After being given permission to speak, he bluntly professes “Ana mafahimsh kif hasalti ala ‘m’?” I couldn’t understand how he could allow himself to speak in Arabic and not make any attempt in English. Had he not suffered enough during his entrance exams just to join an English speaking university? Without any hesitation, the professor began explaining everything, and this time, everything was clarified again in Arabic, and the student finally grasped what was needed. Knowing that the professor knew all the quizzes would be addressed in no other language but English, he still had no problem re-explaining everything in Arabic. It was incongruous how our next class was strategic academic skills, where everyone is forced to speak in Eng-

lish only. After taking attendance, the professor asked “Critical thinking? What is critical thinking in your opinion Mona?” He randomly directed the question to a girl who instantly flustered, eyes wide open, shell-shocked, began shaking her head to the sides indicating her oblivious nature. The next victim was no one other than my Tunisian friend, “Critical thinking is when a person thinks ... from both sides... I mean from two opposing views on a subject.” Indeed everyone sort of understood what he meant, even the professor affirmed immediately, “You are on the right track!” I looked at him and he gave me the ‘like a boss’ look. The entire class ran smoothly leaving absolutely no trace of foreign language other than English. I was genuinely surprised with my classmates because they would only speak English with each other. Perhaps that might be due to the fact that we still have not known each other that well, which certainly pushed us to show-off amongst each other and put an effort to speak English, which again should supposedly be the official language of AUI. I was puzzled. During break time, as I was walking to get my regular café crème in the unhealthiest location, Sodexo, I noticed how smooth the FAS class has passed. Culture could have been one of the firm possibilities that allowed the class to run in such a way. Moroccans are renowned for respecting other cultures though valuing their own. Our logic, so it seems, would be that

it makes sense to behave strictly if the teacher was a foreigner. We would behave professionally if the teacher was professional, and a foreigner. That seemed to be the trend because when I questioned a gamer friend of mine, majoring in International Business and Management, “our management teacher speaks French during his lectures!” he affirmed. I continued questioning him as though I wasn’t satisfied with the answer he gave me, “why do you think he does that?” He replied without hesitation, as the teacher would have explained himself, “he is a Moroccan professor who studied the material in French and he likes to add some commentaires in French.” What my friend stated is a crucial clue as to why such amalgamation of languages to create knowledge happens in a classroom setting. The language that a professor learned through is a significant part to this enigma. My math professor is Moroccan, and the reason his class does not run as professionally maybe due to the fact that we instantly begin sharing the same degree of esteem for the class, we don’t feel as compelled to be professional as we would in a class that would be taught by a foreigner. I guess the fundamental question here is, “Shouldn’t these teachers master English before applying for a job at this English dominant university? What about the university, isn’t it their responsibility to provide an education equivalent to that which they advertise?”

## POISONOUS

*By Ilias Majdi*

I love food. I knew it since I was a little boy, my mother knew it, my father knew it, in fact, my whole family did. Whenever I got invited by a member of my family, or even a friend, there had to be tasty delicious food on the table, otherwise, I wouldn’t go. So naturally when I got accepted in AUI the first thing I asked about was the restaurants in campus and the types of food provided. Some people said it was alright, and others warned me that it was bad, but bad does not even do the food justice, it is so terrible that it makes you question your love of food. I have never doubted my appreciation of food, I was always a proud eater, but things have changed. I have been in AUI for two years now,

and my stomach still hates me for it. The minute I put that food into my mouth, my intestines begun experiencing the worst days of their life. I remember the first time I entered the main restaurant, it was Ramadan. I was amazed by the way it was decorated and by the variety of food offered. However, the food was not as tasty in my tongue as the decorations were stunning to my eyes. Since that day, I knew that my stomach will live in hell for the rest of my academic curriculum. I knew that if he could he would pray, every single day, for me to stop eating those things so called “food” or find a way to take me back to my mother and her well prepared banquets. Luckily enough, I was not the only one here to make his

health, tongue and intestinal agonize. By the time my first visit to the health center, which happened within the first week, came, I had already met some students struggling with the same ache as mine, and that was the moment we all felt compassion towards each other. The nurse didn’t even ask us what we had for lunch that day, she already knew it was the food provided by the catering services, the whole health center staff was well aware of that. The thing that scared me the most was that Doliprane, the yellow boxed paracetamol pills, seemed to be the cure for every single case. The number of times I had to go to the health center due to that greasy, oily, and tasteless food had only one positive aspect, which is the opportunity to make really good fellow sick friends. One of them was my current roommate, whom I asked, for the purpose of this essay, if he liked the food presented at the university’s restaurants. He stated that:

“if I knew how to cook, I would never ever step in that restaurant again”. Another encounter that I have made through the rough times I have had is a faculty member. I asked him too about his opinion regarding the current situation of the catering in AUI and he said: “It is very deceiving to see such depraved meals presented in this well-known university, I wish to see a change one day.” As we grow older, we start wishing we could redo some things, relive certain situations, or erase some mistakes that we might have made. It’s been 730 days that I have spent here in AUI, and I have been regretting every single second I could’ve spent learning how to make my life less miserable and poisonous, every vomit thrown in the bathroom, and every pill ingurgitated. If I could go back in time, cooking would be my favorite hobby.