

Al Akhawayn Chronicle

September '15



The Official Student
Newspaper of Al Akhawayn
University in Ifrane

Building 1- Administration	
Ground floor	→
	←
	↖
First floor	↖
	↗

Al Akhwayn University:
The Whys and Hows of the Budget

More on Pages 6 & 7

EDITORIAL

The Al Akhawayn Chronicle is an intellectual bridge between all different branches of our dynamic community. Along with the news and whereabouts of the students' activities, Al Akhawayn Chronicle is the voice representing every single individual at Al Akhawayn University. Many columns are open to your thoughts and ideas.

Al Akhawayn Chronicle is a transparent and free platform which will allow students to thrive and grow both intellectually and emotionally within the walls of our lively campus.

We are confident that the Al Akhawayn Chronicle newspaper will contribute to the development of a more positive community in which students take the bull by its horns!!

This first issue has been a real challenge to our team, yet we are profoundly glad to present you the pinnacle of our efforts. We would like to thank our team for their work and everyone who offered us their unyielding support and contributed in the conception of Al Akhawayn Chronicle

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SAO BRIGADE ORIENTATION FALL '15



Credits: Student Activities Office

Sahar Ajjab

As Al Akhawayn University prepared to open its gates to new students, the Student Activities Office (SAO) designated 16 students from older generations to help out with the process. The students chosen are considered the ambassadors of the University for being active on campus, familiar with the university and the orientation procedures, and of course, maintaining an excellent academic GPA. The orientation welcoming over 350 new students to Ifrane and preparing their transition to a new university life, lasted 4 days and organized fun and enriching activities to the newcomers. The ambassadors however, including myself, had to arrive almost a week before the orientation to fully prepare, discuss, and organize the events needed to provide new students with a successful experience. The SAO team worked on making a promotional video of the university, which was eventually displayed during the president speech. Apart from academic mentoring, the students were introduced to the campus and student life through fun activities such as: ice breaking games where everyone got to work in teams and enjoy water themed games. Student ambassadors also made sure that every new student received important guidelines and advice concerning the University policies, grading systems, courses, clubs and organizations, to facilitate their transitioning period and make it as comfortable as possible. It is also safe to say that many new comers established good relationships with the student ambassadors, who will be here to assist them during their whole time in AUI.

Besides the activities offered by the SAO, the first day of the orientation was about introducing the students and their parents to the AUI community. All the student ambassadors worked efficiently by making shifts at the SAO stand in the gymnasium, where the academic counseling was held. Since we all have once been new comers to the university, it was a bit familiar for us to understand that students and even their parents had questions, concerns and felt happy to share them with other people who've been in that situation before. While new comers were getting their courses schedule, residence information and keys, cash wallets and orientation programs, most parents

were extremely open to asking questions about life in Ifrane, and understanding the different answers and suggestions they received from the Student ambassadors. The second station of the first day was the auditorium 17, where the President and Vice presidents held their speeches. The promotional video was also displayed in front of all the new students and their families, and an entertainment pause took place with a choreography that student ambassadors were able to prepare in less than 24 hours. The second day of the orientation began with new students taking their Arabic placement tests (for those who hold a non-Moroccan baccalaureate) and was followed by an open radio show in front of the restaurant, in which new students participated, shared their thoughts about the orientation and activities, asked questions, and enjoyed a variety of musical entertainment while having their lunch. The rest of the SAO organized activities for the day including a SAO presentation about student life, and the clubs students they should engage in during their time in AUI. Students also had a meeting with the dean of their respective schools, university counselors, and the informatics department who introduced them to the university's website, and showed them how to navigate through the portal and webmail. In the evening, and despite the rain and the cold, many new comers showed up to the ice breaking games followed up by a karaoke night, where everyone shared a good time all together and under the supervision of the student ambassadors.

The final day of the orientation was more relaxed to allow students to unpack, rest, and get ready for their first week of school. The final station of the journey was a peaceful student gathering that took place in the soccer field. Students were given the chance to request information and advice, share their secrets and concerns, and above all, feel certain that everyone here in AUI is going to help and guide them through their years in AUI, and make sure that their time in this university will be fruitful, fun and memorable. The student activities office, wishes you a very successful beginning and officially welcomes you to your new home and to your new family, Al Akhawayn University.

FRESHMAN YEAR: SURVIVAL GUIDE

Mehdi Lehlali

College life can be exciting for some and confusing for others. You are suddenly far from home, surrounded by hundreds of attractive young men and women and your only responsibility is to pass your classes. However, it is not as simple as it sounds. There are going to be bumps in the road and you will need somebody to lean on (ooh, eeh ooh, eeh ooh, eeh ooh) eventually. Which is why, to help you survive (and hopefully thrive) your freshman year, Al Akhawayn Chronicle has some tips to guide you as you embark in this crazy ride called "college life".

1) Get to know your professors.

This is one of the most important advice I have been given. If you want to succeed in your academic life, USE OFFICE HOURS! Build relationships with your professors and talk to them regularly. You will benefit from recommendation and advice, advantageous connections on your campus and community and hopefully better grades (I didn't say that).

2) Make your own decisions... All of them!

It's always nice to have input from other people (parents, friends, advisors...), but ultimately, the final decision is yours. If you want to make the most of your college experience, take matters into your own hands, be proactive and don't be afraid of failure.

3) Build a network

A strong network is like money in the bank! It's not only a good idea for what comes after college (some people call it real life), but it's also good in case you miss class or you fall asleep during the lecture (you'll get there, worry not!). And as they say in the business world: Your network is your net worth.

4) Get Involved and buddy up!

I know it's tempting to stay hours in bed watching every single TV show on Popcorn Time and procrastinating, but I command you (yes you heard me) to leave your dorm room. We live in the most beautiful city in Morocco and you only have 4 years to do everything you've ever dreamed of doing. There are over 40 clubs that will help you become the person you've always wanted to become. Go to meetings, events and parties because that's how you'll build your network. Make sure you take advantage of the first few weeks to meet as many people as possible. You will have plenty of time to hang out in dorm rooms, but the first few weeks of school will come and go quickly!

5) Know your limits

You can lose control very easily, don't forget this! It's the first time you're independent and free from your parents, but it doesn't mean you have to get a membership card at the Grand Hotel. Your academics should always come first.

6) Watch your money

The campus store is not your friend. Don't go nuts on the chocolate bars (got the joke?), be responsible in managing your cash wallet and more importantly eat healthy food. I know what you're saying: "8000 dirham is a lot of money, it's more than enough". Not if you go grocery shopping 5 times a day..

7) Don't procrastinate!

If good things come to those who wait, isn't procrastination a virtue? No. You should come up with effective study habits and ideally find a comfortable spot to do your daily homework. I think you should have realized by now that college is nothing like high school. If you don't work by yourself and keep everything until the last minute, you will probably fail your classes. It is actually as simple as this.

8) Be communicative

Step out of your comfort zone and communicate with people. Keep in mind that every single newcomer is as lost and confused as you are. Introduce yourself and smile, that's how you'll make friends. Communication is also essential in the shared living space (that's fancy college talk for "room"). Don't be passive-aggressive with your roommate whenever something is wrong. You guys don't have to be BFFs but being honest and open with each other is the least you can do.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Yasmine Mikou

Al Akhawayn University has often been promoted around Morocco as being the incompetent students' space. People consider it the harbor of disqualified students, the "alternative", the answer to "what if plans don't go right". Rumors flow through cities and hometowns, and people believe what seems to be true. However, do they have any idea about what really happens within this university? Do they have insights about those who spend sleepless nights working for the benefit of AUI's community and beyond?

Like any other university in the world, AUI is a place where you can find all kinds of people. From the richest to the less fortunate, from hard workers to the most lackadaisical, and from popular figures to the most introvert ones, we are all equal, and we all benefit from the same advantages. The only thing that makes a difference is one's performance and qualifications.

Indeed, AUI is one of the few universities in Morocco that give students the opportunity to go on exchange programs all over the world. It is a launching pad to many future goals, and an efficient mean to achieving personal goals. We get to learn how to speak in public and voice our opinions, fearlessly and confidently. We are taught how to work in teams and how to manage frictions. We are trained on how to live in harmony with differences. We get both a formal and informal education on a daily basis. This is how we grow up, this is how we can get prepared for tomorrow.

The positive relationships among students emit good vibes on campus and encourage a favorable environment of solidarity and unanimity. We act as a whole, we react as a one. We melt despite our divergence in a sole soul called AUI spirit. We are certainly not always satisfied with many academic and institutional decisions, thus we try to resolve as many issues as we can, altogether. Nevertheless, as soon as someone provokes us, we unconsciously find ourselves defending Al Akhawayn community with all we have. That genuine jealousy is nothing but an evidence that we do care about preserving the sacred reputation of our prestigious university.

Regarding extra-curricular activities, we have an all-time chance to get involved in different fields of interest. There is an undeniable panoply of choice when it comes to clubs. Athletics, culture, entertainment, social work, education, innovation, everything is on point as far as commitment is concerned. Even though we are not materially rewarded for that work, we do take it seriously, and sweat to make something out of it. It is all part of learning, growing, and contributing to giving a better image of our university. At the end of the day, what matters is that we learn the hard way how to break the shells that enclose our creativity.

Talking about creativity, I have to put a finger on the infrastructure and resources available. We are granted the odd of having our imagination and intelligence nourished. The library and the online platform of search browsers provide us with a spectrum of information and academic sources. The aim is to help us make reliable researches and projects, to enrich our knowledge, and to develop our reading, listening, and delivery skills. The target is to extract the quintessence out of our raw minds.

These are all features we got used to. These are all details we happened to take for granted. These are all advantages we still haven't fully benefited from. There is only one piece lacking in this puzzle: we, Moroccans, haven't been taught how to extract enlightenment from the resources we are surrounded by. It is because we haven't opened our eyes yet on what we have. We got used to focusing on what we lack rather than on what we own. As long as we are lucky enough to have more than the strict minimum, as long as we are getting one of the best forms of educations, we are compelled to push ourselves beyond the limits. We are under the free obligation of creating, innovating, and moving forward along with the universal progress.

THE WHYS AND HOWS

Ayoub Lasri

IFRANE, Morocco – Mystery, secrecy, and laconism have always dominated the scene when AUI's budget was under the spotlight. Whether it's about common fees, scholarships, or tuition fees, students of Al Akhawayn University deserve to know how their money is managed, spent, and reinvested to meet their expectations. Today, under the vision of transparency and open-discussion philosophy by Dr. Ouaouicha, president of Al Akhawayn University, the business office accepted to answer some of our questions to hopefully give the AUI community an idea of what happens behind the scenes of the financial department.

Mr. Benseddik, the director of the business office, gladly accepted to receive us in his office to satisfy our curiosity about AUI's budget. Mr. Benseddik began his journey in France –working for 7 years in the private sector– before joining Al Akhawayn University in February 1995 as accounting manager. Mr. Benseddik is in charge of all the accounting and financial activities of the university.

Question: According to the annual report for the academic year 2013-2014, AUI's budget for scholarships is 25M MAD. Where does that money come from?

Answer: the budget of all our scholarships comes from the AUI budget of the university. We deploy all efforts to make Al Akhawayn University as affordable as possible for qualified students. Now there are some private institutions who finance some scholarships, but only few. It is also worth mentioning the university didn't receive any contribution from the government in this specific area until the last 5 years when the Ministry of Higher Education launched the initiative of "Les 10,000 ingénieurs".

Q: Is there a strategy to increase that budget?

A: Yes, absolutely! As I said before, we are trying to make Al Akhawayn University accessible for all social classes. So yes, AUI is definitely working on increasing the scholarships budget, especially that we are today seeking excellence more than ever. Also, our current budget is based on the number of students we have, and since year after year AUI attracts more students, our budget for scholarships will also systematically increase. It is a challenge we are proudly facing today.

Q: Is there any kind of new scholarship AUI is willing to adopt? Why/ why not?

A: Our policy concerning the scholarships awards is inspired from the North American model. However, nothing prevents us from finding new possibilities and adopting new scholarships for our students. Yet, funding remains a serious issue AUI is facing today. We certainly hope that Morocco will develop a university-funding culture where private institutions, companies, and private sectors create financial opportunities as it is found in western countries.

Q: Any more insights you would like to share?

A: AUI's merit-based scholarship was first established to encourage prominent and outstanding students who deserve to pursue their higher education at AUI but cannot afford it. We also hope that our AUI Alumni con-

tribute in creating funds for the upcoming generations as it is the case in the US or Europe.

Q: what are AUI's main sources of revenues other than tuition paid by its students?

A: Besides tuition and fees paid by the students of Al Akhawayn University, our other sources of revenues come from grants from the government, continuing education programs, conferences, and financial investments.

Q: Financial investments such as?

A: Such as revenues from the Endowment Fund established on the inauguration of Al Akhawayn University by his Majesty late King Hassan II and the investment of cash surplus.

Q: Other than expanding and constructing new buildings, could you please tell us how does AUI spend its extra revenues?

A: Al Akhawayn University is an independent and not-for-profit university. Consequently, our main objective is how to break-even at the end of the year. It should be noted that the primary concern of the university is a balanced budget. The tuition paid by our student cover barely 33% of our expenses, with other fees, we achieve 41% of the total budget.

Q: Does AUI make a profit from its services such as dining services, books, and campus stores?

A: Once again, Al Akhawayn University does not pursue profits. Our main objective is education! When it comes to services such as dining, books, and store, they are all services provided by the university to make life easier for our students. However, most of the profit we make goes to covering the operating expenses related to this department. As I said before, Al Akhawayn University seeks to balance the budget. Our main objective is to facilitate the everyday life as much as possible of our students with reasonable and accessible prices.

Q: Are these services subsidized by the university?

A: Absolutely! In fact, AUI aims to achieve quality at a reasonable price and our primary concern is to have a balance between expenses and income made.

Q: Are there any contributions from the government? If yes, for what exactly? (Utilities, research...)

A: Government contributions are not targeted for specific uses. It is left to the university discretion to decide how to manage these funds

Q: What are AUI's main expenses?

A: Salaries! Around 51% of our annual budget is spent only on salaries, then, maintenance, utilities, equipment, books and databases, energy (fuel, electricity ...)

Q: Could you share with us how much the University pays a faculty member on average? An administrative personnel?

A: Providing you with an "average" would be a mistake. We have different salaries for different ranks. Our faculty members' salaries depend on different criteria among which experience, research, publications, and expertise.



Q: We have a beautiful, clean, and especially green campus. How much does AUI spend to upkeep this quality?

A: Yes, that's true! (Laughs). We take pride in offering one of the best campuses in Morocco and take the matter seriously. We believe that our students deserve to live in such beautiful environment. Thus, to upkeep the quality we spend around 20 million DH annually! It covers staff, maintenance and equipment.

Q: Is AUI financially stable? Or are there years in which things go wrong?

A: Al Akhawayn University is 20 years old! Around your age, I suppose? (Laughs). It wouldn't have survived this long if it didn't have judicious management strategies. Our department works tirelessly to keep AUI financially stable.

Q: Mr. Benseddik, anything else you would like to share with us today?

A: Yes! I would like our students to know that the business office is working today on new projects! The main goal is to facilitate relationships with students, faculty and staff such as dematerializing payment procedure or other services. We would like our students to be able to make their payments from their rooms, homes, or even outside the country. All operations will be possible online and we are working on achieving these goals starting next spring. Also, I would like to mention that the business office is open to suggestions from students and we would be more than happy to have their input

Q: Thank you very much Mr. Benseddik for answering our questions!

A: My pleasure! Please feel free to stop by anytime you have more questions.

S OF THE AUI BUDGET



Mehdi Lehlali

In order to get a more comprehensive view of the way the budget at Al Akhawayn University is handled and allocated, we decided to talk to Mr. Brahim EL Amiri, Vice President for Finance and Administration.

Question : Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

Answer: I have come a long way. I started my career at l'Office des Change, where I was inspector from 1972 to 1975. Then I went to the University of Texas at Austin to get my MBA in 1978. After that I worked with Procter & Gamble in Switzerland. I also worked

as general manager of The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Casablanca and as Manager of foreign investments and trade in the banking sector for 14 years. Just before the end of 1994, I came to Al Akhawayn University as Vice President for Finance and Administration to organize its inauguration in January 1995 and set up all the administrative and technical departments of the university. I left after two years and joined The Coca Cola Company where I was in charge of their investments in North and West Africa. In 2006, I took an early retirement and migrated to Canada to be with my two daughters who chose to go the university there. About two years ago, I came back to the university for a short mission of a couple of months and ended up staying to help implement the very challenging and ambitious plans that the President has set for the university.

Q: Why did you leave AUI in the first place?

A: Well, my idea was to spend the first year setting up

the departments and the main structure of the university. The second part of my job was to manage the investments of the university endowment funds. As you may know, the Dahir that created Al Akhawayn University provided that donations made by individuals and companies to the university were tax deductible. Unfortunately, besides the land and buildings that were given to the university at the beginning, cash donations started coming only 4 to 5 years after the university started.

Q: Every university around the world "displays" its endowment in the official website.

Could you please tell

us what is the amount of that endowment for Al Akhawayn?

A: The first endowment, which was worth around 100 Million Dollars, was set up at the beginning in the form of land, buildings and equipment. An additional one, which amounted to about \$30 Million, was set up through donations in the form of an endowment fund. This fund, with accumulated returns, evolves around \$40 million.

Q: What are the most immediate projects that need to be addressed?

A: We're currently working on various projects within the framework of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020 of the university. Among these projects, we can mention the training programs for all staff members, the infrastructure (buildings, automatic irrigation). Finally, one of the biggest projects we are working on now is the reduction of our energy cost. We are planning to invest in other

sources of energy such as solar energy and biomass. Students don't pay close attention to their electricity consumption, but it is costing us (and them) a lot of money. Indeed, if they reduce their consumption and use electricity more responsibly we will be able to save money.

Q: We've heard a lot of students complaining about the fact that the university doesn't give full scholarships anymore. Is there any kind of new scholarship policy AUI is trying to adopt?

A: Well, we have more demand than we can meet and the amount allocated to scholarships remains approximately the same. So if we manage to make our budget bigger, we would love to give more scholarships every semester.

Q: Concerning the new academic building and fitness center, could you please tell us why AUI is

investing in new buildings in this particular period and what is approximately the cost of every one of them? Any external investors?

A: We don't have any external investors. Basically, we needed more buildings because our community is constantly growing. The new academic building is needed to meet the needs of our present students and also

those who will join AUI in the future. We also need more space for our academic staff, because sometimes 2 to 3 professors are stacked in the same room. That building was planned initially in 1994 as you can see on the campus

miniature in Building 1. The same goes for the new fitness center, students and professors were complaining about the small space in the old gym and it was almost impossible to find a free spot to exercise. I must say, the new fitness center is the result of long months of hard work and we were able to finish that project with the help of our own people from Grounds & Maintenance who took over most of the technical installations to reduce the final cost of the building.

Q: Is AUI financially stable? or are there years in which things go wrong?

A: The university endowment represents an important safety net. Besides, the number of students has been growing over the years and according to our forecasts, we don't foresee any financial issues. The university generates enough resources to cover all its expenses which is why haven't raised the price of tuition in 18 or 19 years. However, last year the board of trustees allowed

the university to raise some fees every two years to cover inflation. And you should know that tuition paid by students only covers 33% of our budget.

Q: We have one last question and you don't have to answer it (laughs) Could you share with us how much the

University pays a faculty member on average? and administrative personnel?

A: The average salary for all faculty (part-time and full-time) and deans of schools is around 18,000 MAD. For administrative staff, we should be around 8,000 MAD. Finally, for the university technical and maintenance staff we should be around 5,000 MAD.

Q: Thank you for answering our questions, your cooperation is highly appreciated!

A: Of course! The administration is here to support students and welcomes any suggestions from them to improve the quality of the services and of the campus in general. Students should feel concerned about their campus and therefore take initiatives to contribute to its development.

"The average salary for all faculty (part-time and full-time) and deans of schools is around 18,000 MAD."

"The first endowment, which was worth around 100 Million Dollars, was set up at the beginning in the form of land, buildings and equipment."

WHY DO STUDENTS LOOK ANGRIER ON A MONDAY MORNING (AUI EDITION)

Sara Lamsili

Anyone who's been here for at least one semester has probably got the privilege to witness some of the changes that have been happening on campus (sarcasm alert). For the most unfortunate ... I mean for the ones who just got here, here is a quick feedback that might justify the strange phenomenon of why students look angrier a Monday morning. Although, to be honest, there are plenty of reasons to be angry on a Monday morning (I am quite famous for spreading positive vibes).

I mean seriously: You're awake. On a Monday. Morning. In college. And your empty stomach just went "pro" at playing the drums.

Alright, let us get to the point. Here is the first reason why one's anger might have some management issues: the rise of common fees. I don't know if the European Economic crisis has decided to specifically settle down on AUI student's bill but there is something oddly heartbreaking when you see your parents/tutor/sugar daddy striving to get that piece of paper that make people lose their minds (aka Money).

The bank won't just do it anymore, it is too mainstream. Try the Mafia, they're quite cool people once you get past the "If they know about it, I'll slice your throat with my nail" phase.

(PS: this is a satirical article and I am not in any case encouraging violence or/and robbing to pay for you to get an education. It is genius. But I'm not encouraging it. Not in here. Contact me for further information.)

And because one problem is never cool when not followed by others, here is another one: the chaotic and messy Zanibar and its registration process. As far as one may remember, students are not getting kidnapped. Shockingly enough, the number of students is actually increasing. Crazy right? Here is a suggestion that no one thought about: what if I told you ... that you could add ... Sections.

Last but not least, here is the ultimate change that made all of us lose our minds during the summer holidays: the CIP new policy. Thank you for making us feel like heartless over-privileged people. Back in the days, when you did not accomplish your social work, the only thing you could risk is not getting your diploma ("only" lol). Now if you exceed 90 credits and still didn't complete your 60 hours, guess what's waiting for you? I really don't want to be the one to tell you this kind of news but I'll take one for the team: you might want to write a motivation letter for you to be adopted by the Kardashians and get famous because of your future remake: it's raining fines.

HOROSCOPES!

Sara Lamsili

Your monthly trustworthy college horoscope written by the most expert witchcrafts, scientists and psychics. For a more detailed version, subscribe to our monthly issue for ONLY 39.9 dirhams.

This month, for the first time since last time, planets have aligned themselves to give you one of the brightest futures one could hope for.

- **ARIES - (21 March - 19 April)**

You might consider taking a fourth part-time job and start sleeping in lab 8 (it's the smallest, it will give you more familiar vibes, and you'll feel more at home). This raise of common fees is not helping anyone.

- **TAURUS - (20 April - 20 May)**

Maybe if you stay in the library enough, your crush will finally notice you and you guys can start arguing about which professor sent you to the health center the most.

- **GEMINI - (May 21 - June 20)**

Today is your lucky day and the staff loves you. You won't be charged on the sauce. Go and spend that "Mayo/Ketchup" money wisely.

- **CANCER - (June 21 - July 20)**

You will receive the three same e-mails by Student News informing you about the internship/job opportunities that have literally nothing to do with your major. But hold on there, one day the Sushi Bar will hire, we are confident about it.

- **LEO - (July 23 - August 22)**

You might want to start opening your eyes. You just cannot walk around and pretend you did not read that Data Structure syllabus. You're a part of it now. Embrace data, feel data, be data.

- **VIRGO - (August 23 - September 22)**

Don't trust everything you read.

- **LIBRA - (September 23 - October 22)**

God is trying to speak to you today, but you are too busy watching "equilibrium price for beginners tutorial" on Youtube. #JesusLibra

- **SCORPIO - (October 23 - November 21)**

The portal won't open again and you need to submit your homework in 14 minutes huh? Please go to your professor's office hours and tell him/her more about that time where your dog dunk shot your paper.

- **SAGITTARUS - November 22 - December 21)**

No, Sagittarus, that is not how it is made ... You cannot just go to the Writing Center and ask them to write your paper... Try on Al Akhawayn Confessions page though, you might get luckier (and poorer by the same occasion).

- **CAPRICORN - (December 22 - January 19)**

Stop asking people how much money is left in their cash wallet. Not all people are as privileged as you are. You don't know their life. You don't know what they've been through.

- **AQUARIUS - (January 20 - February 18)**

Just because you're an Aquarius sign and it does not give you the right to spend more than 35 minutes under the shower. ROOMATES HAVE NEEDS YOU KNOW.

- **PISCES - (February 19 - March 20)**

Buzzfeed, Netflix, and Tumblr are great. But they're not Turnitin. They're not Sunday 11:55 pm. They're not WF.

MEMES BY ISMAIL IRAQUI



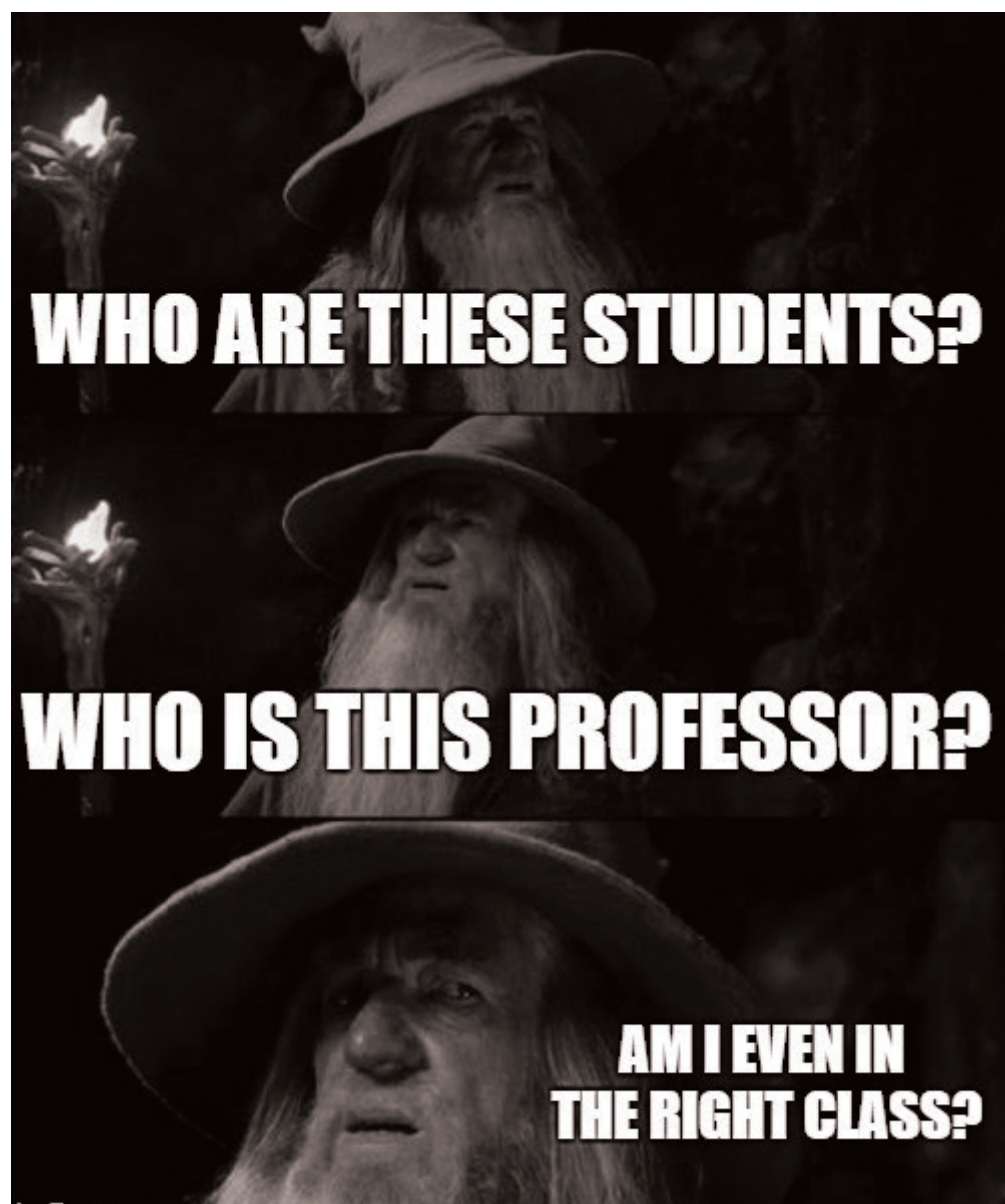
The new gym is such a coveted place..



The real definition of: I am watching you!



All senior students be like..



The struggle of each start of the semester

MOVIE REVIEW: CAMP X RAY

Ouejdane Sabbah

The Arty Section: This section is for all you creative human being (or aliens in disguise) who get easily carried away by the beauty of art. Follow me while I'm giving my genuine opinions about anything you suggest as a piece of art. It can be anything from a moving music track, an inspirational movie to a funny contemporary choreography. I will try to keep it as simple as I can which I guess would be easy because all my attempts to be sophisticated resulted in awkward situations that my friends keep records of. As Ursula K. Le Guin worded so perfectly "The creative adult is a child that survived" so let's remain immortal by creating artistic content.

Ps : I'm apologizing in advance for the not-so-funny jokes that I'll be making. Please don't be annoyed! I cannot help it.

SPOILER ALERT

Welcome,

When I first saw the trailer thumbnail of the movie Camp X Ray on Youtube, I noticed Kristen Stewart dressed as a soldier and I thought « Did they choose the Twilight Saga's diva because of her facial consistency for this role? » Little did I know that my joke turned out to be right.

Context

Camp X Ray is an independent movie written and directed by Peter Sattler starring Kristen Stewart and Peyman Maadi. It portrays a mysterious bond built between a female American soldier and a Muslim detainee imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay for 8 years. The first scenes of the movie quickly project us in the spatial and temporal context of the story in a very fluid way. In fact, the story takes place in Guantanamo Bay in America, 8 years after the tragedy of 9/11. To get some procedures, some legal terms and further understand how the guards and detainees live, the camera follows the new recruit Amy Cole (played by Kristen Stewart) in Guantanamo bay throughout her duty time and documents her interactions with her superiors, her fellow soldiers and the inmates in Gitmo especially a detainee called Ali Amir (played by Peyman Maadi) but known as 471 by the troop.

The performance 3/5

The performance of Peyman Maadi is outstanding. I can't help but see this detainee as an innocent curious child from his soul penetrating eye contacts, his simple sentences in English followed by constant stammering and his insisting reckless questions and above all his refusal to obey. Kristen's performance was as usual... consistent. What I felt about her character is what I feel about most Kristen's character that she performed ("Bella" in The Twilight Saga, "Lydia" in Still Alice, "Snow White" in The Snow white and The Huntsman). According to me she is the best actress to show confusion, slight disinterest and inexpressiveness which I guess is what a fresh recruited soldier should look like. Personally, I got bored and annoyed at a certain time, but her performance served the storyline and the role.

Make up and Costumes 4.7/5



Credits: IFCfilms

The movie is clearly aiming to show details of the absurd life in Guantanamo Bay from the absence of the make up to the minimal costume's choice. Amy Cole is a female soldier trying to look like a Strong-Tough-Woman-Who-Needs-No-Man in order to survive in a hostile environment, so she adopts the combination baggy pants/sweater and high ponytail during her free time and the iconic khaki uniform and strict chignon during her duty time. Meanwhile Ali doesn't have a large wardrobe either except the orange uniform as new comer detainee and the white uniform as an old one.

The Script 4/5

The language and conversations in the movie are simple and funny, but full of symbolic meaning. We get to know more about Ali and Amy and we dig deeper in the guard-detainee relationship to discover a new facet of it: a human-human relationship.

The Set 4.5/5

Despite my limited knowledge about Guantanamo bay, Peter Sattler after many researches managed to create a set for the movie that retranscribe the reality as it is. As for the camera movement, it followed the character Amy Cole to discover with her the brutality of the conditions in Gitmo.

Soundtrack 4.8/5

Camp X ray soundtrack developed by Jess Stroup sprinkles an ounce of anxiety and establish dark atmosphere of fear and fatality which suits perfectly the purpose of the film.

Why was Camp X Ray made at the first place?

To respond to the accusation that he was intending to make a propaganda movie, Peter Sattler stated in an interview with Télérama that Camp X Ray was an opportunity for him to talk about Guantanamo bay, a place that he is fascinated by, and raise the problematic about it without telling people what to think.

Would I recommend the movie?

DUH. And I'll gladly give it 3.5 stars out of 5.

+: The realism, symbolism and good storyline

-: Long awkward boring silence. (Fan of war and action movies, move on you got nothing to see here)

PS: Those "long awkward boring silences" are maybe intended to show how it is for two different people (the guard and the inmate) to be confined in the same place.

Favorite Line of the Movie:

Ali to Amy: "Look at me ! You're asking me why do I want to die, but you don't see that I'm not even living"

Fun Facts about Camp X Ray :

It's the first movie that Peter Sattler directed.

Peter Sattler earned a nomination for a Humanitas Prize in the Sundance category.

The Women Film Critics Circle nominated Camp X Ray for "Best Movie about Women" and also Kristen Stewart for Best Actress.

The movie was filmed in the abandoned Fred C Nelles Youth Correctional Facility in California.

The movie grossed 50,744 dollars in the United Arab Emirates.

The idea to create "Camp X Ray" came from Peter Sattler realizing that the guards and detainees can talk to each other and are stuck together in Guantanamo Bay, so he wondered "What are they talking about ?" and started writing the dialogue of the movie.

With love,
Ouej

THE CUTE PROFESSOR IS GETTING MARRIED



Yasmine Mikou

Question: Smiytek, Kniytek, Ch7al f3mrek, nmra dla carte, makan lizdiyad?

Answer: Badr bouarich, 29 sana, makan lizdiyad azrou, D649853.

Q: You were a former AUI student, and you graduated in 2009. If you could describe your journey here in a nutshell, what would you say about it?

A: It was life, you know. From studies, to school, to friends, clubs, associations. It was the richest experience of my life. This was mainly related to the fact that American system focuses not only on studies but also on developing students' knowhow and experiences.

Q: What was your secret behind getting a high GPA, and passing the GMAT test?

A: The secret is following in class, attending, asking questions, and being fully focused. This method will divide by three the time to work for your exam, and thus optimize time. For those who don't have that ability to grasp easily, then I would advise them to work in groups.

Q: What was the most important thing you've learnt from your past experience that had a big impact on you?

A: Position your gain and strategy based on your strengths, and make them a competitive advantage. Don't waste time focusing on your weaknesses! This is something I started in tennis, but which is still valid in life, in business, and everywhere. For example, I made a mistake; rather than improving my strengths, I worked on leveling up my forehand, and that was a mistake. Then when I got into the university, I realized that I was good in finance, so I kept working on it, I did a master in finance, and in the middle of a crisis I got an amazing job.

Q: Did you go on an exchange program?

A: No, I did not, because during my tennis career, I had the chance to travel a lot.

Q: Where did you get your master degree?

A: I obtained a finance degree from IE business school in Madrid ranked 2nd worldwide in 2012 (according to the Financial Times) mainly thanks to the GPA, GMAT, and extracurricular experiences. . .

Q: During the talk you gave about trading on April the 27th in agreement with Finance Club, you mentioned that you previously worked in HSBC bank, and their interviews are quite challenging, aren't they? What is the key behind obtaining the "Dream Job"?

A: It is a combination of things: being good with numbers, being able to solve problems, being quick with mental calculus, and most importantly being at your top at THE RIGHT TIME. This is why you need to get used to perform under stress through practice. You should push yourself and ask questions during talks. The GMAT test also requires rapidity and answering challenging questions within a limited time. Personally, I dedicated a month after graduation where I studied 8h per day, and I invested a thousand dollars in the KAPLAN book to help me prepare for it.

Q: You once said that living between London and Dubai was not the kind of life you wanted, disregarding other factors. What are the main reasons that pushed you to quit your job and come back to AUI? Did you ever regret that decision?

A: It sounds quite funny, but I am very happy about where I am right now. My job was about money, and I was happy with it day one, day two. Then it became just a number that goes up in your bank account, you don't see it. What you see is your daily life. The lifestyle of an investment banker is very poor, I remember working 24 hours in a row. The average working hours is 12 hours per day. It is a very selfish career. I used to go home alone, Dubai was not a friendly place, and I didn't like the culture. London was fine, I spent there one then four months, but the problem with it was high taxes, the bad weather, and the commute. So I didn't regret coming back to AUI.

Q: What advice would you give to any ambitious college student that strives for his or her own goals?

A: Be curious, focused, and invest in yourself.

Q: There's that "Easy A" trend spreading among students, what can you say about it?

A: It is everywhere around the world. Any smart person wants to maximize the returns with making the least effort possible, so it is good to strive for a high GPA, but at the end of the day, learning is about understanding. Success is good, but getting the experience is what really matters in life.

Q: I noticed that many former AUI students developed their professional experience abroad, then came back to teach here. Is there any specific reason behind this? Does this imply that there aren't flattering jobs opportunities in the market? Or does it mean that there's a restricted panoply of choice for AUI graduates?

A: This means that this place is amazing. I know a lot of graduates that work at Casablanca or elsewhere, and that would love to come and live here. It is the cleanest city of the country, you can go hiking, do activities, and transportation is very easy. Furthermore, the university of-

fers unique working conditions, possibilities and horizons. I would just hope that the overall Atlas region develops so that students get job opportunities locally.

Q: Rumors say that you're getting married soon. Is this true? If yes, would you like to talk more about it?

A: Yes it is true.

Q: Are you aware that you are labelled the "cute professor"?

A: Thank you very much. Well I will join the fashion club then (laughs).

Q: You were working on a summer hit this past months, correct? How did that work for you?

A: I was on the national radio a week ago, "Radio Chaine Inter". I wrote the lyrics, the rhythm, then the singer Moustain Amini interpreted it along with a group from Meknes called Chikos Khitanos with Zouhair Allam. This is something we did just for us, for fun.

Q: So you're a professor, composer, tennis champion, guitar player, entrepreneur, anything else??

A: A couscous eater and a nap lover (laughs).

Q: You are the founder of the traveling website Togenit, what is it exactly? And how did you come up with this concept? Any challenges you faced while pursuing this project?

A: Togenit is something I worked on in my last days at HSBC. Most of my colleagues used to travel alone. Initially the idea was to have a network where people who are interested in the same activities could meet (Together enjoy it). Then I decided to turn it into a ticketing platform, to support the development of the platform. I worked with HEC Montreal, and the SAO who made a great effort to implement the platform and inform students about it. I would like to thank them for that including Taha el Biyad.

Q: How do you manage this polyvalent life style? And how do you balance between your social and private life?

A: It's about not wasting time, the distances are favorable in Ifrane as well. At the same time I don't get bored. What makes you tired is routine! As long as the brain doesn't get tired, the body doesn't as well.

Q: Are you planning to keep teaching at AUI? Or is it a transit to other projects?

A: I like being here, but we never know what the future holds for us.

Q: Anything more you would like to share?

A: I have a message to students: pursue your dreams, make the most out of your amazing conditions, and do what you love, not what others tell you to do.

HABIBTY

El-Mehdi Iraqui

I opened my tired eyes. Fixed to the gloomy old ceiling underpinned with pegs of wood, they were literally burning. Venous and crimson, they forgot tenderness, soothing warmth of tears. My neck was in unbearable discomfort. My blood pulsed my veins in an intense tide motion. Cadaverous, my body became, waited for its last breath. I turned my head to the left side of my cold itching hay bed positioned in one of the corners of four yellowish somber walls framing the room. My eyes met the obscurity. White audacious light sprung from my phone, had been ringing for a while to wake me up from nightmares, to pierce the dark opaque atmosphere I slept in, tried to sleep in.

- Shhhhhhhut!

"Do not wake me up." I whispered. My eyes lost the taste of comfort. Insomnia had been the symphony of my nights since that day, that end.

Its candle light, as a weakened metamorphosed pocket flashlight, targeted my bloody retina. Few letters and numbers escaped from the glass surface of my phone to meet my vision, to overwhelm my exhausted conscience. Thursday, October 19th, 2008, 5:30 in the morning. Date and time, barren and meaningless, refreshed my memory to forgotten circumstances. They removed the dust griming my mind that did not expect, did not want to recall the breathless sceneries. They evoked undesirable nostalgia despite the intentional refusal.

My brain stopped its metabolic duties. It stopped. Two months of emptiness resulted. Sixty days, lying on a lifeless hospital bed connected to generous machines carrying my destiny on. I lost hope. I lost every single emotion of happiness had shaped me.

The white light attacked my entity as a whole. It turned my sensations upside down. I did not want to wake up. I knew my nightmares had a meaning, more than those, real, I had lived five years before. I felt each moment of suffering, hurt and each drop of her love perfume abandoning my body. I felt death.

Five years sharp before that morning, her, my all, passed away in a dramatic chaos. The flower blossoming my life left me. She left her beloved alone with a small wonders box, my refuge after all.

Unbelievable! Unforeseen! Bus driver recklessness was the reason behind my lifelong suffering. Witnesses said she was on the sidewalk having her daily jogging minutes to find herself killed, trapped underneath a school bus

frame. Not a single drop of blood left her body as if the blood itself could not abandon her, could not imagine it would stop the flow. She died immediately.

Two days before the incident, Mama, Ma Chérie told me about a dream she saw, a wooden coffin sailing along a river shined a vivid white light. She talked about her defunct parents, aunts and uncles and recalled her childhood as a life story moving along her sight. She was happy, wistful and grateful. She thanked her dearest, my grandma, for the womb journey, for the life she gave her. My little fresh mind could not grasp the overwhelming words. Yet, I knew, I still do not know how and why, she was close, very close to the end. The grave was calling her. She did not expect that moment when the present and the future she planned for the little warm family evaporated in a blink of eye.

Everyone was present that day. Old wrinkled faces I had not seen for years crammed the living room. Our house was an old medina bus shelter. My father, perplexed, shook hands with the crowd and tried to respond to questions, intonations and words of solace. He could not speak a word. Only facial gestures answered. His face was bloodless. His arms were shaking, shivering from the unexpected. I, sitting on a worn catering chair covered with an off-white shabby cloth, felt unwelcome. Was I really invited? Was I the guest or the host? I could not realize what was happening actually. Semi-conscious, eyes brimmed in silent tears, vision scrambled, I was alone, lost in the crowd, in the massive space between the ornamented painted ceiling and the bright marble floor. Cries, moans and sobs reduced the dimensions of the place. I could not bear anymore the sad picture dominating the atmosphere and the drone murmuring sound my hearing endured. In the other corner of the room, experienced old men wearing white Jellabas sat in a neat order, one next to the other, and recited in a rhythmic symphonic tone verses from the sacred Quran, those I pricked up my ears to once, if my memory served me, in one of my departed dad's friends funeral ceremonies. Definitely stunning and mesmerizing, four bodies hold on their shoulders a wooden dull box enclosed around her, around the body of a beautiful happy young loving woman, of what was, and will never be again. They entered the room. I took the way toward them with feet soaked in sweat. The coffin was semi-opened. Her eyes rested in her pure face. Her lips were formed into a slight genuine smile, which made the image much moving. I knew, then, she would be buried in few minutes.

I felt a hand stroking my soft hair recently washed, and

turned my head to see my aunt draining tears of love. Her mouth came next to my ear and whispered few words that I could not hear, as if I were lying on the bottom of a deep well. I tried to seize her words, love, God, light... I could not. Maybe, I puzzled them out. I cannot remember. I relived, then, a sequence of a movie I had watched years before, where my memory caught the words of a loving had lost his life-light too. "We all loved her. God takes those who give love and light to the world"(Pigem Colls). Moved by the words I recalled and tired from the pain consuming my inside, I lost consciousness and fainted.

Two months later, I opened my eyes. My back was dropped in aches. My arms, my neck and my legs were blocked and could not move properly. A white ceiling above and a large window closed at my right. No one was there. I was alone, as she left me. Little by little, I came to my senses and remembered what happened, yet I did not understand why I was lying there on that lifeless bed connected to plastic tubes providing me with oxygen. I could smell the toxic in my nose and my throat. My mouth and my tongue were as dry as Chihuahuan Desert. A drop of water had not met the smooth of my tongue for weeks. Later, I realized I was in a hospital. The itching smell of the sharp rubbing alcoholic detergents encroached upon my nose and informed me of the place. Doctors, nurses, and then, my father entered the room. Surprised, my father thanked God for seeing me awake.

- Al Hamdoulah YaRebbi!

Days, months, and years elapsed. Minds and memories erased the past. They forgot her death. Yes, they did. After my recovery, my father tried to make me stand on my feet again. We had travelled for a five months trip abroad, cruises in Brazil sea-coast, hikes in Pico Da Neblina Mountains... He thought I could surmount the pain living inside me and forget her face traits easily. My family, my father, and my friends were present to help me overcome her lost. I am thankful guys! Yet, my mother's smile, voice and gaze could not leave me. Funeral fragrance, camphor, benzoin, and orange flower water still invaded my nostrils. My nights were series of images of my mother. Each corner of the house remembered her. Each inch reflected her meticulousness and delicacy. The melody of her voice and her laughs pierced the rancid garlic olive oil of the deserted kitchen. She liked garlic olive oil. Mama, my beloved, I will never ever forget you. You were and are the breath that signs my life. I love you Habibty!

ANNOUNCEMENT

Al Akhawayn Chronicle is **recruiting!!**

Are you motivated and have a passion for writing?

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