

# Al Akhawayn Chronicle

The Official Student Newspaper of Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane

**JANUARY 2016**  
**SECOND ISSUE**



**NEW SECTION!**  
**INKING THE VOID**



**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS WITH THE VPSA, COUNSELING SERVICES, SAO, SGA, AND MORE!**

# EDITORIAL

To our avid and loyal readers,

First of all, the editorial team of the Al Akhawayn Chronicle would like to thank you for your heartwarming feedback. Your support is the main reason we are still working on this newspaper. The reactions around campus were all positive and we will always make sure to meet and hopefully exceed your expectations.

After an investigation on the Financial Department in the first issue, we decided to tackle Student Affairs this time as it is one of the most important departments of this university. We believe so because this division includes many departments that are related to our daily life and impact our existence. We conducted interviews with all the departments of the division and tried to answer the questions you might have. From the counseling services to the office of the VPSA, everyone involved gladly answered our questions in the most transparent way.

Once again, thank you for your support and stay tuned for our next issue!

Mehdi Lehlali & Ayoub Lasri.

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Excellence in Delivery

# STRONG TIES BECOME STRONGER

*Mehdi Lehlali*

In an event sponsored by the School of Business Administration, the Al Akhawayn community got the privilege to meet H.E. Mr. Rupert Joy, EU Ambassador to Morocco. He addressed students and faculty in a lecture which explained a wide range of issues concerning the partnership between the two entities, a partnership that goes back many years to the 1970s and which is still thriving and benefiting both parties, says the ambassador.

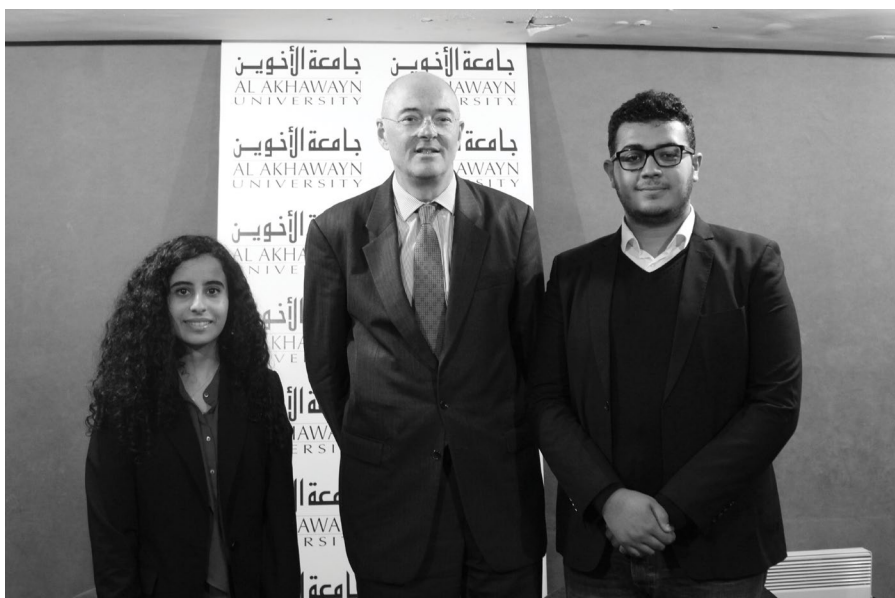
Before joining the EEAS (European External Action Service) in 2013, Mr. Joy was an ambassador to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in many Muslim countries such as Yemen, Iraq and more recently Uzbekistan. He also worked with Morocco between 2000 and 2003, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission to the British embassy in Rabat. Mr. Joy visited Al Akhawayn University many times over the past 20 years and says: "I know this city very well and I am a very good friend of the university".

The aim of His Excellency's visit was to sign a partnership with Al Akhawayn University, offering internships for AUI students in the Rabat offices of the UE embassy. Mr. Joy expressed his enthusiasm to welcome students in the commercial sections and departments of the embassy. Mr. Joy said that the EU needs Moroccan students and diplomats as he believes more can be achieved together through strategic collaboration targeting many axes of the Moroccan-EU partnership. These axes include a mobility, fishing, and security partnership. Also, he focused on a more important and beneficial axis which is financial cooperation. Indeed, the EU is the first commercial partner of Morocco as 63.9% of the country's export goes to Europe. The reason why the Moroccan government and Europe have such developed economic bounds is the free trade agreement signed in 1977, which stipulates that no taxes for export should be paid.

The Ambassador went on about the objectives of the Moroccan-EU partnership and said that the two entities are working on extremely ambitious (yet complex) trade projects which will have a number of benefits for Morocco, such as the enhancement of the economic and social status of the country. Mr. Joy has also stated that one of his main concerns is promoting good governance within the Moroccan government and helping the country achieve an effective justice reform.

Mr. Joy's visit was also about promoting the new EU program for education, training, youth, and sport; Erasmus+ aims to boost skills and employability and also offer opportunities for over 4 millions students to gain work experience and volunteer abroad. Moreover, His Excellency stated that one of the main axes of the collaboration that should be given a closer and more comprehensive focus is education. He believes that young Moroccans should benefit from better schooling opportunities.

This address is one of the several programs and lectures promoting cross-cultural awareness among the community of Al Akhawayn. These talks give AUI students the opportunity to get in touch with the outside world and promote Al Akhawayn as an internationally focused institution that helps its community grow and learn more about the foreign cultures firsthand.



# ROOTS OF A MELTINGPOT

*Oumaima Maliki*

There are times, if not most of the time, when we choose to overlook the Moroccans/Foreigners formula on campus or to see the bright side of it and ignore the other that has to do with racism, misunderstandings, and cultural gaps. Isn't it simply amazing and original to see a mixture of different skin colors, various nationalities, distinct rituals, and ethnic backgrounds all around you? Isn't it beautiful to admit how you actually spend time among thousands of different people and you do not have the slightest remorse about it whatsoever?

The AUI community is a model of varied cultures and religions, but let us shed light on some facts, state them frankly, and avoid sugarcoating things here. Most of the international students form groups and spend time together, which is something perfectly normal and understandable, finding someone who knows what you will be talking about without giving him or her a whole abstract of what you will be saying is a blessing. But while doing so, they are missing out on a lot of opportunities and chances to get to know the other side of college life, the other culture, the other religion, and the other "in my Moroccan shoes" you. Also, Moroccan students barely manage to speak English in the presence of foreigners, something that doesn't really put them at ease and encourage them not to interact with Moroccans in fear of being the "freakish non-Arabic speakers outsiders".

November 13, 2015 is a day we mourn with great sorrow. Paris, the so-called city of lights, has never been that dark and gloomy, and the Eiffel Tower, the dot of love and joyfulness, cried its 120 gutsy souls that were the target of terrible gun shootings and suicide bombings in the area surrounding the Stade de France-North of Paris. This made the whole world criminalize Arabs and Muslims and made terrorism a religion that is attributed to Islam.

Of course, and as expected, international students and foreigners on campus were not very happy with the news, and with all the false information and rumors in the media, it was hard to decide with whom to stand, and impossible to have a clear view of what is happening.

We are all mourning Paris' tragedy, especially that it is not the first shocking one in 2015, but we are also mourning the deplorable daily life of an Arab in foreign countries. We are mourning the thousands of victims slaughtered to serve as a great example of what humanity started looking like lately. We are mourning the so-called "fight against terrorism" without being aware that we are actually fighting against the wrong persons, the wrong religion, and the wrong beliefs. Paris was not the only target of terrorism. Tunisia, Mali, Cameroon, Pakistan, Egypt, and Lebanon were on the list of "highest death tolls of terrorism 2015". These? You may not know them, you may not realize that their populations have suffered exactly the way Parisians did, but unfortunately, not much profile pictures were overlaid with their flags.

AUI foreign students showed compassion and sympathy, they were very supportive, thoughtful, friendly, and most of them actually had this very old belief of "terrorism has no religion" in mind. They asked questions, and hopefully got the right convincing answers about Islam and its principles. They supported Paris' cause without causing any harm or sabotage to the community with whom they share their daily life. AUI students have always been and always will be a perfect example of a community who lives in peace and harmony, may this last forever.

Stay beautiful and genuine as ever...

# #SMILETOFIGHT

*Myriam Ait Malk*

A smile worth a thousand words and a determination that could move a nation... Some say that's all you really need to reach your goals. At least, that's what one could say before meeting Dalal Rachid, a fellow AUIer. Her Facebook page "SmileToFight" has swept the AUI community as well as various areas of the Kingdom by storm, with over 28,000 people liking it and supporting her in her battle against cancer. It is not only a page where Dalal receives support; it is also a way for her to become a confidante and a friend to anyone who is going through a similar process.

Her smile and joviality are contagious, to say the least, and when asked about what her definition of happiness is, she simply states that it is "finding the beauty in the smallest of things". But what does Dalal have to say about all of this?

## Can you explain how you started SmileToFight?

Even before knowing about my cancer, I was following different pages of cancer fighters or survivors. I was amazed by how strong those people were, and I liked how they shared their stories with us strangers because they gave me another side of cancer that Google doesn't give you when you type cancer in your research. When people found out about my cancer, they first reacted as if I told them I was dying, and I hated that feeling. I had to explain to them that I still have a chance and that I will fight for it. My page was one way of telling them that I am not giving up, that I am not dying!

## What inspired you to pursue SmileToFight and can you give us a little information on what it is?

When I first started SmileToFight, I thought I would hit around a thousand followers who would be my family and my friends. So the page was a way for me to express myself and share my experience with them without the awkwardness that I used to feel when they first knew about my cancer, especially face to face. So at first I created this page to allow people around me to live my cancer in the best way possible. However I ended up getting thousands of followers; some are cancer fighters, some of them are close to a cancer fighter, and some are just interested in knowing more about this disease. The main goal of this page today is to show people and especially Moroccans that "cancer is a word not a sentence". It is my hope that one day, people stop thinking that cancer is a synonym of death.

## What can you say is the goal of such an initiative?

The goal of SmileToFight is to encourage cancer fighters to persevere and to have someone to talk to who actually understands what they are going through. It is also for those who are close to someone who has cancer to understand the process and issues that person might have to go through. If they have any questions, I am always happy to answer them. Most importantly, it is for everybody out there to be able to talk about such a disease without feeling like it is taboo.

## Have you had support from the AUI community?

Since I started Smile to Fight, I got several messages from different people from the AUI community. The administration showed their support, I in fact got a few calls from some of them. My classmates keep sending me messages to ask about my situation and when I will be coming back. But the support that shocked me the most and in the most positive way possible is the one I got from AUI alumni, whom I never had the chance to meet. I guess we are right to say that once an AUIer, always an AUIer!

## Thank you for your answers, Dalal. It was a pleasure! Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you, the pleasure is shared. I would just like to add that sometimes I feel so strong and sometimes I feel incredibly weak. The weakest moment happened a few weeks after I started posting on my page. I was feeling so down that I quit in the middle of a chemo session. What gave me the strength to come back and fight again was the song my AUI friends wrote for me and published on social media. That was definitely the sweetest thing someone has ever done for me. Since I heard it the first time, its rhythm never left my head. I would like to thank my family and everyone who believed in me.

# CLASH OF MAJORS

*Sarah Allouche*

The first weeks of college go like, after exchanging names smiles and the social convention process of getting to know someone. The question that pops out of the blue is: "so what is your major?" Of course you are not used to it. According to the orthodox way you have always known, this question is not familiar. Exchanging names and hobbies at the most is more than enough. You are trying to be part of all this new greeting process and you manage. At first you are enthusiastic, you answer proud, head held high, convinced that this is your choice, your responsibility, you don't hesitate, you smile confidently, and say the word. A little experience is enough to make you realize that you want to skip the question entirely and talk about YouTube videos and cafeteria food, but never your major. However, in the face of some very persistent individuals the conversation goes like this:

"So, what is your major?"

"Hey, look at those kittens."

Awkward silence; it stretches forever. Apparently the person is not a big fan of cats.

- "Yeah cute, but you didn't answer the question."

- "Oh yeah, right well I am a BA student."

- "Uh, cool yeah at least no programming in C."

Plastered smile on your face nodding infinitely, the face of your interlocutor is expectant.

- "How about you?"

- "Well, I am a CS student."

We are a nonjudgmental, indiscriminate community of students. WRONG!

As much as we want to deny it, there is this so called hierarchy that exists in our university. Yes SE students are the smart geeky people. BA students tend to be less gifted when it comes to intellectual capacities and keener on partying. SHSS students, well they are the only-papers-students. I guess many of us saw those American movies displaying social scales ranging from the cheerleader to the DUFF. Well this resembles it somehow, only put in a fancier context.

Apparently, this stereotypical and almost discriminatory behavior is based on unproductive criteria. Look at it this way, just because the nature of some courses is more challenging than others, this only reflects a specific kind of intelligence. Let us not forget that this may be the inheritance of some cultural biases. In high school for instance, the science-math branch would be described as the elite of the academic dominance hierarchy. It may have been the actual case, but how much choice did we really have when we were "picking" the branches in our poor high school days? In our unconscious minds, it was all settled, the best get the math, the weak get literature. Aren't we too mature to reapply this idiocy? A powerful feature of the American system is allowing a margin for choice. Some of us are still trying to figure it out-although you might want to consider the price you pay for it here-what their weaknesses are, what they feel compelled to study. Apart from those pressured, the ideal would be to come to AUI with a vision, a goal. Maybe capacities would be a serious parameter to consider while choosing one's major, but shouldn't we consider the love and passion that drive us to choose what each one of us wants? A personal incentive that can trigger the need to fulfil that goal? I also believe that brilliance needs to be extrapolated to any field a student tends to like. Because if physics is considered as the science which studies the rules of the universe, I challenge you to do that by only using mathematical formulas. I bet Einstein himself wouldn't understand you (poor you, you won't get to shine in front of the Nobel Prize committee). Same goes for this, we all need diversity, this domain might be complementary to another, but it is there to serve a purpose. We hope our university would consider expanding its programs, so as to enrich those majors which do not differ in matter of importance. Indeed, minimizing one and highlighting another does not reflect the maturity one seeks to find among college students, it is ridiculous and absolutely biased!

# ARTIVISM (PART 1)

*Ouejdane Sabbah*

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, art is a human activity based on creativity skills that aims to produce a work appreciated for its beauty and emotional power. As beauty and emotions vary from person to person, we cannot for sure define what is considered as art and what is not.

For me, art is a method of expressing feelings and ideas sometimes by only relying on the esthetics and metaphors and other times by telling the raw touching reality, adding power to the message in both cases.

## What should this message be?

When "art" is purely commercial, its message is decided by the preferences of the masses. People are served by what they want to listen to, to watch, to feel. Fortunately, the daring independent artists decide to create a work coming from their own experience in life, delivering to us, the receivers, a message and an insight of their philosophy. Sometimes, the beauty of this exchange goes beyond what we expect as the artists decide to dedicate their careers for a cause they strongly believe in a call for change. They strive to make their art meaningful empowering people to act for noble ideas such as fight for freedom and justice.

That's when the word artivism comes from. As its name indicates, it's the newborn baby of "art" and "activism".

## MY TOP 10 SELECTION OF ACTIVIST SONGS

Music has a special power to bring people together. The first lesson that every musician must learn is that music is the nutrition of the soul. It speaks when words fail to explain. Music is for all occasions both extreme sadness and pure ecstasy. It is also one of the easiest tools to convey a message to the masses. Here is my selections of songs that make me want to get up and change the world...

1. **"Imagine" - John Lennon:** I remember listening to the sweet melody of this immortal song for the first time in my mom's car when I was 6 years old. Little did I know that the song calls for a collective escape to a utopian world where wars are not needed and where humans are all loving brothers.



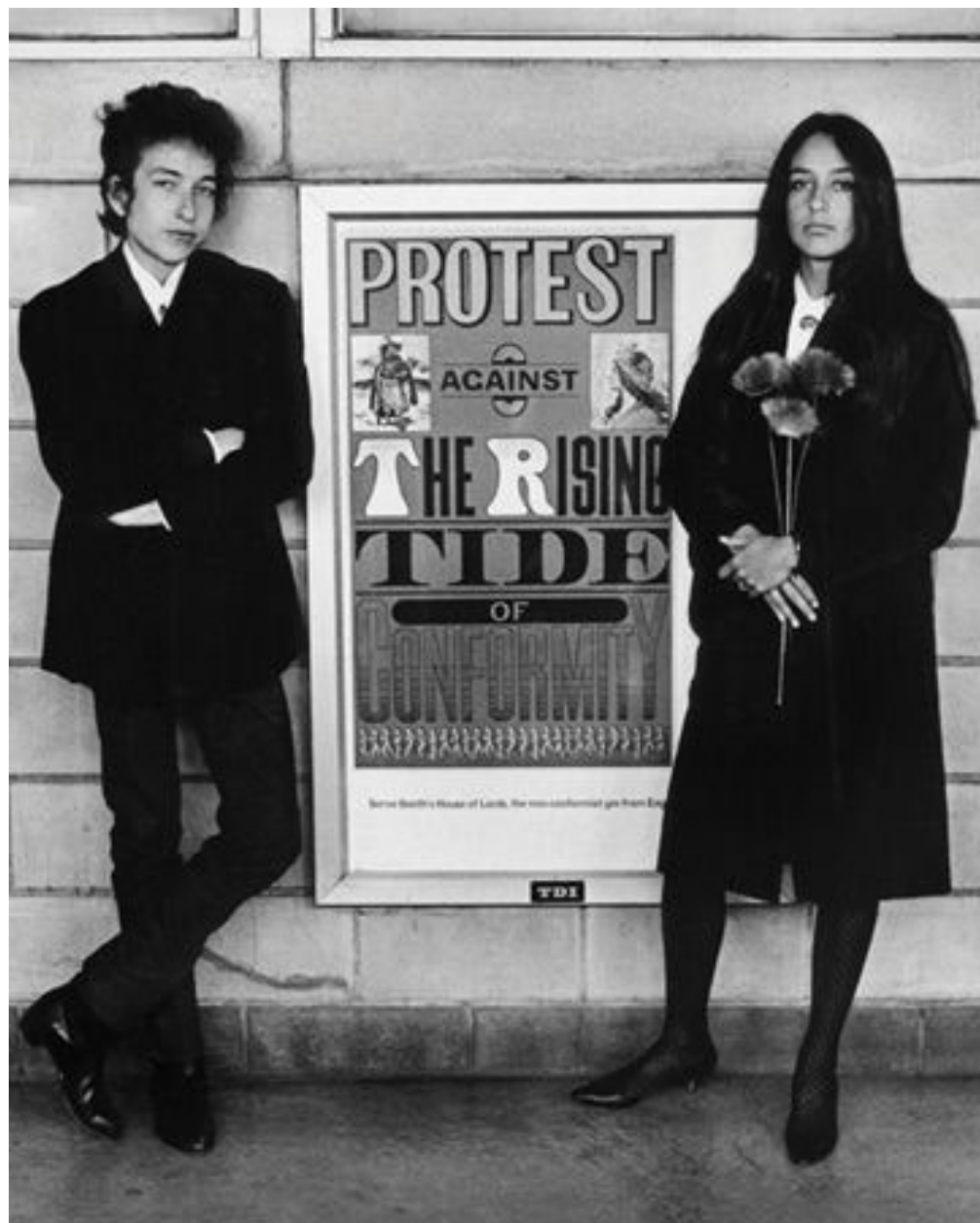
John Lennon, Photo by Lennon Photo Archive. © Yoko Ono

2. **"Brothers in Arms" - Dire Strait:** I discovered this song later on in life when I was leafing through one of my uncle's book. According to song facts, this song was written about the Falkland war where 280 soldiers were killed. It's a song for the fallen soldiers.

3. **"Get Up Stand Up" - Bob Marley:** The king of reggae was known for speaking up against police brutality and calling for change. I would love to list all his songs in this selection, but I'm afraid this paper would smell like Mary Jane if I did so.

4. **"The Times They're A Changing" - Bob Dylan:** The nasal voice of Bob Dylan makes everything feels right, like this song, which is the anthem of youth predicting a positive change and calling every authority figure to accept it. The lyrics are also based on the civil right movement.

5. **"Blowin' in the Wind" - Bob Dylan:** Yes, I just did it. I listed two songs by Bob Dylan in the same selection. What now? This song, which was beautifully covered by



the sweet voice of Joan Baez, was written in 10 minutes. It is asking the auditors to find an answer to naïve questions about war and inequality, making it again an anthem anti-war.

6. **"Oh Freedom!" - The Golden Gospel Singers:** The first time I heard this song was with the AUI United Voice Choir. Initially it was a song of a slave during the Civil War, then it was recorded by Odetta. It's about the fight for freedom that African Americans craved, as the lyrics stated they would prefer to die for their freedom. The version of Golden Gospel Singers gives it a religious and spiritual dimension that will make you shiver.

7. **"The Sound of Silence" - Simon and Garfunkel:** Even if this song is not about war or destruction, it has its place in this selection as it is the symbol of a generation of consumers worshiping the products and ignoring the human relationships (aka our generation).

8. **"We Are the World" - USA for Africa:** You cannot hear this song and go "Meh". The first time I got struck by the beauty of this song is when I was 12 years old. Following my mother's suggestion, I sat in front of the enormous white box that I had as a screen and got lifted by the harmonies of all those talented artists. One word to describe it : Goosebumps.

9. **"Walking Tall" - Marcel Khalifa:** I felt the duty to include an Arabic song , because I mostly grew up listening to those kind of songs. The choice was hard as many classical Arabic songs were meaningful and fought for a noble cause. I finally chose the one that felt familiar when I was a little kid. Walking Tall is an inspirational song calling for peace in Palestine ( at least that's what I understood from the verses "I carry an olive branch in my hand. And my corpse on my shoulders")

10. **"Blackbird" - Paul McCartney:** Another song about the civil right movement. Paul McCartney referred to a black person as a black bird asking her/him to fly to a new life even if their wings are broken.

If you liked this selection, you'll probably like the second part of Artivism series with another selection of the MY TOP 10 inspirational and activist movies. Be young, be inspired, be the change you want to see.

I'm open to all your suggestions.

# INKING THE VOID

Last name: Thinker. First name? Over. Just like some of you, I have trouble sleeping at night, as that selfish and ruthless brain of mine will only take care of its grey matter. I am Mohamed Bentaibi, and in this section, I would be honored to be your chauffeur throughout my nightly flights in a sky full of weird sparkles of thoughts. I decided to write what I think after what happened last night. Last night, I landed on one of the stars, where it was asked "How does an idea feel?" I opened it, and here is what I read:

It is dark in here. Have no place to go, nowhere to be sincere. Oh! A pen! Come on... take it. Find a notebook or some random sheet. Write me. Pin me to the endless wall of letters or else, you will see me dying just like all the others. Give me birth, make me feel alive; let my words sound to the beat of your thoughts. Let me breath, let others say "Madre mia!". Let me be what I am: a written idea. Welcome to "Inking the void". Let it ink in for a moment!

## CARPE DIEM

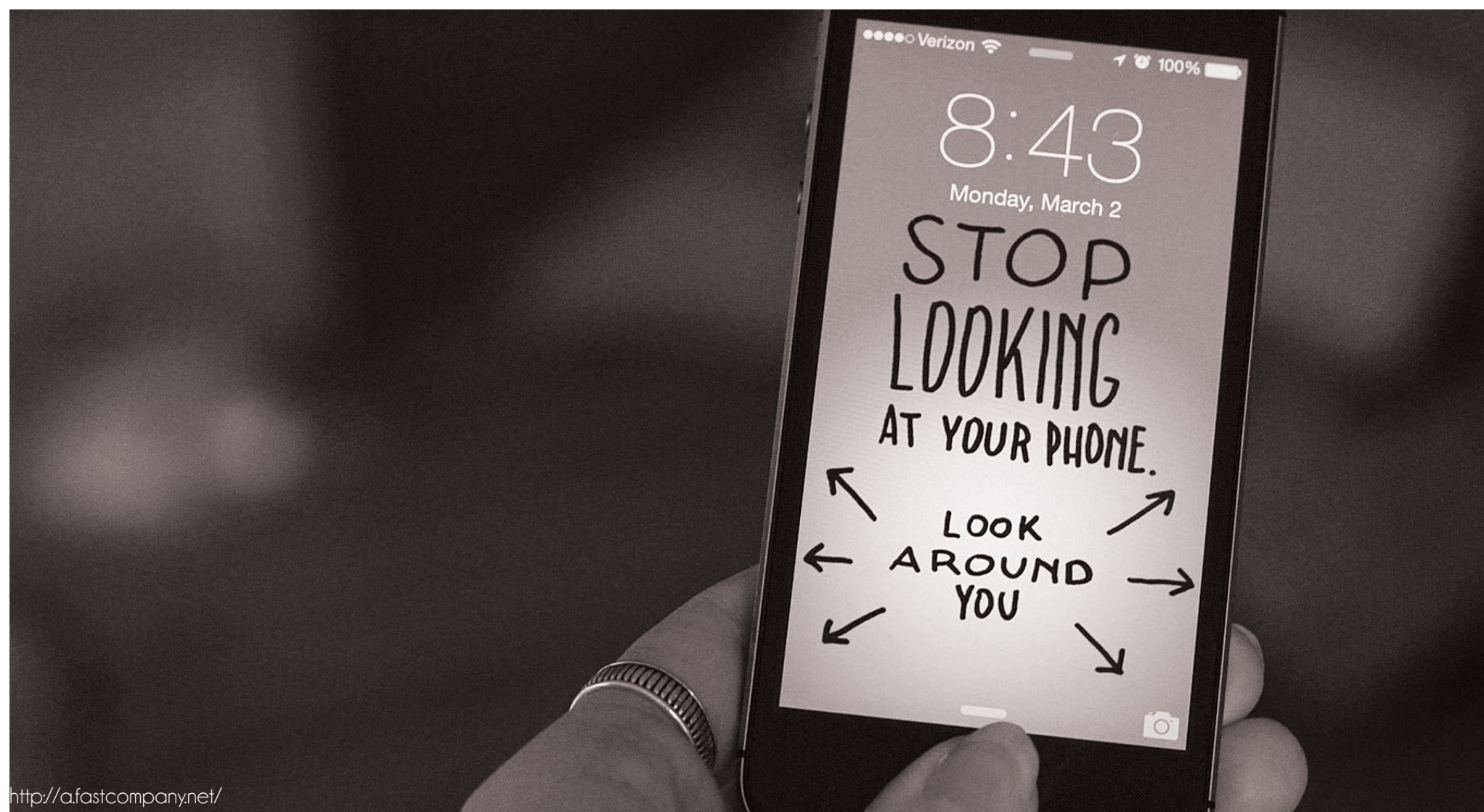
*Mohamed Bentaibi*

Choose a caption. Uploading. Finishing up. Check! Now wait... BOOM! First "like". Oh! There goes a second one! Two "likes" in fifty six seconds, I can do better than that. Yeah, there you go: 42 likes in 3 minutes! My S-tank (satisfaction tank) is partially filled up, I feel better now. Hey, reader! Sorry, I did not know you were here. I was too busy uploading a picture of me faking I had fun at yesterday's karaoke night. I just love my smartphone, you know. It allows me to share my precious moments with my 26,789 friends. Sharing is caring, right? So have a sit and let me explain to you how I love being an alienated slave.

One day, I was asked in critical thinking class about what I thought hell could be. I had the most natural answer: no smartphone for a day. Can you imagine? I will not post what I eat on Instagram and will not see cute kittens in 9gag... for a day! How can I amuse myself without vines and videos on Snapchat? What could I possibly do without Facebook? Facebook! My savior! I have so many pictures there pretending I am happy, so many videos taken at the best parties I have ever been! I know that for sure, because as soon as I put them, I was drowning in tons of "likes" and new "friends' requests" of people I did not even know. My not-so-critical thinking class professor could not understand my rationale. His arrogant are-you-serious face clearly pointed at his commitment of staying old and denying being part of the Y generation. Nodding his head as words were coming out of his mouth, he cautiously asked: "are you saying that you cannot live without your phone and Wi-Fi?" Hell, yeah! What is life after all? I once found in the holy website Imgur that "life is what happens to you while you are in your smartphone". I completely agree: if you are not in your smartphone, life does not happen, and therefore it is death. Logic. As soon as I got out of class, this got me thinking about heaven.

I wonder if there is Wi-Fi in heaven. After twenty seconds of deep concentration, I started to feel dizzy and a headache started to pick on my nerves, as I am not used to thinking. In these cases, I do what I do best when I doubt about something: I google it. For people aged between 30 and 150, to google means to search on Google. A window appeared in which it was written "hot girls in your area want to date you" I was flattered, but I needed to close the window as I was advancing in my quest for the truth about after-life. I later found out that Wi-Fi was not the fifth element of nature as I used to think, but that it was man-made, and that it was not likely to be found anywhere else except on Earth. I felt enlightened and shocked at the same time. What is the point of going to heaven if you cannot capture the moments? What is a moment itself if it cannot be played through a video/audio player?

I was lost. Then I knew it all. I arrived at the utmost concluding fact: I smartphone therefore I am. Much smartphone, much life. I live through pictures and videos. My essence resides there. I live through my smartphone. The real world is the virtual one. If I cannot take selfies, then I am not to be part of society. If I cannot fill my S-tank, then there is nothing else useful I can do. My egocentrism is my weapon. I do not need people; I need "likes", "shares", "followers", "tweets", even if they are automated. I need external approval, even if I pretend not to. I need to show that my motto is YOLO. For people aged between 30 and 150, YOLO means "you only live once". All this incredible flow of information was taking over my mind. At the center, there was an idea taking shape: I do not live the moment per se, I live through the pictures and videos. These are more alive than me. I am a smartphone addict.



# STUDENT AFFAIRS:

*Ayoub Lasri & Mehdi Lehlali*

## Who is Dr. Lotfi and when did he join Al Akhawayn University?

I joined Al Akhawayn University in the summer of 2003. I have served this institution in various capacities, as Mohammed VI Library director, director of the Center for Academic Development, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and Vice President for Student Affairs.

Before coming to AUI, I taught at Mohammed V University and served as founding dean of the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences at Moulay Ismail University in Meknès, and director of la Maison du Maroc in Paris. I studied at Mohammed V University in Rabat, the University of Nottingham in England, the University of Iowa, the University of Pennsylvania, USA, and spent several months doing research on Islam in America at the University of Texas at Austin and the Center for Muslim Christian Understanding at Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

My research interests include American autobiography, prison literature in Morocco and the USA, Islam in America, traditional Islamic education, and Arab American literature.

## As the Vice President of students' affairs, what are your main responsibilities on campus?

My main responsibility as VPSA is to align the actions of the various departments of Student Affairs with the university mission, making sure that the actions of its various units contribute to student development and growth, helping and empowering them to achieve their highest educational potential. In this department, we all strive to enhance student experience through diverse learning opportunities, programs, and services that prepare students to lead, serve, and engage Morocco and the world. This department works to foster a campus community that supports students in the development of their unique potential, inspiring them to be active learners and successful graduates.

## What are some of the challenges you face to perform your duty?

AUI has adopted the liberal arts model, which challenges all of us to be alert to the fact that all our procedures, processes, and actions should be directed towards achieving student development and growth. We have to work very hard to promote the idea that the freedom that comes with this model also comes with important responsibilities that students have to assume in order to grow and develop.

Studying in residential campuses like ours entails adherence to strict rules and regulations. In collaboration with SGA we hope to continue elaborating better rules and procedures to enhance the quality of residential life.

## Any future strategies you would like to implement?

We would like to pursue our student development initiatives hoping to contribute to student development with special attention to the quality of life on campus. We believe that we should challenge and support students to promote their psychosocial and cognitive development. Our strategy is premised on student development approaches; we strive to create personal learning opportunities.

As the VPSA, what do you think of our student com-

munity in terms of involvement?

AUI can be proud of having a highly motivated and committed student body whose involvement in the life of the university and its region is to be commended. Our university has done a great deal to promote and enhance student involvement, and we must be proud of what has been achieved so far. Our rich and diverse club and sports culture has shown that our students are aware of the benefits they can draw from their involvement in the life of the university and its social environment: learning how to initiate and manage social, recreational, and educational actions, and interacting with various stakeholders, to provide essential services for the community or building and developing interactions among themselves. The Community Involvement Program formalizes and institutionalizes our university's commitment to the development of the culture of student involvement, but our students also volunteer as student ambassadors during our outreach campaigns, orientation programs, or commencement because they are proud of AUI and because they know that their input and involvement matter.

Student involvement and excellence are recognized in various ways, one of them being the student mobility grant program. Student involvement is also visible through SGA's various contributions to quality enhancement of university services. This being said, I am sure that more can be done to enhance student involvement for greater benefits for all.

## Could you share with us what could be improved in Al Akhawayn University?

Al Akhawayn is committed to continuous improvement of its processes and services. A number of programs in our three schools have been accredited; the Language Center has been reaccredited for ten years, and more importantly, the University as a whole is engaged in the accreditation process. Improvement, then, is a route that the University has chosen to travel; it is a long process that never ends and requires therefore constant attention to the areas that need it.

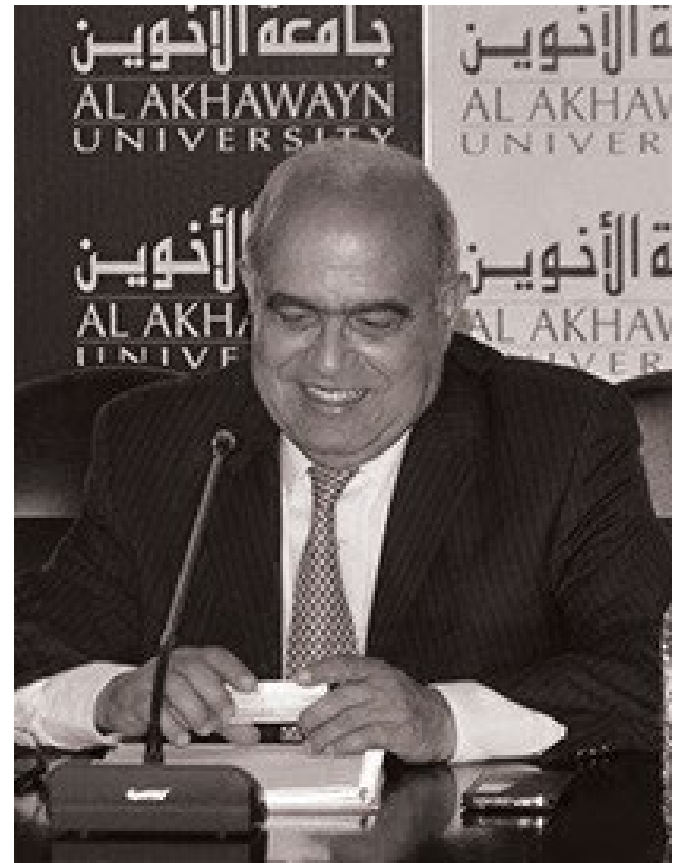
I am proud to serve this institution because of its values, its achievements, and its commitment to excellence!

## Concerning the housing department, how is Al Akhawayn dealing with the very limited places it offers to the yearly increasing demand?

No university can house all the members of its community. We have to manage our housing needs in such a way that those who need it most can enjoy the privilege of on campus housing. Clearly, the university must house all its entering students, and to continue to do that, students who have been housed for eight semesters should seek housing off campus. I am happy to say that careful management of our housing resources has made it possible for the first time in years to provide housing for all the newcomers last fall, while allowing a number of students to live on campus beyond nine semesters.

Over the past twenty years, AUI assumed a housing responsibility that is normally shared with the city. Fortunately, the Ifrane environment has changed considerably over the last decade, and the city now offers housing to an ever-increasing number of the university community.

## Could you please tell us why students are prohibited from using hot plates and other cooking devices in their rooms?



AUI provides restaurant services to its community, as well as community kitchens in a number of residences so that students don't have to cook in their rooms, except in studios and apartments. Hot plates are not tolerated because they represent an unacceptable fire hazard; they are outlawed because the university is responsible for the safety of both people and property.

## Is Al Akhawayn University willing to open a new restaurant or possibly switch the company they work with to satisfy the students' needs?

AUI has contracted its restaurant services to some of the top players in the field in Morocco and is constantly monitoring the quality of restaurant products and services in collaboration with SGA to ensure quality and variety of its offerings.

We hope to open a food service unit to provide take-away service in the vicinity of Building 38 in the near future to bring our catering services closer to students.

## Dr. Lotfi, anything else you would like to share?

I hope all of us appreciate the uniqueness of Al Akhawayn University and its environment. We live, work, and study in one of the best places in Morocco and the world; a mountain resort surrounded by pristine forests and a string of lakes; a city considered as one of the cleanest cities in the world, a world class university where the interests of students are at the center of our initiatives.

AUI has pioneered changes in the Moroccan higher education landscape that many are trying to emulate, but one of the areas where we are far ahead of others is student centeredness and student development.



# FIN GHADI BIYA KHOUYA?

## COUNSELING SERVICES

Dr. Pionati, a certified counselor at the Health Center, agreed to give our team an insight on what happens behind the curtains of the counseling services.

Deeply solicitous about the well-being of its students, Al Akhawayn University's division of Student Affairs works tirelessly to provide every person on the campus with the necessary support to thrive academically, emotionally, and spiritually. The Counseling Services, for instance, are of a great help to the students. AUI is one of the very few Moroccan universities that acknowledge the importance of assisting students with private and confidential counseling services.

Dr. Pionati gladly answered some of the questions and inquiries we had about the matter.

**Question: Al Akhawayn University is one of the very few educational establishments in Morocco that has a counseling service. Why do you think students need these services?**

Answer: I believe that the ages between 18 and 22 are a period of change and your generation in particular has special challenges. For instance, for most of the students, it's the first time living away from home and you are constantly connected on your electronic devices, so there are many changes taking place and many issues that are very important to investigate for yourself so that you can make wise decisions. Sometimes you just need an adult to speak to in confidence.

**Do you think it's because AUI is following the American model that we have the counseling services?**

Yes, definitely! Counseling is part of Student Affairs. In every Student Affairs department in the U.S, you would find such services for the students.

**Do you believe that having such services is the norm? Because the availability of counseling services at AUI is yet another reason why its students are called not "normal" or even spoiled by outsiders.**

No, no, no! This is definitely the norm! The norm IS to have a counselor on campus to assist students throughout their academic careers at university.

**Dr. Pionati, what are the recurrent cases you get from students and is the University working on something to limit those issues?**

Well, it's complicated because it's confidential. So I can't even reveal details to my supervisor (laughs). But, in general terms, there are some similar and repeated issues that our students suffer from such as "I'm studying something I hate because my parents forced me into it." Other issues range from relationship issues with family members, lovers, and/or roommates, to adjusting to academic life, to personality conflict with professors. Also, students tend to seek more support in the exams period and before graduation.

**Do you believe that counseling is effective when it comes to these issues?**

Yes, absolutely yes! It is very helpful for the student and we help them overcome their anxiety and all the challenges they face.

**What are the challenges that Counseling Services is facing today? Is there anything you would like to be improved in this division?**

Well, I wish we had more counselors. We are currently only two and I believe four counselors would be better to offer an even higher quality services to our students. Also, the division needs to reorient some of its focus to students in probation. We need to make sure they have all the necessary resources to be back on track.

**Do professors and staff members receive any guidance from the counseling department?**

Yes, many professors come to see us in order to discuss the behavior of their students. We tutor them on how to help a student in need and how to build a healthy relationship with him or her so that the student can succeed.

**Any advice you would like to give our fellow students?**

Come forward when you need help! There is no shame in seeking support when you think you need it. We will help you go through whatever challenges you are facing, either academic or emotional.

**What can we practically do as a community to modify and perhaps improve the idea that reaching out for a counselor is "Hchouma"?**

Change the mentality. There may be shame in making a mistake but there is none in reaching out for help before making the mistake. Also, know that your counselor is your ally and has your best interest at heart. It is totally confidential.

**Dr. Pionati, thank you very much for your time!**

Thank you and good luck!

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES OFFICE - MRS. YASMINE BHAJI

**What is the mission of the SAO ?**

The student Activities office aims at engaging the students in different activities of different sorts that would shape their different skills and help them in their development process. We are here for the students and thanks to them. We try to offer different opportunities for students to learn, interact, enjoy a rich social life on campus, and become engaged citizens.

**What are the challenges you encounter in the fulfillment of your mission?**

It is very challenging when it comes to defining the right balance between having a culture of accountability for the clubs and creating an environment with a pleasant atmosphere that would foster creativity and offer a clear setting for flexibility. In other words, we want the students to learn and develop, while enjoying the necessary and needed work for that. We are here to accompany the students and offer real life training.

**What are the future projects of the SAO?**

We would like to continue improving our services by involving students in decision making through the creation of the Student Organization Council SOC. This would only be possible thanks to a serious implication of the club leaders themselves. We

would also like to facilitate the process of event organization by developing an online platform that would help the clubs and the SAO to better manage the events. We wish to accompany the students in becoming more professional when defining their objectives, preparing their action plan, and dealing with operational challenges. This could be done by developing tailor made trainings and workshops for the executive boards of the clubs. We do encourage initiatives and feedback from the community, and any suggestions and recommendations are welcome.

**How would you like to see the active students involved in the SAO ?**

Ideally, all AUI students are involved in different ways! Concerning the students who are already active, my dear wish would be to see them having bigger dreams, being more enthusiastic, and showing more motivation and passion about what they do. Students should work hand in hand through collaborating, peer learning, arguing, negotiating, compromising, and never giving up trying.

**What is the change that you would like to see in AUI ?**

An achievable dream that I have is to see this place become a leading example for all institutions in Morocco by continuing to promote humanistic and holistic values. I want AUI to be a trendsetter at all levels and be known by the exemplary engagement of its students.

This place is special and I am sure amazing things could happen here. We need students to be in the front as true change agents.

## SGA

### SGA, Where have you been? Students seem quite unhappy with your performance.

After discussing the matter with the entire SGA core, I would like to inform you that we are not going to answer the first question as we all think it is a loaded one.

Please, formulate it better, without any underlying assumption (which is, in this case, that we were not doing our job), if you would like us to answer it!

### What are the current issues and future projects of the SGA?

As SGA members, our first priority is representing the students and addressing, on their behalf, their issues and concerns. So, we filtered through the most pressing issues and made great progress thus far. For example, recently the issue of the bathroom heaters was resolved as soon as it became an urgent matter. Other projects we undertook this semester include enhancing the quality of food in the cafeteria (new chef, more menu options, etc) and addressing the WiFi issues (54 new switches will be scattered across the residential area in the upcoming weeks, four buildings – 33, 36, 25 and one other building – have completely changed routers which were placed in much better and close locations.) On the academic front, we have urged the SSE administration to share internship offers with the students who may not be able to find internships. We are planning to address next the needs of HRD and IS students. For the housing fines, we have agreed with the housing department to reduce the storage and housing fines substantially (two-thirds reduction) in the hopes of eliminating them completely in the future.

### How can students reach out for their inquiries?

The Student Government Association is open for suggestions, ideas and constructive criticism. In this light, all students interested in sharing their input can contact us via email at: SGASG@auj.ma

### What is the vision of SGA? How do you see our campus in the near future?

The main mission of the SGA is to serve as a liaison between the student body and other parts of the university (Faculty/Administration). The Student Government Association shall strive to improve the quality of academic and social life and act as a representative of the student body of AUJ.

Our hope for our campus is to remain an inclusive community in which everyone's voice is heard. Our duty, and ultimately our pleasure, is to represent the student community to the best of our best ability. We want to make sure that the needs of the students, like you and us, are satisfied and their pressing issues are resolved urgently. We strive, however, to benefit our university and maintain its prestige and competitiveness on the national and international levels. This will reflect on our image as future alumni of Al Akhawayn University.

### What are the main issues the SGA is facing that perhaps jeopardize its performance?

One of our difficult tasks, and perhaps the most difficult, is figuring out what the students actually want. It's nearly impossible to make everyone happy and thus we find ourselves in tough predicaments more often than not. Some students will contact us about an issue they claim everyone is facing; notwithstanding, we will receive queries that completely contradict such claims.

On the other hand, we are often blamed for decisions made by previous SGA bodies. The student community must understand that the SGA mandate lasts for one year, or two semesters. All decisions are carried out via a majority vote. So, these tides often yield different boards and, ultimately, different approaches to problem-solving. That being said, our hope is for the efforts we make to amplify the students' confidence in the SGA as their representatives.

### Is change really possible?

Making a change is like building a house. First, you need a strong foundation. A strong foundation means a sturdy house. For us, the foundation is the students' belief and trust in the SGA and the decisions we make. When the students are on our side it makes our jobs easier and change will indisputably and irreversibly come. But if unfounded, unreasonable or unsubstantiated criticism arises, the whole building is shaken. Thus, as long as the students provide insightful and constructive criticism, we will continue building and making an impact.

### Do you have a message for the students of AUJ?

First of all, we thank you for taking part in the democratic process of voting that led to us representing you. It is our utmost of pleasures and most sacred of duties to act and speak on your behalf. Please rest assured, we do not take this responsibility lightly. Your confidence in us and our ability to address your concerns in a vigilant,

effective, and efficient manner is the main reason we will continue making sacrifices. We volunteered to take on this responsibility, and our goal is to make your time at AUJ as enjoyable, comfortable, and successful as possible. Do not forget; your success is our success.

## HOUSING SERVICES - DR. KHALID MRABET

### Many have been complaining lately about the mismanagement of the Housing Services and as a result more students are now looking for an apartment outside campus. As the director of the Housing Services, what is your insight on this issue?

With regard to "the mismanagement of the Housing Services", I would be happy to answer any specific questions you may have. The question is simply too general and vague and is based on unstated assumptions.

As for the second part of the question, which states that "more students are now looking for an apartment outside campus". We are not aware of that and in fact, our records indicate that more students who chose to reside off campus are reapplying for on campus housing. AUJ is growing, and some of our students will eventually have to live off campus either out of choice or out of necessity.

### What is the real reason behind the restrictions on heating?

No restrictions have been put on heating, but a new heating management schedule designed to optimize energy use has been put in place while providing comfortable living conditions on campus. The optimization of energy use is part of our quality assurance system, and a necessity dictated by soaring energy costs.

### Students are wondering why the quality of the Housing Services is decreasing even when the price was increased. Any insight?

I don't know where you got your information but again, Housing services have improved considerably over the past year or so. Several buildings were repainted, floors redone, and furniture replaced. Buildings 32, 24, 23, 25, and 38 have all received preventive maintenance.

As for the housing price increase, that was two year ago overdue. The increase was to take place back two years ago but it was delayed until this year to give students plenty of notice. Housing is heavily subsidized by the University as close to 50% of the housing costs are borne by AUJ, in addition to housing related management and personnel costs.

### What is the role of the resident assistants and what have they accomplished since the launching of the program?

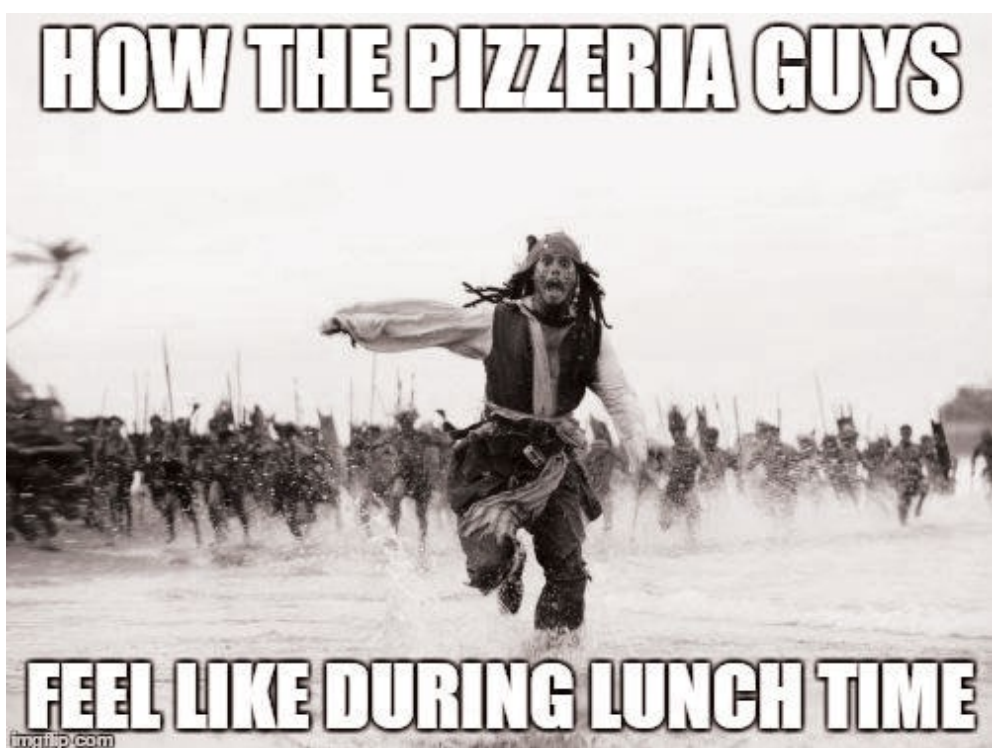
The duties and responsibilities of the Resident Assistants (RAs) are many. However, their main role is to help build communities within the residence halls. Every semester, each RA is required to organize social and educational activities that promote team building and community living. They work hard to create and maintain an atmosphere that is safe, secure, and civil. All RAs are required to be reachable during the evening and after hours in their room in case of need. They act as role models and mentors to those who need it. They are at the forefront when it comes to conflicts. They are the first responders, if you will, and try to resolve the problem before it gets out of hand. All RAs participate in conflict resolution training conducted by AUJ counselors at the beginning of the semester.

### Is there any future policy to deal with the growing number of students and accommodate all of them?

AUJ has done a great deal to accompany student population growth. Over the past five years or so, the University built Building 14 (the student center), and student residences 38 and 39 (almost doubling the residential capacity), the Gym, and is in the process of building an academic building that will have 16 classrooms as well as offices.

What AUJ has done is commendable as it is not easy for a nonprofit institution to accomplish so much within such a short period of time. This is not to say that it ends here. AUJ is also engaged in discussions with private investors who have approached the University to build housing for students in Ifrane. The talks are ongoing and are expected to bear fruit in the foreseeable future.

# MEMES



# 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 the planets have aligned themselves to give you one of the brightest futures one could hope for.

- ♈ ARIES - (21 March - 19 April)**  
 This week won't be good, okay? The concept of happiness is a capitalist idea. #Jesuisproletariat
- ♉ TAURUS - (20 April - 20 May)**  
 Okay, we get it. You don't want to go out with your friends tonight and you're running out of excuses. But intentionally getting sick by going out of the shower with the windows open on a gloomy rainy January, that is just plain suicidal.
- ♊ GEMINI - (May 21 - June 20 )**  
 The pair of socks lying on the floor tends to have more luck at finding love than you actually do.
- ♋ CANCER - ( June 21 - June 20 )**  
 I know it's your first semester here, but posting eleven pictures of the lake's ducks and six selfies of you next to the lion makes the governor of Ifrane want to quit.
- ♌ LEO - (July 23 - August 22)**  
 I seriously don't understand why people don't trust horoscopes. It may be the only positive thing of your month.
- ♍ VIRGO - (August 23 - September 22)**  
 They say love comes in all shapes and sizes. In your case, love means carrying that huge Comparative Religion book. Praise our lawd, the Almighty. \* Gospels to death\*
- ♎ LIBRA - (September 23 - October 22)**  
 See you soon at the registration office, bro.
- ♏ SCORPIO - (October 23 - November 21 )**  
 The chances of you getting a food poisoning before giving that presentation that's worth 15% of the final grade could have been predictable by the dude who's intentionally fasting because he too has a presentation. #twotypesofpeople
- ♐ SAGITTARUS - (November 22 - December 21 )**  
 Just because you're curvy it doesn't mean that your grade will be too. #allgradesarebeautiful #stopgradeshaming
- ♑ CAPRICORN - (December 22 - January 19 )**  
 If you're ever wondering where all your motivation, patience and sleep went this semester... Me too, please, let's keep looking.
- ♒ AQUARIUS - ( January 20 - February 18 )**  
 The global warming that's happening may explain why fever has reached your professor's forehead for him/her to give you a quizz on syllabus week.
- ♓ PISCES - (February 19 - March 20 )**  
 Generally getting a D on a test with a "See me after "written just next to it, does not suggest positivity. Except for the pregnancy test.

# TYPES OF PROFESSORS

Sara Lamsili

This article will specifically deal with the different types of professors that some of us have the privilege (or misery, depending on your standards) to encounter. In case you're thinking about a specific professor, you are probably right, but due to the fact that I still want to graduate and have a clean criminal record, I will write this for my protection: I am not targeting anyone and any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Let us start, shall we?

## The Add and Drop Professor :

This is the kind of professor you meet on your first class and here is how it usually goes in your mind: "Are you done? Because I am."

You just pick out your phone and drop the course online, because . . . :



## The "check the syllabus/ check my mixtape" Professor :

This is the type of professor that anticipates everything and has a crystal clear schedule of when you'll have your first quiz, when will he/she be away for a conference about banana extinction, when will he/ she get the flu.

But because they do still want to appear as human they still will write the following sentences:

"Your exam can be re scheduled in case of extreme situation." Yeah, if you're giving birth on the day of the final, maybe you'll have a pass.

"This syllabus is subject to change." LOL, nope. The final is on the 13th of December, start preparing now. You are warned.

## The "My Course is the Chosen One" type of Professor :

This professor makes you want to give up on anything called "motivation," "hope," and most of all "life". This kind of professor is savage. They have no mercy. They give tons of work for a very strict deadline. They post the assignment the night before it is due. They do not believe in office hours nor in responding to emails. If they want to post



the grades on the 34th of august, they'll post the grades on the 34th of august, no feelings of empathy detected.

## The "I know how to read" type of Professor

This professor wants to show the world that practicing the art of reading is super-duper important. They read everything. No comma, no full point, no parentheses . . . No, nothing is spared. You better pray that your syllabus is one sentence long.

## The "I'm a writer/I can't even" type of Professor

This professor wrote ONE book. ONE. *WA GHIR WAHED*. Yet, they still find a way to relate their book to whatever chapter you are currently in (and somehow life too). You could be focusing on the "Supply and Demand" chapter, they'd still find a way to put a word regarding "The Gorilla Revolution in Kazakhstan from 1956 to 1962." The more you know.

## The "My laugh is funnier than my jokes" type of Professor

Ah, the best kind. It does not matter whether you like them or not. It does not matter if you understand the material or not. Their jokes may not be funny but oh lawd the laugh. Darn it . . . That laugh. You want to put it as a ringtone (if you like it, then you shoulda put a ring on it, uh oh uh) you want to put it as an alarm ring, hell you even want to shower to that laugh. (*Wallahy*, I'm not as creepy as I seem. Just a *chwiya*.)

## The "Do you even human" Professor :

You have hurricanes. You have genocides. You have wars. Then on the top of everything, your professor appears. Breathing. Existing. Smiling. Talking. Ugh, the humanity.

## The "My man" Professor :

This guy is the total opposite of the one above. This professor is able to make you believe that you will fail the class with honors. Usually, half the class drops within the first thirty minutes because the syllabus made them nauseous. But what they do not know is that the two lowest quizzes are dropped and the exams are curved. Deep down, they want you to pass the class but they're only harsh because they want you to be disciplined. And also because: they got the power.



# MOHAMMED BAKR SIKAL

Yasmine Mikou

***Smiya w Kniya? Ch7al f 3emrek? Makan lizdiyad? Nmra dla carte/ ID?***

Mohammed Bakr Sikal, 23 years old, born in Kenitra but lives in Larache. ID:49859

**As a music director and composer, how would you describe your musical journey from birth to the apogee?**

I grew up on Andalusian music always played at home and sung by my parents. When I was five, I used to see my father listening to songs and playing them on the piano. He had a musical ear that I inherited from him, enabling us to play the notes as soon as we hear them. Then I started reproducing generics of cartoons. Five years later, I bought a professional keyboard from my own pocket money and I started learning the presets of classical music such as Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, and also Pachelbel. I found out that classical music wasn't my thing, so I focused more on improvisation techniques, scales, fast piano riffs and licks, and that's it! I learned to play my own versions of songs just by listening to them. In addition to that, I started discovering the guitar by myself. At the age of thirteen, I finally went to the music academy, where I studied theory for five years. By the time I met my piano teacher, I found the content intended for beginners and left the classes as I had already finished the whole book at home after only two weeks. I took a placement test in guitar and I was given the fourth year only after two years of learning. For the following two years I just attended the music theory classes. In parallel, I was enrolled in the classical Arabic choir for five years in the music academy. I participated in a classical local guitar competition, which I won. I was selected to represent Morocco in the international level, but paper work wasn't done on time. I kept working on both my piano and guitar skills. Now, I have the ability to play any instrument I want as long as I understand the logic behind it in a matter of minutes.

**I heard you compose songs for an animated 3D series called "The Blooze". What is that project about? And how did you get involved in it?**

It was in 2014 when I was playing piano in building 17. My friend Saad Benlafdil presented me to his guests Youssef Ouazzani and Hamza Touijri. They were about to start their new 100% Moroccan 3D animation project and, thanks to Saad's introduction, they suggested that I join their team as a music themes' composer for the series characters. The first theme I composed impressed them and proved how much skillful I was.

**When and why did you decide to join the AUI Voices United Choir?**

Back in my hometown, I was already part of a choir. So I joined AUI's choir when I came in 2010. The fact that my sister was already part of it encouraged me to join it for sure.

**As a board member in the AUI choir for four years, and as a current president, how do you manage to synchronize between many people with different voices, schedules, and characters?**

I became the pianist and vice president in 2012 along with Zakaria Fouzbi. Then I was promoted to the presidency from 2013 until now, which no one had ever done

before. In order to encourage each one's performance, you've got to make the members love the music they are singing, and most importantly, motivate them by participating in events. It's something that the choir wasn't able to do before. Adel Abaab and I have done our homework in networking and eventually managed to give the choir the chance to shine in various events. This, in my opinion, was the key to fostering the team spirit within the group.

**Your participation in the talent show of last year was outstanding! From where did you get the idea to play piano with your eyes closed, and carried up by your friends, like Aladdin on his magic carpet?**

Both in 2014 and 2015, I prepared for my performance just 30 minutes before the auditions. I played the last part as a variation of Czardas very fast, and I could remove my eyes from the piano. Adel Abaab was with me and said "You aren't looking anyway, so let's close your eyes during the performance!" Therefore, he brought a piece of tissue and closed my eyes, then as the piano and I were very light, the MC agreed on carrying me while playing music.

**You also participated in the 21st Edition of the Festival des Musiques Sacrées du Monde on May 23rd, and I guess that you had an extra surge of adrenaline flowing in your body. How did you manage your stress? How were the rehearsals and the overall show?**

I do not believe in the word "stress". We got invited to a big event, so we practiced more than usual. At the end of the semester, everyone left for the break except the choir that stayed here and rehearsed every single day. In just two weeks, I obtained the sponsoring from the Development and Communication Department, providing us with more than 30,000 DHS for new outfits for the choir. The day of the festival, we were ready and very excited. We totally nailed it.

**Did you get any criticism concerning your performance? What was the audience's feedback?**

The spectators were not the right audience for our show as we performed in Bab Boujloud. Seen as an "Amateur" choir by the organizing committee of the festival, I couldn't negotiate a better deal. But it was a good beginning.

**What are the standards of hiring choir members?**

If you can follow the notes and sing them back, you are welcome to join us. Note that not all pretty voices can follow the notes.

**On what criteria do you base your choice of songs? Are you the one to choose them, or is it a common decision that you all agree upon?**

For two years, we were just repeating the old VUC repertoire. Starting this semester, members could suggest songs and we voted on them. From the selected ones, and according to the themes of the events we are planning to participate in, I am in charge of assigning priorities to the songs.

**What was more dominant at the festival "Les Voix Universitaire" at l'ISCAE, complicity or competitiveness?**



There wasn't any competitiveness, but we rather performed a song together chosen by the Organizing Committee.

**Beside the musical field, do you have other centers of interest?**

I have been the basketball team captain back in my hometown for nine years. I also coached the 8 pool team at AUI. I play pool and snooker, and I also participated in national events.

**Which clubs were you involved in during your academic career at AUI?**

I was a tutor in Guitar Club, and a volunteer in Hand in Hand where I taught English in Allal El Fassi High School for three years.

**Did you have any part-time jobs at the university?**

Yes, this is my second year as a mentor with the Center of Learning Excellence, and I will be certified as an international academic mentor by the time I graduate.

**You are a Computer Science major along with being an artist. How is it possible to combine between academic requirements and music work?**

My schedules are mostly dedicated for music, be it composition or rehearsals. While computer science is not just a major for me, but rather a passion that I am successful at as much as I am in music. Concerning the assignments I have to deal with, it's a matter of good time management.

**Can technique, coding, music notes, and innovation be put together in one context?**

All these points meet at the critical thinking station. As far as I know, there is something called music programming that I am planning to work on later.

**Are you planning to progress in the music composition career, in the programming one, or are you willing to balance between both after AUI?**

My plans are as follows: launching the team's startup (Taketos Productions) followed by my own music production and web development companies. Currently, I am working as a freelance web and embedded systems developer, piano and music theory teacher, and as a freelance music producer.

**What final advice would you give to any ambitious student who's got will and talent?**

AUI offers students a good environment where they can foster their leadership skills. "You are never skilled enough, so keep learning and get involved as much as you can."

# THE FOUR TYPES OF WATER SPRINKLERS

*Ayoub Kachkach*

"The pasture is always greener on the other side", but not when you're an AUI student that's certain, because the well-maintained lawns of the campus are something few institutions can boast of having. It required phenomenal human efforts and resources to make and a lot of expertise to maintain. Among the major contributors to this achievement are the water sprinklers that have gotten to be an integral part of AUI's culture. The legend even says that one doesn't become a genuine AUIer until he or she gets sprayed by the holy water of one of many AUI's water sprinklers.

AUI's water sprinklers come in various forms. The first and most common one of those is the anarchic water sprinkler, who do a better job at spraying sidewalks than at watering the lawn. Their mischievous watering trajectories make them hard to step over or avoid. They usually transit from normally functioning water sprinklers to their chaotic state in a matter of seconds, leaving no time for the poor walker to escape their evil clutches. They do not like being in the middle of the lawn as they prefer proximity to frequented roads. Various testimonies have confirmed that their long exposure to these sprinklers have made them develop supernatural, ninja-like dodging abilities and a phenomenal sixth-sense instinct to danger very much like the one superheroes possess. Those sprinklers' favorite victims are said to be the half-awake half-asleep students who are late to their English Composition class on a quiz day, because those are usually the ones who are in the biggest hurry. The slyest, and perhaps most dangerous of them all, is the one near the soccer field, on the right side of Sodexo. Its maliciousness and meanness are unparalleled campus-wide. My first encounter with that water sprinkler didn't go well for me at all, as it drenched me with water, catching me unaware, and exploiting my naivety and lack of experience as an AUI student. Luckily enough, AUI thought of putting various alternative roads to save us the trouble of facing that demon of a water sprinkler.

A second type of water sprinkler, one that only those with marksman's eyes will be able to notice, is the retired water sprinklers. Those are never turned on and are usually surrounded by dry, fading, yellow grass. They're mostly positioned beside the roads behind the Library, where only hungry students heading for Sodexo dare to walk. Although they seem harmless at first, students always pick up the tempo when walking near them because no one wants to witness the raging eruption of a dormant volcano. Although highly unlikely, the eventuality of those water sprinklers being turned on again is still possible, as their long experience in watering generally and soaking people specifically is still very sought after and highly-esteemed by their peers. In fact, I was lucky to witness the awakening of one of these sleeping giants at a computer programming lab class where an apparently harmless water sprinkler suddenly came to life again taking advantage of the wide open windows to mark its territory inside Building Six's lab. Luckily enough, no casualties were reported.

## PERIOD

AA.

Names of actors appear on a black background one after one. One name comes up on the screen as an idea appears in my mind. Name after name, idea after idea. My head as always is too close to just exploding: Should I do it? What if I do it and then what? Without even bothering and answering the questions, I turn the TV off, get up from my seat, go to my room, take my scissors and in two more steps I am already in the bathroom. For the first time ever my head is absent. My mind is disconnected from my body. My legs and arms are moving with no commands from above. I sit in the bathtub, my legs to my chest. I feel the wetness of some water drops on my bottom, and I get the feeling that my shorts are now all wet. Although we are in the middle of August, I am shivering feeling extremely cold as my body was burning hot. I am sweating, my hands are shaking dropping the scissors I have with me several times. I take few seconds to just try and calm myself in order to focus. "I have to do it. Three years of wanting to do so and today is the day". I open the scissors wildly as the blade touches the opposite handle, pull my sleeve back using my teeth in order to clear my wrist, put the blade on my flesh and then nothing. A big blur, not even a foggy mist, just an uncolored space. I feel something wet on my knee, I open my eyes and it's red colored. Blood is dropping from my wrist. One second later, my eyes decide to join the party. I feel boiling tears traveling down my face to reach my chin and then dive into the little lake of blood I had all over my legs. I was there both my

The third type of water sprinkler is the upper-class anarchic water sprinklers. Let's face it, these water sprinklers were spoiled by the gardening planners as their central position on the lawn is the envy of almost every other device of their kind; They're in the middle, so watering every part of the lawn will be more like a child's game than infinite years of servitude, and they're pretty far from walkways, so they'll be spared the trouble of overhearing the stupid and futile conversations we humans have every morning on our first-world problems: from the classic "I hate Mondays" to the typical "that lady in the cafeteria didn't say hello back". However, the luxury they were put in has diminished nothing of the anger they feel towards the system. Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto and George Orwell's Animal Farm are some of the unmovable books that compose their bookshelves. Just like the mythical Che Guevara, they refused the comfortable background they laid their first water-drops on, and decided to join the fight against repression their fellow anarchic water sprinklers were already leading. However, unlike Che Guevara, they failed miserably. To put it simply, they're very bad at playing revolutionaries as their polished manners make it hard for their ideological aspirations to meet reality. So it is not a rare sight to see some of the students willingly getting sprayed out of compassion to boost the confidence of these water sprinklers which fight for such an honorable cause.

The last and perhaps rarest of those are the perfectly-working water sprinklers. They're extremely hard to come upon. Some students have even graduated from Al Akhawayn without ever encountering them. They're like one of those dark, sinister, fantasy-tale characters that you always hear about but that no one ever got to meet. These water sprinklers are believed to have completely functional rotating heads that have a pre-set span radius, in such a way that it doesn't spray the nearby roads, which may seem unconceivable for most of us AUIers. Rumor has it that such water sprinklers are only set every full moon, before dawn. To try and bring this concept closer to those who might, rightfully, have a hard time believing that such mystical creatures exist inside our campus, try picturing it as that model A+ student who's admired by all his peers, whose reputation precedes him, but who is never seen outside of class.

To conclude, water sprinklers in AUI, in all their forms, certainly hold a special place in every AUI's student heart. The retired water sprinklers lead us to think about how all things are ephemeral, how glory quickly fades away and how you can go from active to senile and rusty with time. The anarchic water sprinklers teach something no other integration week would. It demonstrates how easy it is to get sprayed, in a way that no remorse or regrets will get you dry again. The upper-class anarchic water sprinklers are the evidence that free will in life is nothing but an illusion. The perfectly-working water sprinklers show how good things rarely come in abundance, and how it is not in one's interest to believe in fairy tales. Each road we'll make different encounters, so let us choose the road that will lead us with the least harm towards our goals. Meanwhile, be very afraid of the day when our world will be led by water sprinklers.

wrist and my mouth wide open, my hands were still shaking but calmly this time. I close my eyes and very carefully and slowly I move back and rest the back of my neck on the bathtub's edge. Suddenly, my bipolar side decided that it was time for it to come out and take over. I get up, take my shirt off and wrap it randomly and not very neatly over my bleeding wrist, stand in front of the mirror, look at my face, stand there staring deep into my eyes, cross and penetrate any boundaries ignoring my dizzy head that was begging me to join the floor. My body is craving the coldness of the floor but I resist. In a fraction of a second I hated myself. Hating myself was never something very odd to feel. I look at my face: deep hollow and pale skin, exhausted red eyes still half full of water, my kohl and few lashes are laying all over my cheeks. I rub my eyes and slap myself few times. It's just a glass, just a mirror, just a reflection, just an image. Don't be terrified. It's inside of you already. Isn't it that that is terrifying? Isn't it that that gives you the feeling of just wanting to die in the most horrible ways possible? When you will get to that stage where you can stand in front of a mirror feeling absolutely nothing but love towards the image reflected that's when you know what heaven feels like. And out of the blue, I decided that I was the biggest idiot on earth for trying to commit "it" because of "it". I think about the fact that my selfishness could've put a red line in front of me. My selfishness could've put my parents in the most gross and disgusting state I would ever want to see them in. My eyes are still glaring at their reflection on the glass. Like lightning, an idea comes to my mind and a smile appears on my face. I reach out to the scissors that are now full of blood, rest my fingers in the handlers and wait a few moments then take chunks of my long black hair and cut it all any which way. My smile stretched even more on my face. Two minutes pass, I stop and look at the mirror. I feel nothing but satisfaction.

# STUDENTSHIP IN PARADOX

*El-Mehdi Iraqui*

It is quite awkward to live in a society trusted to reflect signs of wisdom, blossom with true citizens leading a genuine lifelong quest, and realize, then, that a bunch of paradoxical behaviors over-manipulate day-to-day circumstances without even being aware of what really occurs. The true image of society is simulated. The first intention is unconsciously corrupted. Maybe people are so busy that they do not devote a minute, a little time, to look over some obvious details that could change the flow of life if noticed. They do not, eventually, want to devote that one minute. They are scared. The fear of facing the truth is invading their spirits. The moment is hard to understand, to imagine. No one wants to be judged.

Details always seem to be unimportant, but once you stop, sit down and think deeply about them, you take a good look, release yourself from the fear, you literally get shocked, perplexed. How could you? Why? Really? These small questions whip over your mind. They call you to examine what occurs around you, to perceive things from the other angle, the angle of paradox.

Let me call him "Chameleon". He is a "student". He is neither the infamous lizard, nor the lovely pet. He takes showers of different colors depending on his temper. He laughs, yells, cries and puts himself in a continuous senseless drama. Carmine from laughs and cries and bloodless from madness, he does not suffer from any incurable diseases, as I have anticipated. He wants actually to put himself in the chameleon skin. He enjoys insanity.

"I am here to win, and I always win," he says. "Books and sheets are not my stuff. I study, I learn, but not as you do!"

Never seen holding a book, hardly passing a class, he is a guest in the university, at least, so far. "Chameleon" reminds me of some silly homework instructions I had, when I was in the fourth grade, if my memory serves me, "Cross the Intruder." So, is he really that intruder I was taught about? The problem, thus, does not stand behind the question. What sounds weird in the story is that the problem is not even perceived. The normal obvious details are not realized anymore. "Chameleon" is seen to be a normal student in the perfect studentship framework.

Living in a university with thousands of "students" and hundreds of faculty means looking forward to meeting genius craniums, people with one and half brains, pure intelligences. You expect to live in a sphere of books, encyclopedias and novels. Everyone, eventually, breathes knowledge. Everyone wants to leave the university gate holding a diploma in hand, a life safeguard that could empower him or her as individuals in a society that prizes distinctiveness.

Yet, all these reflexive expectations and prior rational outlooks vanish in a blink of an eye, once you click pause by the magical remote control, the one your brain already assimilated during a science fiction movie you saw years ago. Astonished, woken up from the same nightmare that holds every single student diary, you open your eyes and you seize the reality. A mass of chameleons darts around the campus. Some have just finished their classes. Some have not yet started them. Others, lost within their headaches, cry and laugh. Life! Emptiness! Chaos! Extravaganza! Bluish lips holding stifled white cigarettes, tired ringed eyes hidden behind the latest brand of sun glasses, corpse-like bodies exhausted by nightly insomnia. They kiss, kick and love each other. A mixture of feelings and sensations that become, with time, a pure confusion, overrun the atmosphere. People here and there do not feel anything. That is OK!

The scenery, worthy of the best and most dramatic psychiatric hospitals, is not actually as expected. The cold walls, the great buildings and the place do not deserve this kind of backdrops. Even the inanimate would speak out one day from the inappropriate. Is a university a suitable place for "students" to run love, madness and addiction stories? I do not think so. The basic definition of a university is "an institution of learning of the highest level" (Oxford English Dictionary). The first impression this definition leaves me with is of a district or a kind of neighborhood with special features, libraries, classroom buildings, offices, dorms and more. And the vivacious core of that whole is hundreds of students holding books, bags filled up with paper-work, and pages are turned over by ambitious eyes.

Isn't it weird, isn't it illogical to think about a learning place, an academic institution as if you think about a chaotic night club? Imagine yourself in a bar, and every client is holding a book or a bag pack, reading continuously for hours in an absolute deaf silence as if he is sitting in a public library. Isn't it embarrassing to be the only one that wants to attempt a refreshing cold beer in this awkward atmosphere? Thus, are "students" in universities really students? Do they fulfill the real student format? Do they understand the real meaning of the word? These questions impel students to rethink their essential duty as knowledge seekers.

Yes, maybe students are lost in the university maze and do not realize their appropriate position. They are living their youthfulness and enjoying the moment. This is normal. Though, the much more normal act of studentship is opening one's eyes to the real aim, understanding the paradox they are living in, and, then, pulling out the action of change into accomplishment.

## THE POWER OF THE PEN, THE POWER OF THE GESTURE

*El-Mehdi Iraqui*

They both mingle to reinterpret art on its divine forms. They both live inside the human being and spring up one day to reaffirm they have been the ultimate power standing the soul, the spirit, and the human entity up.

I believe literature, the confirmation of existence, allows one's thoughts and insights to persist, stay engraved in memories, on hard memories, the ones, that would never disappear. Literature is the power, which ejaculates from hardships to triumph. It is the strainer your mind uses either to filter all what it encompasses, or let every single thought, idea, perception, moment jump up from ink, to paper, and stay intact.

Theater, the other power of expression, of living art on its raw state, makes the moment feel genuine, with no lies or even doubts. It smoothly blossoms spectators' attention and make them believe on the scene, on the story, the simple gestures the theater play disguises. Theater brings up hope, brings up all feelings a human could embrace. Actors, audiences, back-scene people, to the very late fan, and the very tired ticket-man, they all live that moment, fully live it, and never reach it again. Theater changes by its people; theater makes the voice, the imagination, the message, the belief live a flower cycle journey, to cry one day, until taking life by all its means, and come back again to the very first start and make new dreams come true. Literature, theater, the power of the pen, and the power of the gesture, both live inside me, both report my instance, my moment, our moments to either persist to eternity or live the present and let the future decide of its fate.

# NAKED THOUGHTS

*Oumaima Maliki*

Call her the one, who loved you until she forgot how to love herself,  
The one who ditched all life pleasures to satisfy your sadistic needs,  
The one who neglected her struggles, to help you get through yours,  
The one who has been with you through it all, when you were nowhere to be seen  
The one who believed in you, when no one did  
The one who got your back, when you thought you would never get on your feet again  
The one who touched your heart before touching your lips  
The one that made your lungs fall in love with smoke,  
And made your blood embrace alcohol

Call her the greatest thing you never had  
Call her the gem you replaced with rocks  
Call her the deafening sound of silence in your room every night  
Call her the smell of wild berries that lingers in your apartment after she left  
Call her the gentle touch of femininity you failed to explore  
The love you were too poor to afford

Call her your last smashed cigarette  
Or your last tequila shot

Call her the smell of burnt toast in the morning,  
A body heat that shatters you into pieces whenever you hear her name  
A full weight of what is being lost in your life  
Call her the cold blood that boils inside you

Call her a fairytale  
A nightmare  
A dream

Call her a long road you can never take  
Call her the fastest and easiest stairway to hell  
Call her a hurricane  
A calm river in a forsaken town

Call her a memory

Or let the memory let her memory fade away

Nameless,

Unknown, Slowly,

Quietly.

# AUI GEOGRAPHY

*Soufiane Tahri*

*Mission: Infiltration inside Sigma Crew.*

*Purpose: Discovery of a new species surnamed "Wald Al Akhawayn".*

*Tools: A camera, a sharp eye, and quick legs adapted to survival.*

First day. After a quick scouting of the environment, we dispatched the teams to different basic locations: the food site, where the species gather to grab their portion of a meal, the training camp where warriors are trained to become as ferocious as lions, and the temples of knowledge where every member of the community is required to go. It seems that "Wald Al Akhawayn" had to adapt to the harsh environment by different rituals. The first one: wake-up call. The response is the same for each one of them. Either a morning groan, a hit to the 'alarm' which seems like a device suited for psychological torture, or a random gesture of the limbs to express irritation. We can safely assume that they enjoy a masochist component in their lives. Then comes the rush for either food or knowledge. We took our precaution but still got caught up in the wave of assailants. The one to stand in the way would only face decay. On the other hand, the mating ritual is very hard to access for outsiders but we could notice that the sun is an enemy and the moon is their ally. Or maybe the darkness. A location called "rond-point des amoureux" is where the selection process takes place.

After a few days, we weren't able to get a full description of the species. However, we came to the conclusion that the community is divided in different groups to survive, and that each faction is hostile to the others. The loners are left alone and show no sign of percussion. Finally, the species is dangerous in its spontaneous reaction with no clear pattern. It should be isolated and kept under more supervision.

*End of the reportage. Casualties: disabled cameras due to AUI environment. "Wald Al Akhawayn" blamed the ITS, a mysterious cult.*

# ANNOUNCEMENT

Al Akhawayn Chronicle is **recruiting!!**

Are you motivated and have a passion for writing?

Please get in touch with:

**Mehdi Lehlali: Me.Lehlali@au.ma**