



PRESIDENT'S NEWS DIGEST

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 17th issue of the 3rd year of the President's News Digest.

In this issue, I will be addressing the topic of inspirational teaching. Highly effective teaching is a combination of art and science reflected through attitude and technical skills.

Passion for teaching combined with positive attitude, energetic behavior, technical competence, and ability to motivate and interact with students is a must to make it inspirational.

Inspirational teaching requires that the learning objectives are clearly articulated to students and delivered by providing clear and exciting teaching material through the understanding of the learning styles of the recipients and the adoption of a behavioral attitude that encourages participation. Some tips are provided below on how to become an inspirational lecturer:

- Start your lecture by proving a clear and detailed lesson plan of what you want to achieve in the lecture and the teaching methods you will be deploying
- Avoid sitting down while teaching as this implies low energy
- Demonstrate passion and enthusiasm by moving around the class and use your body language in order to send signals that you really enjoy teaching
- Innovate in teaching by using different teaching methods and rely on technology whenever appropriate
- Always remember that students have different abilities and you need to tailor your teaching approach to meet their needs
- Make your lecture lively through interactions with students and group discussions
- Demonstrate genuine warmth towards all students in the classroom
- Praise students for their hard work and efforts and this will ultimately unlock their potential
- Encourage questioning and provide feedback to make lessons highly interactive. This will result in the students developing strong critical and analytical skills



- Do not make your PPT presentation slides congested with information
- Use practical examples in order to simplify difficult theoretical concepts
- Encourage your students in order to help them perform better
- Lead by example through respecting the timing of your lecture
- Be well prepared (technically and emotionally) as your task is to transfer your knowledge to your students within a supportive and interactive setting
- Remember that we are all learners, and we can learn a great deal from our students. Treat them with respect and encourage them to enjoy the learning experience
- Adopt a reflective approach in order to improve the quality of delivery and content of your lectures. Colleagues who are fellows of the Higher Education Academy should share their learning experience with their students and peers

Inspirational lecturers combine leadership, energy, innovation, passion, integrity, and knowledge during their lectures in order to unlock the potential of their students. Our students should be at the heart of all what we do and we should inspire them to acquire skills needed in the market place. Our students will become more employable through acquiring technical skills as well as critical, analytical, problem solving, communication, research, and presentation skills. It is our duty to provide them with the best learning experience by enriching their knowledge and understanding, extra curricular skills, and self-respect and confidence.

ASU'S WORKSHOP ABOUT MEETING THE MARKET NEEDS

On 20 February 2018, ASU organized a workshop titled "Millennials (Young Graduates) and the Job Market: The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Meeting Market Needs" at its Dome Hall from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm with the presence of representatives from the public and private sectors, members from Programme Advisory Boards, academic and administrative staff members from the University, in addition to a number of students and alumni.



INTERVIEW OF THE WEEK

We would like to feature the interview this week with:



Name: Dr Mohammad AbdulQadir Obeidat

Position: Asst. Prof. of Management Information Systems

1. Tell us about yourself: (Your childhood, academic background)

I grew up in an impressive small town in the north of Jordan among an educated family; four of them including myself have a PhD in different disciplines. I am married with four kids.

I completed my high school in the scientific stream with a high GPA in 1989. I completed my higher education from highly reputed universities with high GPAs in six years including; BA in Accounting from Yarmouk University (2.5) years, MS in Technology Management from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (1.5) years and PhD in Management Information Systems from the American University of Cyprus (2) years.

Prior to joining ASU, I worked at highly reputed universities in Jordan like the German Jordanian University, University of Jordan and the American University of Madaba.

2. Tell us about your job at ASU

I joined ASU in September 2017 as an Assistant Professor of MIS. Currently I am teaching the MIS courses: Management Information Systems, Decision Support Systems, Strategic Information Systems and Financial Information Systems.

The workshop is part of the University's perpetual effort to listen to the market needs and adjust its educational delivery accordingly in order to better equip its students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their careers.



Indeed, the university believes that its role is not to just graduate students with academic degrees, but to graduate well-rounded human beings who have what it takes to easily integrate any structure they want. This belief was echoed in the President's opening presentation where he underlined that this holistic approach to student development is a cornerstone of the teaching philosophy at ASU, a university that prides itself for always trying to be a market-driven applied science university.



The President also looked in his brief introductory presentation at the latest trends and numbers related to the present and future market needs in terms of the most sought-after disciplines in the job market and the most promising programmes in terms of employability and profitability. This underpins the question: are the university graduates in Bahrain a good match for the current market needs? Do they have the necessary skills?

To trigger the discussion and profit from the insight of the workshop's participants, Dr. Faiza Zitouni, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Development, and Dean of Student Affairs, presented to the audience a couple of slides about the soft skills that ASU tries to embed in its graduate attributes and asked the audience about what they consider to be the most important skills, hard and soft, for the workplace nowadays. The participants were very engaged and reactive and, after working in small groups, shared lists of the skills they deem essential for the modern graduates. When asked to name one chief skill per group, the following came up:



- Self-confidence
- Adaptability
- Teamwork spirit
- Being value-driven
- Communication and presentation skills

In addition to my teaching duties, I have published a book titled Technology Trade Theory (TripleT), in addition to five papers published in highly reputed journals; three of them affiliated to ASU. My research focused on the technology management, competitive opportunities with MIS and issues of the networked companies.

Other duties encompass community engagement, advising and supporting students academically and personally.

3. Tell us about your aspirations for the University

In the view of my aspirations for the University, I can quote "ASU = I"; this means that if ASU goes up I will go up, and vice versa. So I will keep working hard to boost ASU to be always at the peak.

4. What do you enjoy most about your job?

Experience: Inspiring students academically and personally adds up new experiences that I can share later on and help my colleagues in solving problems.

Innovation: Dealing with different levels of students prompts me to create new techniques for teaching and learning.

5. Tell us about your hobbies

I like reading, design and decoration, listening to music and if I am in the mood, sometimes I play violin!

6. Tell us about your favourite food

Definitely the "Mansaf"

Throughout the discussions, a persistent question kept coming up: what are more important: the soft skills or the hard skills? Dr. Faiza gave a nice metaphor to answer this question: the hard skills, or the academic credentials, are the key to the door of employability, but the soft skills are the handle that will open the door for the graduate to get hired and succeed in his job. In other words, the academic credentials will secure the interview for you and perhaps get you your first job, but the soft skills will help you get ahead and build a prosperous career. The development of these skills, explained Dr. Faiza, is an integral part of the University's Employability Strategy.

Prof. Saad then took the stage and shifted the discussion to a more practical direction: what should the university do to better meet the needs of the marketplace? And what are the programmes or disciplines that are really in demand nowadays in Bahrain? The industrials and professionals present at the Workshop were keen on answering these two questions. For the first question, they believe the university should build upon its current connection with the industry –namely evidenced by the Programme Advisory Boards meetings- and intensify its consultations with them. In fact, they believe that it's high time the universities in Bahrain engaged in joint research, projects and initiatives that help both the students and the employers. For the second question, they mentioned the following disciplines:

- Cybersecurity
- Hydroculture
- Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things
- Retail, Tourism and Hospitality Management
- Construction and Engineering (Mechanical, Electrical, Railway, etc.)
- Telecommunication

They also stressed the need for universities to focus more on delivering technical qualifications as part of their current bachelor degrees or as part of HNC and HND degrees.

Finally, the President came back to conclude the workshop and thank all the attendees for their valuable contributions. In his closing note, Prof. Ghassan couldn't help but notice that the common thread through the entire workshop was the importance of graduating entrepreneurial students who can take initiative to develop further skills and gain more knowledge on their own.

7. Tell us about the book you are reading now

Actually I don't read books because books are static. You know, we live in the information age, and the journey of authoring a book from the idea to hard cover to the reader's hand takes from 3 to 5 years; this means that most information in books is obsolete. So the big stake of my reading efforts goes to the dynamic Magazines.

I usually read "The Economist" magazine it touches our past, present and future life. It offers authoritative insight and opinion on international news, politics, business, finance, science, technology and the connections between them.

8. Final words

I wish to rewrite Larry Goetz quote "When I am right no one remembers, when I am wrong no one forgets" to be "When I am right no one forgets, when I am wrong no one remembers".

There's only so much universities can do in a limited time span, but if they manage to graduate students who are life-long learners and self-reliant, then they will definitely be able to profit from every opportunity they are presented with, or even create their own opportunities.

Many thanks must go to Prof Saad, Dr Faiza, Mr Hatem and Ms Tania for organizing such a successful workshop.

A VISIT TO SHAIKH ISA BIN SALMAN AL KHALIFA NATIONAL LIBRARY

The Community Engagement Office at Applied Science University represented by Mr. Thaer AlRamini member of the office, visited Shaikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa National Library and met with Mr. Ahmed Al Desooqi, Head of Public and International Relations at the Library and discussed opportunities of cooperation between the two parties.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Successful Entrepreneur, Deena AlAnsarim, shared her experience and her success story with ASU's MHRM students and how she managed to establish three entrepreneurial projects in Bahrain, UAE and KSA.

The visit took place as part of Prof Saad Darwish's interactive approach to engage his students and inspire them, during the course focusing on leadership, team building, and how to overcome challenges through a lens of opportunity and Entrepreneurial spirit.



FALAH SCHOOL VISIT TO ASU

As part of the Community Engagement Office at Applied Science University to host school visits to the University, the Office has invited Falah Schools (A'Ali – Boys) to ASU during the Health Care day that was held on 20 February 2018.

A delegation of administrators and students from the school participated in the health day activities. Press interviews were conducted by Falah student reporters including an interview with Professor Ghassan Aouad, the University President, who expressed his happiness over the initiative from Falah reporters conducting interviews and expressed the University's keenness to build positive relations with various local and international community organizations and discussed the importance of quality in education in order to have students ready for the labor market needs.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICE VISITS BAHRAIN SPORTS FEDERATION FOR DISABILITIES

The Community Engagement Office at Applied Science University represented by Mr. Thaer AlRamini member of the office, visited Bahrain Sports Federation for Disabilities and met with Ms. Sara Ibrahim AlShawi, the Executive Director and discussed opportunities of cooperation between the two parties.



ASU ANNUAL CAMPING

On Friday 23 February, the Marketing and Public Affairs Directorate organized for the 4th consecutive year a recreational camp in the Sakhir desert. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees Professor Waheeb Al Khaja, the President of the University Professor Ghassan Aouad and more than 200 attendees including academic and administrative staff members and their families, attended the event as well as a large number of ASU's students and Alumni.



The camp which kicked off at 1.30pm and finished at 10.00pm, included a full entertainment programme of fun games, children's games, competitions, artistic and sports activities, Bahraini cuisine and other activities where the attendees enjoyed the festive atmosphere.



ASU aims to hold such types of events to strengthen the bond between employees, and create a sense of unity and teamwork.

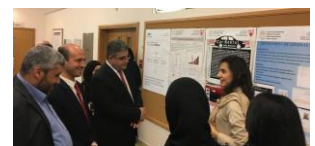


ART EXHIBITION

On Sunday 25 February, coincided with the Job Fair, Prof. Ghassan Aouad, the President of the University inaugurated the Art exhibition, which displayed projects for the graduate students from Computer Science, Graphic Design, and Interior Design in the College of Arts and Science.



Four projects showcased the graduate students' designs and drawings, while three other projects displayed the modern buildings and the new design styles, and the last three projects presented a new students' voting system and research work.



The graduate students presented their projects to the President and the audience and talked about their experience and knowledge they acquired while studying at ASU and how they reflect it when applying to jobs in the industry.

The president expressed his admiration for the creativity of the students' projects and wish them success.

STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY – DR MOHAMMAD A. OBEIDAT

By its very nature, teaching is basically the art of educating. Teaching is a profession that goes through the input-process-output cycle, because it is the processing of input in terms of raw students into output in terms of qualified students. I believe that moving from “input” to the optimal “output” must go through “process” which in the teacher's role involves three major phases:

Teaching by Logic: Input

In view of the “Garbage in, Garbage out (GIGO)” rule, working hard on the input is one of my priorities when starting the teaching cycle in order to realize the positive side of the rule “good input, good output”.

During this phase, the instructor:

- Provides information through lectures, videos etc.
- Engages and captures students’ interest and the topic is established.
- Explains the facts, rules, specific data and the meaning of concepts related to the topic.
- Explores, so that the student is allowed to construct knowledge in the topic through facilitated questioning and observation.
- Links the meaning of the concepts to something known to students so later on easy for them to recall and retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory

Teaching by Example: Modeling

During this phase, the instructor:

- Gives real world business examples related to the main topic.
- Describes to the students how to link the example to the given topic.
- Provides directions and breaks the example into its various components and relates each component to the main concepts underlying the topic.
- Explains, by asking students to explain what they have learned and leading a discussion of the topic to refine the students' understanding - and so leading to the last phase “Imagination”.

Teaching by Imagination: Checking for understanding

During this phase, the instructor:

- Prompts students to imagine, consider their life experience and the world and bring their own examples to the class.
- Asks questions based on the Bloom’s Taxonomy Concept of “wait time” (i.e. individual work, team work)
- Extends, by asking students to apply what they have learned in real business situations.
- Evaluates, by observing each student's knowledge and understanding, and leading students to assess whether what they have learned is true.

From my side, I provide my students with a dynamic environment triggering questioning, critical thinking, answering and finding solutions to current situations. To support these duties and close the teaching cycle, students from their side must:

- Be prepared for class,
- Be equipped with different ideas,
- Work hard to complete course activities,
- Bring their life experiences into the class to enrich discussions and understanding, and
- Try to apply what they learned in class to solve real business problems.

Teaching is a sharing knowledge process between students and their teacher, and between students and their colleagues. So my teaching methods are discussion-oriented in terms of individual and teams. Therefore, I believe that it is an imperative for the teacher to enhance research, discussion, reasoned thinking and team work, rather than to promote memorization of facts.

REMINDER OF THE WEEK

- SER Institutional Accreditation Report, End of February 2018
- Program Review Visits for Arts and Science, 11 March 2018

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Learning never exhausts the mind.”

Leonardo da Vinci

