President's News Digest

ASU
جامعة العلوم التطبيقية
APPLIED SCIENCE UNIVERSITY
معتمدة من مجلس التعليم العالي
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Message From the Editor

Welcome to the 17th issue of the 5th volume of the President's News Digest.

In this issue **Dr. Islam Abohela, the Head of the Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering** will address the subject of " **Students' Community Engagement as a Route for Extracurricular Learning** "

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Inside this Issue

Message from a Colleague
Students' Community Engagement as a Route for Extracurricular Learning

It is evident that extracurricular activities can provide a better learning experience for students on many levels; it is positively linked to academic achievement (Chan, 2016), it enhances students overall experience and improves their acquisition of skills (Buckley and Lee, 2018), it increases their employability (Bastedo, 2017), in addition to its contribution to improving their sense of belonging to the institution (Civitci, 2015).

On the other hand, the social responsibility of the individual and the institution is unquestionable, not to mention the expectations of the society for the role of Universities in producing socially responsible graduates (Millican and Bourner, 2011, Bernardo et al., 2012). Thus, the need for involving students in community engagement activities. In this article, I would like to share with my dear colleagues at ASU two community engagement activities I organized and encouraged my students to participate in, the two projects were: refurbishing a house for a family in need and facades design of a multi-storey residential complex. These two projects were excellent opportunities for engaging myself, the team of students and faculty in a complete practical teaching/learning experience tackling all stages of design from meeting the client to the execution stage which also involved a number of informal assessments and critical feedback sessions.

The two projects also gave the students an excellent opportunity to interact with real clients rather than imaginary ones. This process is missing in our *'curricular'* activities and one of the main hurdles facing our graduates is their communication skills with clients, since in most cases they haven't experienced that before. The closest they get to interviewing real clients is when members of the community are invited for studio based critiques sessions or when the instructor plays the role of the client, which is not as effective as interacting with a real client. In most cases the clients are *'virtual'* and the students are asked to have an imaginary scenario about their clients (Kuhn, 2001, Romice and Uzzell, 2005).

In the first project, after visiting the family's house and taking their permission to involve the students in refurbishing their house, I formed a team from a group of students, another faculty and a teaching assistant to manage and execute the project. We visited the family house, interviewed the family members and recorded their requirements. Afterwards, the students made the plans for the refurbishment and presented it to the family then the municipality representative for seeking funding for the project. One of the students described this experience as a life changing experience since it introduced her to conditions which she thought did not exist. Another student said that it was an eye opening experience as it introduced him to many human aspects which should drive any design.

Dr. Islam Abohela, PhD, SFHEA
Head of the Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering

I formed a similar team for the second project, then we visited the site, received the drawings from the owner and started working on the facades design. I and the other two staff members were participating as members of the team while the students took the lead in this project. I was supervising from a distance and empowering the students to take informed decisions based on analysis and communication with the owner, this is obviously a problem/outcome based learning process which is also a real one. Students learned a lot while solving the design problem which is an expected outcome of this approach, it also encourages their lifelong learning skills (Kaliannan and Chandran, 2012, Yang et al., 2015).

The owner was pleased with the work to the extent that he offered internship opportunities for the students in his contracting company which was constructing the project. The students described this experience as invaluable and gave them an opportunity to apply what they have learned to real life. The owner as well, described this experience as a win-win situation, since he gave us his time and in return he received alternative designs for his project. The project also impacted my colleagues as one of them proposed having similar activities as part of the curriculum and not just as extracurricular activity which was considered as one of the ways forward for developing the curriculum.

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Marketing and Students Recruitment

Marketing of key academic achievements, especially students' work is vital in attracting students to any university. Students' recruitment in a university depends to a large extent on its reputation and academic standards. In addition, the provision of extra-curricular activities like community engagement, sports tournaments, arts exhibitions, volunteering, and many others make a university more attractive to students. Word of mouth is very important in our part of the World and words tend to travel very fast. It is therefore important to treat students with respect and give them the best support if you want them to recommend our University. It is equally important to keep engaged with our alumni as they are our best ambassadors and usually reflect the reputation of the institution. Establishing partnerships with private and public and charity organisations is also very important. As these organisations are always looking for the brightest and most capable graduates who will demonstrate the capabilities of the University. Universities across the globe tend to rely on open days and we need to encourage this in our University. In addition the use of student's recruitment agencies may prove helpful.

Written By
Professor Ghassan Aouad
The President of Applied Science University

It is also important to realise that we are dealing with digital natives "the social media generation" and we have to address their needs. Adverts in social media channels will definitely help students' recruitment.

Providing scholarships to the needy and outstanding students is also another technique to attract students. This is already applied in our University.

It is everybody's responsibility to help in students' recruitment not just Marketing and Public Relations. We have our networks and we should mobilise them to our advantage through regular meetings with alumni and decision makers in industry and government. We should also use the media and press to market all our achievements and the opportunities offered by the University.

As the competition is getting tougher with the establishment of many new universities, it is crucial to make marketing and students recruitment our top priority in the foreseeable future. Institutional accreditation will open many doors for us and international students recruitment should also be a priority. Our academic achievements, especially our rankings and QS rating should enable us to do more and better

Feedback and its Necessity to our Students

In spite of the hard work students exert, they sometimes receive negative feedback from their teachers to an extent where they feel very embarrassed and frustrated in front of the other peers. That is why it is very important for us to give a positive feedback. In order to give a constructive feedback, it is essential for us to understand what feedback is. In its simple form feedback is the comment the teacher says regarding the answer or the behavior of the student.

We can comment verbally regarding what the student says in class. If the student is submitting an exam paper, we can write on the paper our comments. The question is why we give our students a feedback? The answer is because we want to improve their standard and help them do better in the tests. Our purpose is to assist our students have the courage to do things properly, feel and show the sense of success.

It is very important when you are giving a feedback to refer frequently to other practical cases that are related to what we discuss. Dealing with facts only is not enough. You need to try to link what you are talking about to other examples.

Written By
Mr. Hamzah Ramadan
Lecturer

The lecturer can ask the students general questions related to the feedback, and the students themselves can ask each other questions related to the same topic. This will generate more interaction between the lecturer and the students and the students with each other.

The feedback cannot come from one side. Instead it comes from both sides. For example, the lecturer can ask the students different questions related to his/her way of teaching and then he/she needs to list what they suggest regarding what he/she asks about.

It is very important for the lecturer to pay attention to the students' behavior in class i.e. if the students are attracted to what he is talking about.

The students in the classroom feel more relaxed when they are talking about their progress and studies to each other. When they give feedback, they show considerable courage to collaborate more affectively by commenting constructively and revising thoroughly the questions even if they write the feedback to each other on papers.

From my experiences, I noticed that some students check certain information on the internet and read from different sources about selected topics. When they give a feedback to other students, some of the information from the internet or books will be included in their comments. This information may be of great value to them as well as to the other students who they are communicating with.

Some teachers prefer to type or write the feedback on cards and gather the students in groups. They ask them to discuss the information in details together. This method is undoubtedly useful when the feedback is related to common errors. The students will identify what their mistakes are and try to avoid them in the future.

The earlier we give feedback to our students, the better. When the information is fresh in our students' mind, they can accept new ideas regarding what they have learned. The procedure will be based on giving information, whether directly or indirectly, and asking questions related to what is being taught and then giving the feedback. When the instructor is asking questions and some of the students do not answer properly, he/she must not frustrate the students by saying that your answer is not correct. He/ She can draw the attention of the students to the new ideas in an efficient way so that the students do not feel frustrated. This prompt feedback will be much better for the students because all the information is quite fresh in their mind and they respond in a different way.

There are some students who cannot understand the feedback unless it is given to them on individual sessions. If the student is alone with the instructor, he/ she will have the considerable courage to ask any questions that come to his/ her mind. In addition, he/ she will feel more comfortable with the lecturer because nobody is watching them while they are interacting with each other. Also, the instructor will be able to give more attention to the student and answer as many questions as possible.

Some students prefer to be given verbal expressions as long as the feedback is given in a nice and respected manner. Other students prefer to be given a written feedback so that they can refer to it when they revise the paper at home.

It is very important to explain to the students the proper way of helping each other. They must give the feedback to each other in a nice and polite way and try their best to be as constructive as possible.

To conclude, students must understand that they cannot rely on their memory to remember the feedback. They need to write down the feedback while the teaching is explaining it especially if the feedback has to do with common errors and is given in details.

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Information Research and Sourcing Skills Workshop

A workshop was held on Feb 13th 2020 in collaboration between the Library and Information Services Directorate and the Training, Development and Continuing Education Centre titled with (Information Research and Sourcing Skills) which was presented by Dr. Ammar Jalamneh, the Director of Library and Information Services Directorate.

The workshop was delivered to the university administrative staff and office managers, the main aim of the workshop was to give the administrative staff an overview of how to conduct a research using the library's online and paper resources, all attendees were provided with a user name and a password to access the online resources of the library and were trained on how to extract the information.

Written By
Mr. Yasser Mustafa Abusenah
Head of HR Department

The workshop was a practical approach on how to obtain information when required by the college, examples on information obtained throughout the workshop was the fourth industrial revolution, which focuses on various topics, including artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, the Internet of things, etc., and also focused on how to obtain the latest trends in the academic curriculums around the world.

Post this workshop, academic head of departments and deans can now ask the administrative staff working in their respective colleges to search for any information they may require in order to conduct a benchmark or to review the latest technologies and trends in their field.

The College of Administrative Sciences organized a seminar titled "Humanitarian Intervention in International Relations"

The College of Administrative Sciences organized a seminar on Thursday, February 20, 2020, from 11:00 to 12:00 am at the Dome Hall. The title of the seminar was "Humanitarian Intervention in International Relations" presented by Dr. Ali Al-Dada, the Professor of International Relations at ASU.

The purpose of the seminar was to investigate the idea of humanitarian intervention that occurred in the new international system. Moreover, the audience showed a substantial interest in the topic and highlighted fruitful comments and discussed the moral duty and responsibility of the United Nations. To conclude, the academic members proposed constructive ideas for future researches.

Written by
**Mr. Saeed Al dulalml
Asst. Professor**

ASU Students Attended the Ceremony for 19th Anniversary of the National Action Charter

On 17th February 2020, under the Patronage of His Majesty the King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, a ceremony for the 19th anniversary of the National Action Charter was organized in Bahrain National Charter Monument. ASU participated in this event and many members of the Student's council cycle 13 and other ASU students attended the ceremony with Ms. Rawan Bucheeri from the Deanship of Student Affairs.

Written by
Ms. Rawan Bucheeri
Administrator in Student Services Office

Interview with Alumnus

Name:	Abdulla Saleh Al-Saeed
Workplace:	Ministry of Interior
Academic Degree	Bachelor
Academic Major	Political Science
Tell us about your Experience at ASU in terms of learning environment and teaching methods.	It was a very valuable experience from all aspects. I always felt motivated to give as much as I can and help others to achieve success in their tasks. We all collaborated as one team.
What did you enjoy the most about your experience at ASU?	All specialized fields in addition to the events of the University where I got the chance to meet new people and interact with them.
Tell us a success story inspired by ASU.	I have reached all what I want at work because of my education at ASU. I have developed my practical talents, experiences and how to deal with people in real life.
In your Opinion, What are the Improvement areas you would like to see at ASU in the future?	I would suggest preparing an awareness- raising courses in order to prepare students for their careers in the future.
Final words	Every success to ASU

Interviewed By: Mrs. Noora Musalam, **Manager of Career Development & Alumni Affairs Office, Deanship Of Student Affairs**

Applied Science University Hosted the Closing Ceremony of the Eleventh Edition of the Project "بيتكم بيتنا"

As a part of the activities of the Community Engagement Office at the Applied Science University, ASU hosted the closing ceremony of the eleventh edition of the project "بيتكم بيتنا".

The ceremony was organized by Ayadi Relief Organization on Saturday the 15th of February 2020 in Abdulla Nass Auditorium at the University campus.

The ceremony was the culmination of the project that was launched by Ayadi Relief in its eleventh edition, which included the process of restoration and furnishing of three homes of Bahraini families during a whole month and with the participation of three volunteer teams of school students. During the ceremony, the volunteers' experience in the project was presented, in addition to honoring the participating teams and supporters.

Written by
Dr. Mohammed Al-Hamami
Office Manager of Community Engagement

Quote of the Week

"If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough."

- Albert Einstein

من روائع الشعر العربي

وكم من كفيف بصير الفؤاد *** وكم من فؤاد كفيف البصر

ـأبو العتاهية