

PRESIDENT'S NEWS DIGEST

15 JULY 2018 – VOLUME 3 - ISSUE 37



ASU
جامعة العلوم التطبيقية
APPLIED SCIENCE UNIVERSITY

What's **INSIDE** this ISSUE

- Message from the President
- Pro Vice Chancellor For Research And External Engagement At LSBU Visited ASU
- The VP for Admin, Finance And CE, along with Director of Admin & Finance attended the Edudata Summit
- The President Received Dr Nadya Abduljabbar Mohammed Al Shareeda in his Office
- Award Honoring Ceremony for the Outstanding Students, of the Second Semester 2017/2018
- The Bachelor in Accounting and Finance programme conducted its Programme Annual Review
- El Eker Charity Organisation Reconising their outstanding students
- Dr Adel Al Samman - Teaching Philosophy
- Interview of the Week
 - Dr. Rawya Taher
- Quote of the Week



Office No: (+973) 16036161

Email: tania.kashou@asu.edu.bh

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 37th issue of the 3rd year of the President's News Digest.

In this issue of the News Digest, I will address the subject of “**the joy of working in higher education**”.



It is a universal fact that jobs are becoming scarce and we should all feel blessed and fortunate that we have jobs that we really enjoy. Working in higher education, especially ASU, is rewarding in many ways. First of all, the satisfaction we get from the achievements of our students is eternal as we see them graduating with big smiles heading towards a bright future. The joy of working in a university is manifested in many ways:

1. The achievements of our students as we help them to graduate with good degrees encompassing relevant educational and extra-curricular experiences.
2. The help and assistance we provide to the community, especially charity organizations.
3. The recognition through successful programme reviews, accreditation, international certification like ISO and many more
4. The publishing in top rated conferences and journals, books, and many other venues.
5. The promotion to higher roles in the university.
6. The receiving of “thank you messages for good achievements”.
7. The celebration of success like graduation ceremonies, outstanding students awards, innovation in teaching awards, etc.
8. The recognition of the university by international bodies and partners.
9. The professional recognition as fellows and senior fellows of the higher education academy (HEA).



10. The discovery of new cultures by working in a cosmopolitan environment.
11. the attendance of social events like Ghabgha and staff camping.
12. The transformation of students who are receiving financial aid.
13. The family spirit we really enjoy.
14. The engagement with organizations in the public, private and charity sectors.
15. The achievements of our students in sports, arts, and other competitions, tournaments and events.
16. The increase of knowledge in our disciplines and the exposure to a wide variety of innovative and modern teaching methods.
17. The ability to be creative in a stimulating work environment
18. The discovery of new things and the opportunity to explore new ideas.

Gibran Khalil Gibran in his book “**The Prophet**” talks about the joy of working, he says:

“And what is it to work with love? It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart, even as if your beloved were to wear that cloth.

It is to build a house with affection, even as if your beloved were to dwell in that house.

It is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy, even as if your beloved were to eat the fruit.

It is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit.

and to know that all the blessed dead are standing about you and watching.

And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy.

For if you bake bread with indifference, you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half man's hunger

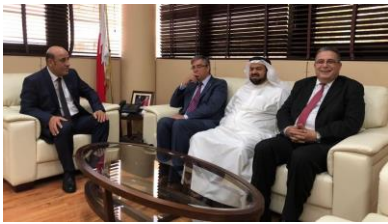
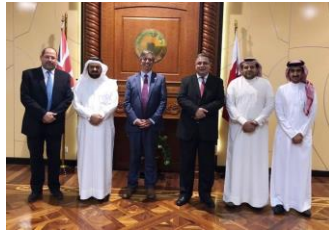
And if you sing though as angels, and love not the singing, you muffle man's ears to the voices of the day and the voices of the night” (Gibran Khalil Gibran - **The Prophet**)

In an article published by the Times Higher Education Magazine it was stated, “we know from research that achieving makes us happy – but only for a short time, perhaps one day, one week or one month. In other words, happiness levels increase after promotion or publication and soon go back to previous levels. We get used to our new situation very fast and consider it the “new normal”. Our expectations rise, and we are no longer able to appreciate what we’ve achieved”. However, it has to be said that this is natural, as we want to achieve more driven by our ambition and future aspirations. The sense of achievement will always bring us joy and long lasting memorable experiences. Our passion to help others should be our main driving force. As educationalists, it is our duty to make the world better and to provide golden opportunities for our students and the community at large.

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/there-are-plenty-reasons-be-happy-about-working-he>

PRO VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH AND EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AT LSBU VISITED ASU

Prof Paul Ivey, Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and External Engagement at LSBU visited the University from 11-12 July and had meetings with the Senior team at ASU in order to explore future opportunities for collaboration. During his visit, Prof Ivey had fruitful discussions with the Secretary General of the HEC and the Assistant Secretary General.



THE VP FOR ADMIN, FINANCE AND CE, ALONG WITH DIRECTOR OF ADMIN & FINANCE ATTENDED THE EDUDATA SUMMIT

Dr. Mohammed Yousif, VP for Admin, Finance and Community Engagmeent, along with Mr. Abdulla Alkhaja, Director of Administration & Finance attended the EduData Summit in USA, Boston on 17 and 18 June.



The EduData summit is the world's premium forum for data-driven educators - a platform for strategists, data scientists, CIOs and other dataheads to discuss and share best practices at the intersection of big data, predictive analytics, learning analytics, and education. It is a summit to explore how higher education institutions can respond effectively and promptly to global changes by understanding the value of efficient implementation and use of data. Attendees left EduData Summit with the tools and understanding necessary of how to get the most business value from your data, making their university a more innovative, competitive and data-driven organization.

THE PRESIDENT RECEIVED DR NADYA ABDULJABBAR MOHAMMED AL SHAREEDA IN HIS OFFICE

The President received Dr Nadya Abduljabbar Mohammed Al Shareeda who have completed her higher studies and obtained her doctoral degree.

INTERVIEW OF THE WEEK

We would like to feature the interview this week with:



Name: Dr. Rawya Taher

Position: Manager Counselling Office

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

I was born in Kuwait where I lived for 20 years. I am married and I have five children (3 girls and 2 boys)

I studied bachelor of elementary education at Yarmouk University in JORDAN and worked as a teacher for 14 years because of that, I understand the nature of the problems for students in the school, I therefore decided to complete my studies; both a MSc and PhD in Counseling Psychology, that enabled me to gain more about the theories and strategies of modern counselling in Higher Education Institutions.

2. Tell us about your job at ASU

I taught in various Universities including; Yarmouk University, the University of Bahrain, the Arab Open University and the Gulf University, then I joined the Applied Science University in 2010; I work as a Director of the Counselling Office in the Deanship of Student Affairs to help students to overcome the difficulties they face in the university environment or the family environment as well.

I also work as an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Dr Nadya presented the President with a copy of her Doctoral dissertation on “The Impact of commitment to requirements of General presentation and disclosure standard on achieving Competitive advantage”.



AWARD HONOURING CEREMONY FOR THE OUTSTANDING STUDENTS, OF THE SECOND SEMESTER 2017/2018

Mr. Mohammed Najjar and Ms. Hadeel Bucheerei from the Deanship of Student Affairs organized on Sunday 8 July 2018 an award honouring ceremony for our outstanding students of semester two of the academic year 2017/2018.



The honouring event was under the Patronage of Professor Ghassan



Aouad, the University’s President and was attended by Dr Assem VP for Academic Affairs and Development, Dr Faiza Dean of Student Affairs, College Deans, Deanship of Student Affairs staff, a large number ASU staff, students and very proud parents. Seventy nine students were honoured and were granted fees compensation varying from 5 to 20 percent, depending on their achievement and position on the honour list.



THE BACHELOR IN ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE PROGRAMME CONDUCTED ITS ANNUAL REVIEW

The Bachelor in Accounting and Finance programme conducted its Programme Annual Review on 11-12 July 2018 by Dr. Gagan Kukreja, Associate Professor of Accounting, College of Business & Finance, Al-Ahlia University, Bahrain. Dr Gagan’s review was that the current Bachelor in Accounting and Finance programme (ASU) matches international standards and was pleased to learn that the programme has 6 courses exempted from ACCA and the programme is built on International Accounting Education Standard Board (IAESB).



3. Tell us about your aspirations for the University

I hope to be a member of the University who always seeks to achieve valuable goals for the interest of our beloved University.

4. What do you enjoy most about your job?

I like the teaching profession very much and I also like to cooperate with the students so much, I like to develop the teaching strategies and modern methods, students love the educational material and make them enjoy the work they do, especially the educational exhibition held annually as well as the seminars that I evaluate their work according to the taught subjects, including; anxiety during exams, stress and anger management, art of etiquette etc.)

In addition, during these events, students leadership, communication, teamwork and organizational skills and others important skills as per our graduate attributes are developed, and talents are discovered and encouraged such as acting, playing, casting, negotiating skills, solving problems, etc.

5. Tell us about your hobbies

My hobby is reading novels, and watching foreign and Indian films with my family.

I love cooking all type of cuisines, but not so much sweets, as I always fail to prepare them.

6. Tell us about your favourite food

I love seafood, Indian cuisine and pasta.

7. Tell us about the book you are reading now

I am currently reading a book; “I finally found happiness”

8. Final words

One always needs to close the doors of the past, and live for the future. In other words never leave the problems of the past ruin or control your life.

EL EKER CHARITY ORGANISATION RECONISING THEIR OUTSTANDING STUDENTS

On 6 & 7 July, the President attended a ceremony organised by the El Eker Charity Organisation at the University, under the patronage of the Governor of the Capital Governorate to recognise its outstanding students.



DR ADEL AL SAMMAN - TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

I entered the teaching profession after more than 10 years in the industry, namely in the discipline of HR management, which reflects in my professional education practices from several angles, including my concern to give substantial consideration to the fit between the individual and collective responsibility, feeling responsible for providing help and support for my colleagues and co-workers, in addition to giving me a wide experience in designing, implementing, and assessing learning programs and mentoring the progress of others. I have been exposed to other cultures which has had a substantial impact on my teaching philosophy and professional practice, widening my horizons to others' opinions and perspectives. Furthermore, it urges me to bridge the gap between theories and practices, which was reflected substantially in my teaching strategies with my students. In addition, it made me able to work as a team member, recognizing the desired objectives and optimizing collective efforts to achieve them.

Being influenced by my HR management background, and how it addresses different people with different needs, I carried on the same approach as an educator and unit manager in Applied Science University, with my colleagues and students. Scott (2015) argued that people learn in a variety of ways, so the challenge for teachers is to discover which approaches help students learn most effectively. Until a teacher becomes familiar with a learner's individual strengths and needs, it is difficult to know which learning methods will have a positive impact on that person. That is why throughout my years of teaching and training before, I have developed an understanding that the best way of teaching is to be more of a facilitator than a teacher, selecting the teaching activities, feedback and assessment approaches, in close relation with students.

As Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis (2004) argue that any adequate account of theory must take note of the relationship to practice that it implies, and as Benjamin Franklin put it "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember, Involve me and I learn ", which is why when I entered academia, I was keen to encourage methodological pluralism, concentrating my approach on engaging in integrated activities through the use of problems extracted from real situations that induce the engagement and enhancement of the learner-teacher relationship. I urge my students to engage in group in-class challenging assignments, applying learning from in real life case studies, to link theory with practice. Such endeavors are reflected in a better performance from the students' side and enhance their critical thinking and application skills. That was really obvious during the activities conducted by the final phase of the semester.

As Wrenn and Wrenn (2009) argued perhaps the difficulty in making the transition from theory to practice arises, at least in part, from a failure of the teacher to integrate both theory and practice into the same course in the curriculum in ways that are relevant and meaningful to the student. Such integration helps students to more closely associate the practical value of learning theoretical concepts. As a course leader for "HR Training and Development", for master students, I initiated changes to the course specifications after conducting discussions with my colleagues to add more student-centered learning activities, linking theory to practice. On top of all, I have changed the course main work, from a theoretical research into a practical project, making my students, in groups, conduct a real training course from training needs assessment phase all the way till establishing ROI and evaluation mechanism of the course.



Moreover, I made a requisite for them to implement the training course in a real organization in the Bahraini community. That contribution proved successful for adding more levels of employability to my students and set an example for my colleagues who began to adopt the same strategy in their relevant disciplines where convenient. I received praise on several occasions from students, colleagues, Department Head, and the Dean of the College, and I am planning to make students conduct management related training courses for the university employees, hence, we get the benefits for both ends.

I believe in empowering my students, learning itself is empowering. Almost with each course, and after the first half of the semester, I ask my students to recommend the learning activities they find not useful and to suggest approaches they find more profitable for them to be embedded in the future learning activities (K2, K3), and in many cases I use their recommendations and they turn out to be very useful, such as the use of opposite points of views, in which one group adopts one point of view regarding a specific topic, and another group adopts the opposite point of view, and each group defends its perspective and argument, then we open the discussion to the rest of students

In addition, I use some other tools, such as peer and self- assessment to get students involved in the criteria and goal setting of the learning process. Challenging questions, group discussions, problem solving, and case studies help me monitor the progress they achieve and provide more interactions with them. I found out that the more formative assessment I use, the more my students benefit in the critical thinking side and this is reflected in the learning activities subject to summative assessment. I translate some of my case studies and problem solving exercises into Arabic, so that my colleagues who teach Arabic courses could use them, and I even initiated a case study database within the department to be used by all teachers according to the different disciplines we have.

I like to use peer-feedback instrument to give them more confidence in their judgement, and enhance their input contribution in developing one another. An example is their assessment of group presentations using forms I developed for this purpose, and then I give them my feedback, as sometimes they get complimentary with one another.

To add more relief, and to decrease the pressure of the academic environment, in addition to having international master students coming from different GCC countries, it happens sometimes that I conduct face-to-face and group support sessions in social environments, which helps them meeting their needs, and taking into consideration their tight schedules, specially that all of them are employed. This allowed me to get more space of time with them to cover the required issues. Furthermore, during the last summer semester, and when the issues were more of a discussion that did not require such aids like boards, projectors, MOODLE, I used to take my students and conduct our discussions away from the class environment, such as the garden and lobby. Actually I was reluctant first to do this because I did not know how my students would react, and whether there would be any benefits from such endeavor, but after we conducted this, I received a lot of positive feedback from my students and how refreshing such exercise was that we think of nominating specific discussion topics to be held in such environment.

Furthermore, I make extensive use of peer observation strategy, attending some lectures of my colleagues, soliciting their advice and help, conducting many corridor and cafeteria discussions concerning teaching and program materials, reading and using their research, and sharing with them teaching and real life experiences. This strategy helped me in so many ways to develop the way I teach, the information I have, and directions I follow. Having said that, I solicit development activities, even outside the higher education context, such as the Bahraini Society for Training and Development, Advisory Boards, Bahraini Ministry of Works and the like, in endeavors to develop myself.



I believe that we are now surrounded by external sources of knowledge, but without a detailed, well-structured body of knowledge in our content area, students will have difficulty working with higher cognitive tasks, and without having the information readily available in our brains, new facts will be isolated and without context; hence, we need a network to plug these into, and that comes through memorizing the underlying facts.

Griffiths (2004) and Healey (2005), also discussed by Clarke (1997) distinguished between research-oriented and research-based teaching. I try to do both with my students. Students usually learn through active research activities. I usually urge my students to use the approach of solving real business problems through research starting from analyzing the situation, and going through the different stages concerned to come up with practical solutions and recommendations to those problems. As my style of teaching is to be one of the herd, you might call me the big brother, but not in the political implication of the expression; I am a moderator rather than a teacher, especially when it comes to researching. I show them the way and how to go through, but they have to open the door and go the path themselves and meet me at the end of the road to discuss what was right that need to be stressed on and what was wrong that needs corrective actions. I always tell them that this approach is not only for studying, but actually it would support them for the rest of their lives. Demonstration of this approach's success is the positive feedback I usually receive from my students, and colleagues as well.

I strongly believe that research loses a lot of its core benefits if not put into action in real life, and that is why I am used to conducting action research, whether formal or informal to help and support my students and colleagues. "Action Research is a form of collective reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out" (Kemmis & McTaggart, p. 6). One example is my study of anxiety in students' presentation skills (Al Samman, A. 2016) which focused on timid and female students and ways to support them. Another example focused on the professional competencies of academic members from the students' perspective to improve the effectiveness of teaching (Al Samman and Zitouni. 2017), conclusions and output of both studies were shared with my colleagues to be used in their teaching endeavors.

In my teaching, I was influenced by Entwistle's Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students (Entwistle 1991), which argues that student's conception of learning gets more sophisticated as they progress throughout the degree course. That is why my teaching strategies change according to the level of students, and they change from the beginning of the course throughout its duration based on the progress my students achieve.

A well-maintained VLE should enable students of all learning styles to receive the best possible education, in a way they may not in an exclusively lecture-based environment which tends to be focused on auditory learners only (Demian & Morrice. 2012). I am doing my best to be a resident more than a visitor to the online environment with my students (White, 2011). To make sure help and support are available for colleagues and students, I use different VLE methods, such as the University MOODLE uploading materials, assignments, quizzes, resources, especially during informal hours to communicate with them, along with the mobile What's App application and e-mail to be available for them any time, especially for those who live out of Bahrain. Using such tools made me available for them as much as possible. I can add to that the use of technology support I am providing for my colleagues regarding training materials, resources, timetables, and communication on the university share points and platforms, I sought the help of our IT department to create for me, as part of my responsibility for the development of academic members' performance. This resulted in significant implications for the working conditions of teachers, support staff, and learners of a move towards a "24/7" approach.

Bryman (2007) argues that leading change in higher education brings challenges to the orthodox structures and common practices, something that requires those with leading positions to induce a collaborative environment, enabling professional academics and students to achieve their potential. Being the leader of the Applied Research in Business course, I have a sustained active commitment to the creation of such environment for my course colleagues and students.

I made a change to the evaluation criteria and marking distribution, wanting to shift from one presentation to three and from the prevailing single research to the joint one to get students to work collaboratively. I got the support of colleagues, conducting several meetings and discussions to market my ideas, building their enthusiasm, and modifying some ideas based on their recommendations. The proposal proved its worth in the last semester and the approach was moved from my department to other departments within the College.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“The foundation stones for a balanced success are honesty, character, integrity, faith, love and loyalty.”

Zig Ziglar

 *Happy Reading!* 