

Noor Al-Hekma

Special Edition 2014



جامعة دار الحكمة

DAR AL-HEKMA UNIVERSITY

A Visitor from 10
Downing Street

The Dawning of a New Era

Dar Al-Hekma University wins
2013's "employer Achievement
Award"

Hekayat Ashara The Story of Ten

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Noor Al-Hekma Team

Arabic Editors
Souha Kabbara
Dr. Saida Shihab

English Editors
Susan Al-Amudi
Laraine Anne Valles
Samina Moshtaq
Soukaina Hamidaddin

Contributing writers
Asma Sheikh
Susan Al-Amudi

Translator
Souha Kabbara

Graphic Designer
Hiba Fawaz

Photography
Hiba El Dada
Rogayah Hamidaddin
Noha Dahlan
Haneen Osta

To advertise
Tel: +966126303333
Ext. 683
Fax: +966126325498
E-mail: PU@dah.edu.sa

The Dawning of a New Era

The Beginning

Dar Al-Hekma University was first established in September 1999 as a college built to serve the educational needs of young ambitious women in the community who sought quality education and challenging careers in pioneering fields. It is a premier non-profit institution of higher education for women in Saudi Arabia and a leading model of teaching and learning institution, nationally and internationally. A pioneering project of the Al-Ilm Foundation, Dar Al-Hekma was built with the objective of providing state of the art higher educational facilities and services through academic institutions, such as colleges and universities, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

After nearly four years of intensive planning and successful implementation, Dar Al-Hekma University, still a college then, garnered 120 candidates in its first year. Enrollees poured into three different majors: Management Information Systems, Interior Design and Special Education.

Dar Al-Hekma began facility expansion in 2003, with financial support from Mohamed Bin Issa Al-Jaber, a Saudi businessman, for whom one of the buildings was named. Applications for enrollment in 2003 exceeded Dar Al-Hekma's number of graduates, a development corresponding with the Kingdom's realization of high female unemployment at the time.

The academic programs at the college were developed by the Texas International Education Consortium (TIEC), Austin, Texas as part of the larger contract to design the complete blue-print for the various divisions of the college. For developing the academic programs, TIEC appointed project element teams with Saudi and international experts and academics who were charged to develop the curriculum. About 140 experts were recruited to serve on the various project elements teams to complete the task of developing the overall curriculum, the detailed course description and course syllabus as well as information on the laboratory component and text books, etc. The work of the teams and the program

documents they produced were reviewed and approved by the Academic Committee appointed by the Founding Committee and the final program was submitted for approval to the Ministry of Higher Education, which assured national accreditation. The standards used for developing the curriculum closely followed the requirements of the Middle States Association in the United States, which will further facilitate international accreditation.

In addition to its master's programs, Dar Al-Hekma University currently offers four-year bachelor's degree programs in six majors with up to 142 credit hours and a liberal arts component comprising a variety of general education courses. To this day, Dar Al-Hekma continues to uphold its promise of being a creative and supportive learning community, retaining its commitment to the liberal arts, whilst preparing graduates for professional success.

The Metamorphosis

Since the summer of 2008 Dar Al-Hekma began its pursuit of university status. The quest was a long and vigorous journey; but the college's swift and steady increase in its student population, year-in and year-out, was the predominant incentive in its plans to rapidly grow the infrastructure from a single building to a multi-building campus. This multi-building campus would house conference-halls, auditoriums, a separate building for the Design Program and a countless of other facilities such as a race-track, gymnasium, swimming-pool, etc.

Since the inception in 1999, and excellence was, and still, is Dar Al-Hekma's main goal. To achieve this goal, the university developed four pillars of excellence: teaching, learning, operational, and strategic excellence. These principles are to be accomplished through the university's 18 strategic objectives it developed which need to be achieved over yearly objectives from the different university departments. The objective behind Dar Al-Hekma University's strategy is to graduate future generations that exhibit independent learning, analytical and critical thinking, and high level of culture that is based on research and exploration, distinctive ability in problem solving with a creative look on community service.

On January 16, 2014 Dar Al-Hekma was honored with the decision of being awarded the university status with the consent of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz; and with the continuous support and encouragement from the Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Khalid Al-Angari.

On Sunday, January 26, Dar Al-Hekma not only started its second semester but also celebrated the new status as a university. During the celebration, students, faculty and staff sang their hearts out. Everyone was so cheerful and ecstatic to be part of a university now. The celebration ended with the sound of the university anthem and everyone singing along as they headed back to class.

To mark this memorable moment of becoming a university, Dar Al-Hekma University are set to have another celebration in the near future and will invite everyone who was part of this journey since the beginning. "My gratitude goes to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz for his wise order. Also I would like to thank the Minister of Higher Education, the Honorable Dr. Khalid Al-Angari, on everything he made possible for the university and higher education in general," said Dr. Suhair Hassan Al-Qurashi, the President of Dar Al-Hekma.





A Visitor from 10 Downing Street

Dar Al-Hekma University Welcomes British Prime Minister David Cameron

The grounds of Dar Al-Hekma University are frequently graced by dignitaries from all over the globe, yet no visitor has brought as much spirit of excellence to the University as British Prime Minister David Cameron did during his visit on the 6th of November, 2012. Notably, Dar Al-Hekma University was the only female institution in Saudi Arabia to receive the Prime Minister who had arrived in the Kingdom for a special appointment with King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud.

The Prime Minister was received by Dar Al-Hekma University President Dr. Suhair Hassan Al-Qurashi, members of the Board of Trustees, senior management and faculty. Mr. Cameron expressed his gratitude and pleasure in visiting the University

and his great appreciation for the successes and achievements of the institution. Dr. Suhair and the Prime Minister engaged in a lively conversation, discussing higher-education opportunities between the two countries and collaboration of Dar Al-Hekma with educational institutions in the UK.

The highlight of the Prime Minister's historic visit was the round-table discussion. Students, primarily from the Law Program and distinguished alumnae who had completed their post-graduate studies from leading universities such as Oxford and the London School of Economics, got their fair share of the Prime Minister when they were invited to take part in a round-table discussion with him.

The students were very much engaged and spirited during the debate and thoroughly enjoyed the exciting exchange of ideas. "We are deeply grateful to the Prime Minister for taking the time to visit Dar Al-Hekma University during his brief stay in Jeddah, and more importantly, for having a discussion with us. It is enormously encouraging for us, as students, to have international political leaders take an interest in what we do and what it's like to be a student in Saudi Arabia," commented one of the round-table participants. Another student was amazed by David Cameron's sincere interest and said, "Mr. David Cameron was really sharp, asking us the right questions."

"It was a very inspirational session with a fascinating group of ladies who will clearly do amazing things for the Saudi Kingdom and our world."

He was genuinely interested in hearing what we had to say. It certainly felt like he cared and wanted to learn more about us."

Everyone was left wanting more as the discussion inevitably came to a close, but it was clear that both parties had learned a lot from each another and would continue to reflect on this experience for quite some time. The Prime Minister was very pleased to witness the high caliber, passion and ambition demonstrated by Dar Al-Hekma's students and alumnae. He also praised Dar Al-Hekma for its role in educating

and empowering women in the Kingdom, adding, "It was a very inspirational session with a fascinating group of ladies who will clearly do amazing things for the Saudi Kingdom and our world."

Dr. Suhair was greatly honored by the Prime Minister's historic visit. "It brings us immense pleasure and pride to host British Prime Minister David Cameron at our campus. His visit signifies his support for our university's vision of a bright future for our graduates excelling in their fields, as we also help raise the bar for higher-education in the Kingdom,"

remarked the Dar Al-Hekma University President.

As a symbol of gratitude and appreciation for Dar Al-Hekma's generous hospitality, David Cameron later invited Dr. Suhair and a number of Dar Al-Hekma members to 10 Downing Street, the home of British prime ministers since 1735. This unforgettable experience allowed those invited a sneak peak of where the Prime Ministers of the UK have resided for centuries – a land-mark most visitors to London only get a glimpse of from the outside of a gated-entrance.



Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf Al-Saud along with Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi and the Vice Deans greeting The Prime minister

Kerry Healy is the first female President at Babson College



Kerry Healy, president of Babson College along with Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi

Dar Al-Hekma University joins hands with Babson College

Often linked to daring innovation and calculated risk-taking, entrepreneurship entails taking the initiative to develop, organize and manage a business venture (along with the risks) with the aim of making profit. Indubitably, the spirit of entrepreneurship is integral to a nation's capability to survive and thrive in the global arena of capricious cut-throat competition. On the 17th of May 2013, Dar Al-Hekma University forged an alliance with Babson College. Founded in 1919 by financier and entrepreneur Roger W. Babson, Babson College invented the methodology for entrepreneurship education. A pioneer institution in field of entrepreneurial education, nearly a century later, Babson College continues to champion the idea that "thinking and acting entrepreneurially is more than just an inclination. Rather, it can be taught."

During her first historic visit to the campus, Babson College President Dr. Kerry Healy was received by some of the members of Dar Al-Hekma University. Being the first woman president in Babson's 94-year history, Dr. Healy was genuinely impressed with Dar Al-Hekma University, describing it

as a paradise for women's learning and empowerment. "I look forward to our collaboration. Your graduates virtually glow with ambition and talent," added Dr. Healy, who signed the Cooperation Agreement after addressing over 200 members of Dar Al-Hekma University's Graduating Class of 2013. Following the MOU-signing, Dar Al-Hekma University President, Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi, shared her vision for the university and its array of strong academic allies.

"The cooperation with high-profile colleges and universities, international expertise, and attraction of specialized expertise that have international reputation like Babson College, will grant the college a place in the international educational arena," said Dr. Suhair. "The agreement will be instrumental in advancing women's leadership and entrepreneurship at Dar Al-Hekma, which is aligned with our mission to cultivate accomplished women, leaders and entrepreneurs."

With the Cooperation Agreement, Dar Al-Hekma also announced that it would soon be launching an entrepreneurship center in the

university. The center is expected to offer a blend of ground-breaking and cohesive curricular programs, giving Dar Al-Hekma students and alumnae the opportunity to garner functional business skills and foundational liberal-arts knowledge to tackle real-life problems in business and society. The new entrepreneurship center will certainly give Dar Al-Hekma a competitive edge over other academic institutions in the country, and will be a valuable addition to higher education in the Kingdom. The center will also play a vital role within the Saudi job market since entrepreneurs are considered to play an essential part in economic development. Dar Al-Hekma entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to help build the Saudi community in ways such as providing jobs, conducting business locally, creating and participating in entrepreneurial networks, investing in community projects, and giving to local charities. Dar Al-Hekma University can take advantage of the entrepreneurship center opportunity to become a leader in entrepreneurship and secure the economic and social rewards that accompany that role.



Diplomat Wives visit the Campus

Representing 11 different nations, the wives of the Attachés of Defense paid a visit to Dar Al-Hekma University on the 28th of October 2013. The high-profile delegation had accompanied their diplomat husbands on a trip to Jeddah were very much interested in Dar Al-Hekma University and learning more about women's education and empowerment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Along with other six program directors, Dar Al-Hekma University's Advisor to the President, Dr. Saleha Abedin, received the delegation and gave them a tour of the campus and its various state-of-the-art facilities. Dr. Saleha

underlined the significance of education as the greatest weapon for success, noting that "the best means of relationship and collaboration between countries is education - take a student from another country and you will have an ambassador for life."

During the visit, several Dar Al-Hekma Student Ambassadors spoke to the guests about their university life, extracurricular activities and the many exciting academic opportunities provided by the university. The ladies were

quite impressed with the students' professionalism and passion for their studies and ambitions, and commended Dar Al-Hekma students for their outstanding enthusiasm. "I speak here for the whole delegation, we are very happy with this visit and it was even better than what we anticipated," remarked one of the visitors at the end of the campus tour. "However, the one thing that bothers me is that I do not go to school here. I want to be in that print studio!" she added, referring to the Dar Al-Hekma's Graphic Design studio.

Dr. Saleha received feedback that the 11 visitors were positively surprised of Saudi females

Dar Al-Hekma Promotes the Prince Mohammed Al-Faisal Prize for Islamic Economics Research

An integral factor spurring the growth of an Islamic community is the development of Islamic economic thought. This is especially true for developed economies today since they are no longer immune to economic crises and other pecuniary predicaments. The philosophy and theoretical framework of any economic system are essential components driving initiatives in the form of:

articles, programs and regimes to deal with economic problems and crises.

On the 16th of February 2013, a delegation of Dar Al-Hekma students met with His Royal Highness Prince Amr bin Mohammed Al-Faisal. The prince paid a special visit to Dar Al-Hekma University in order to announce the commencement of one of his latest projects - the Prince Mohammed Al-Faisal Prize

for Islamic Economics Research. Students interested in research will be given the opportunity to prove their research skills and proficiency by taking part in this project. A period of 10 months will be allotted to all participants to complete their research, and the winner of the competition will be the lucky recipient of SR 100,000. In alignment with Dar Al-Hekma's commitment to research and its aspiration of becoming a teaching-research institution, the University has been a large supporter in the promotion of the project. The Prince Mohammed Al-Faisal Prize was conceived to support and promote scientific-research within the many fields of Islamic Economics. This is expected to be carried out via linking current economic problems faced by Muslim communities and the solutions emanating from the Islamic principles of faith.

HRH Prince Mohammed Al-Faisal touring the campus



Dar Al-Hekma University Wins 2013's "Employer Achievement Award"



Minister of Labor Engineer Adel Fakeih awarding Dar Al-Hekma University

We won!!!

Dar Al-Hekma University won the Middle-East "Employer Achievement Award" during the Talent & Diversity Leadership Forum, held in Riyadh in November 2013. Dar Al-Hekma University is the first higher educational institution to win this award at the Talent & Diversity Leadership Forum.

The initiative was endorsed by the Ministry of Labor of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and organized by Naseba in collaboration with Talent Enterprise. Dar Al-Hekma received the award based on the outstanding results the university scored with regard to workplace practices and culture, talent attraction, and employee development and retention. Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi, President of Dar Al-Hekma, received the award from His Excellency Eng. Adel bin Mohammed Fakeih, Minister of Labor.

"Dar Al-Hekma is proud to receive the Employer Achievement Award 2013. Such an award shows a tremendous achievement and proves that we are doing everything right in means of workplace practices, culture and employee development. Dar Al-Hekma continuously strives to invest heavily in the development of its main asset, the employees of the University, and involves them as much as possible in the strategic planning of Dar Al-Hekma Community. This award acknowledges the commitment, support and dedication of employees at Dar Al-Hekma, who have given their time, knowledge, skills and experience to enable young people to grow. It also confirms our country's recognition of the importance Dar Al-Hekma plays in young people's future," said Dr. Suhair upon receiving the award.



Dar Al-Hekma University placed among the top 11 companies to be awarded the Employer Achievement Award, in recognition of the Kingdom's most innovative and diverse employers and contribution towards making the Kingdom a knowledge-economy.

Out of all the applications reviewed for this award, only 21 organizations were short-listed for final judging. The process of evaluation was through a 'blind-judging', where the names and identities of the organizations were kept confidential, and each nominated company was evaluated by the experienced judges solely on the merit of their application.

Key criteria for evaluation included transparency with regards to employer brand and talent attraction, employee engagement, development and retention. Another factor was how inclusive the strategies were for managing talent and diversity, including the youth, females, expatriates and the Saudi national talent.

Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi thanked and praised her staff for their efforts and mentioned that without them they would never have gotten this far and that shared management is how the college makes most of its

decisions which creates clarity and transparency that provides equal opportunities for all. "When I see the superior quality of our students, excellent work environment, and high work ethics I cannot help but feel proud to be part of this organization," said Dr. Suhair.

Dar Al-Hekma University's retention rate is very high as a result of the holistic approach that aims to develop five areas in students, faculty, and staff. Spiritual, cultural, academic, health, and career are the areas that the university focuses on through workshops, lectures, and activities. This creates a conducive and attractive environment to work, thrive and grow in, yet still challenges employees to bring out their best.

"Dar Al-Hekma is, in my opinion, the ideal employer. I really mean that when I say it, it is a place where I can achieve and grow, then enjoy the fruits of my labor directly and indirectly," remarked Dr. Amal El-Tigani, Vice Dean of Finance and Administration division at Dar Al-Hekma University.

To celebrate this marvelous achievement, Dr. Suhair invited the Dar Al-Hekma community to take part in a celebratory gathering on December 17, 2013.

"This award represents the recognition of the high quality of our work environment, an environment that encourages and supports creativity, growth and excellence. I would like to emphasize that without your support, enthusiasm and commitment to our diverse, yet rich environment we would not have realized this achievement," said Dr. Suhair. "Indeed, success is a choice we make each and every day here at Dar Al Hekma! Congratulations to you all."

Dar Al-Hekma Graduates

Class of 2013



MBA Graduates 2013 and the Management Committee

There is a beginning to every successful story, and our story began here at Dar Al-Hekma University on the 5th of June 2013. It is a story about 222 heroines, the spell-binding tale of Dar Al-Hekma's distinguished graduates whose triumphs are worth mentioning with pride, honor and appreciation.

The 222 heroines bade farewell to the realm of Dar Al-Hekma University where they had thrived for years, arming themselves with knowledge and expertise needed for whence they would enter the real world. The time of their graduation had arrived, and full of hopes, dreams, and ambitions, they were finally ready to leave their beloved alma mater and start the rest of their lives as accomplished women, leaders, and entrepreneurs.

On that long-awaited night, Prince Bandar Bin Sultan auditorium was a full house. Throngs of professors, program directors, the Dean along with her Vice Deans, parents, relatives and friends had all gathered to witness the momentous occasion. The audience eagerly had their sights set upon the stage. Many mothers went misty-eyed as the stars of the event gracefully

ascended onto the platform, hearts swelling with pride and excitement. Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi, President of Dar Al-Hekma University, proudly welcomed all attendees who had come to share in the graduates' jubilation on the university's 11th Annual Graduation Ceremony.

Radiating with pride, Dr. Suhair addressed the audience and graciously thanked everyone who contributed to the advancement of the educational edifice, from faculty members and administrative staff, to all friends of Dar Al-Hekma. She also expressed her gratitude to the parents and guardians of the graduates for their continuous support and care. She mentioned that all Dar Al-Hekma graduates will be capable of bringing about positive change for the betterment of self, society and humanity with the aim of pleasing the Creator.

During the ceremony, the graduates were recognized for their many successes and victories in all international and local competitions and events. This graduation ceremony was notably memorable as it included the first graduating batch of Dar Al-Hekma's MBA program.



MBA Students in Dubai



Saudi Role Model Dr. Thuraya Obaid

As per tradition at Dar Al-Hekma University, a prominent Saudi role-model is invited to the ceremony to speak in front of the graduating batch and inspire them with moving stories about their own education, hardship, sacrifices and perseverance that helped them realize their dreams. These success stories leave an invaluable impact on all attendees and graduates.

2013's guest of honor was a prominent figure - Dr. Thoraya Obaid. She was the first Saudi woman to ever obtain a scholarship to pursue her education abroad. Dr. Thoraya held several positions in the United Nations since 1974 and was the first Saudi to hold a leadership position in that organization. She was also the Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population from 2001 to 2010. Today, Dr. Thoraya is one of the first women to be elected in the Shura Council.

Dar Al-Hekma Award for outstanding achievement Ms. Safeya Binzagr

Every year, Dar Al-Hekma University presents the Award for Outstanding Achievement to honor creative women. This year the award was given to a pioneer in the movement of fine arts in Saudi Arabia and author of the books: "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: an Artist's look to the past" and "A Three-Decade Journey with Saudi Heritage" - Ms. Safeya Binzagr. Ms. Safeya

established several local and international art fairs and is active in organizing a monthly artistic, cultural and educational gathering. Her studio organizes lots of cultural, artistic and literary activities that deal with community services. At the same time, Dar Al-Hekma University awards and celebrates the generosity of donors that have contributed to awards, prizes

and scholarships throughout the years. The evening came to a close with the boisterous strain of the university anthem echoing through the halls, accompanying the birth of a new generation of graduates armed with knowledge and a thirst for creating change in society. We wish them the best of luck.

Dar Al-Hekma shines at London's Saudi Job Fair

™There's no security in life, only opportunity.
 Mark Twain



Dr. Sanaa Askool being awarded by Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf Al-Saud, the ambassador of KSA in UK & Ireland

Under the patronage of HRH Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Kingdom and Ireland, and in the presence of the Minister of Higher Education Dr. Khaled Al-Anqari, Dar Al-Hekma University participated for the first time in the Saudi Job Fair.

The Saudi Job Fair was hosted in London, on the 30th and 31st of March 2013. The job fair was designed to provide Saudi graduates and final-year students with an opportunity to meet with senior representatives from leading companies and institutions in Saudi Arabia who were looking to recruit talented and motivated youth. Dar Al-Hekma University President Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi was among the honored guests at the ceremony.

Dar Al-Hekma University was among the 62 organizations that took part in the job fair. With the goal of aligning purpose, people and values, the university partook in the fair to meet the brightest Saudi students face-to-face, and consequently recruit exceedingly qualified high-caliber individuals.

Dar Al-Hekma's booth featured promotional brochures highlighting job-offers and its MBA and Undergraduate programs. Dar Al-Hekma post-cards and copies of Noor Al-Hekma Magazine were distributed, and the booth included a plasma-screen with a slideshow of images of campus life and the graduation video.

Five representatives from the university manned the Dar Al-Hekma booth during the course

of the two-day event, including graduates Lama Sahab, Samah Al-Safadi and Dr. Sanaa Askool who interacted with visitors, talking about their experiences and education at Dar Al-Hekma University.

On the second day of the event, a formal graduation ceremony took place for over 2000 Saudi nationals. The graduates were delighted at the prospect of the Saudi Job Fair opening doors for them and paving the way to promising careers. To everyone present, the graduation ceremony was symbolic of national pride and glory. Among the graduates was Dr. Sanaa a former IT director at Dar Al-Hekma. She moved to UK in 2008 to continue her studies, and in 2012 she graduated with a PhD in informatics.

"I cannot describe how excited I was and how much I appreciate the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission for their efforts in conducting this event. I cannot express how happy I am! That day, I promised myself that I would keep dreaming and prayed to Allah to help me in my future endeavors," said an elated Dr. Sanaa. "I would like to thank King Abdullah for his kindness and for enabling me to pursue my PhD. Thank you for opening doors for all Saudis to study abroad and investing heavily in the education of girls and women."

Overall, the career fair was a wonderful opportunity for the graduates to network within a short period of time. Dar Al-Hekma was able to both establish new contacts with academic and business organizations, as well as screen potential candidates.

Many students voiced their optimism at the employment prospects presented to them at the career fair. Over the two-day event, the job fair managed to attract more than 2000 visitors and Dar Al-Hekma managed to collect 110 CV's (of which 30 were male applicants). 7 candidates were later contacted for interviews and one of them recently joined the Dar Al-Hekma community as a teaching assistant in the Architecture program.

Participating in the Saudi Job Fair was part of Dar Al-Hekma's ongoing efforts in favor of the recruitment, retention, training, development and capability of Saudis in various disciplines and roles. The job fair was very successful and it is Dar Al-Hekma's intention to participate in next year's fair, in support of the King's vision

of reducing unemployment and focusing on job opportunities for women and ensuring the university's success by fostering Saudi Arabian economic development and social prosperity.



The Voice for the Differently Abled

One-on-one with Dr. Amal Al-Yamani

Dar Al-Hekma Program Director of Special Education, Dr. Amal Al-Yamani, believes that all children, especially those with special needs, have the right to be given equal opportunities to reach their full potential. As such, the Special Education Program at Dar Al-Hekma University prepares aspiring special education teachers with the skills and tools needed to identify the characteristics of different types of learners, and to improve the quality of life of children with special needs, bringing about necessary changes in society at large.

Noor Al-Hekma Magazine recently spoke with Dr. Amal, to learn more about the Special Education Program and the tools it provides to students who are passionate about educating and caring for all students - no matter their individual gifts, abilities, or needs

1. Please tell us a bit about yourself, your qualifications and your achievements.

My name is Amal Ali Al-Yamani, a mother of 3 (Lina who is 15, Ahmad 12 and Omar 4). I graduated from Umm Al-Qura University with a degree in Social Studies and then received my master's degree in Special Education from Boston University.

I then joined the clinical psychology program and got a masters and doctorate from Argus University in Atlanta, USA, with a specialization in family and childhood. I am interested in the fields of practical measurement, diagnosis and early intervention.

After receiving my master's degree and while working on my PhD, I worked in several centers in the United States in the field of diagnosis and treatment for children with special needs - especially children with autism disorders.

2. What is the Department of Special Education?

The Special Education Department was established in 1999 in Dar Al-Hekma University. The department aims to help improve and raise the standard of living for children with special needs and their families through qualified and skilled

professionals. The Special Education Department is made up of two active specializations: autism and learning difficulties.

3. What is the future vision for the department?

Thanks to the Almighty, we have graduated 137 girls so far, but our vision is greater than that, and we aim to attract a larger number of students and to provide more direct services to the community.

4. What are the requirements to enroll in the Special Education Department?

Conditions that apply to the department are the same as university enrollment requirements. In addition, of course, the desire to work with children, especially those with special needs.

Therefore, whoever is interested and willing to help others, loves children and has a bubbly personality would excel in this major. Dar Al-Hekma also asks students to take personality tests that will help them choose majors that fit their tendencies and interests.

5. What positions will the graduates hold and what responsibilities will they have?

It is a large field and it's up to the graduate depending on her interests and ambitions. The aim is to graduate skilled and qualified students to work in public and private schools and centers within the community. I also advise my girls to never set limits for their future career ambitions!

Facts on Autism

A major problem for people with a learning disability is that other people don't understand what it means for someone to have a learning disability" (Calderstones Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, n.d.)

Some graduates are content with their bachelor's degree and want to work with the degree obtained, and there are definitely many opportunities out there for them. On the other hand, other graduates want to continue their education and apply for master's degree and PhD, and prefer to specialize in more than one field. The community needs everyone.

Some graduates work in private and public schools, private centers and institutions that serve children with special needs and there are some other graduates who have gone abroad to continue their higher education in the same or similar field.

6. In your opinion, what do you think are the biggest problems and obstacles you face as the director of the Special Education Department in Dar Al-Hekma?

One of the biggest challenges the department faces is the number of enrollments. Only a few girls apply, which may be due to lack of awareness within the community about the majors offered as well as the career development after graduation.

7. To what extent do you think the Saudi job market needs qualified and skilled professionals in the field of Special Education?

As I mentioned before, it is a big field and the need for qualified and experienced professionals to work with children with special needs in private and public schools and centers is growing.

8. What do you feel when working with children with special needs?

Teaching is a noble profession and I don't think anyone would disagree, as well as the important and psychological impact it has especially when performed with sincerity. Not to forget the great feeling you experience when you've made a change and helped a child and a family; you've contributing in transforming a vulnerable group into a group of active and productive individuals who will help in shaping the community in the future.

9. What activities were carried out by the Department of Special Education during Special Children's Day?

Every year, the department organizes several activities that are meant to enhance the skills and personality of students; as well as contribute to the community service and strengthen the sense of social responsibility, and to provide training and education in order to raise the level of efficiency in teachers of special education in the community.

And one of the activities done once a year by the Department of Special Education is the celebration of the International Special Children's Day. During this event, schools and community centers are invited to take part in a special workshop that aims to teach the strategies of special education teachings. Among the activities done by the Department of Special Education during the International Special Children's Day in Dar Al-Hekma, is hosting several centers specialized in children with special needs in Jeddah. And as mentioned earlier, the celebration event serves several goals such as showing the organizational skills and talents of the students as well as their passion and knowledge with children evident in their activities performed with the children.

The event also gives the students the opportunity to work with a group of people that owns a special place in our hearts.

All of this has a positive impact on all of us, whether on the centers or the children who attend the event, it strengthens our senses towards social responsibility and we get a feeling of fulfillment when we see the smiles on the children's faces.

10. Do you think it is important to deal with autistic children at an early stage?

I believe early intervention is a very important factor in improving symptoms in the future and to control the nature of the disorder. Early diagnosis and treatment must be our top priority as they impact both individuals and society's future.

11. What advice do you give the parents of children with special needs?

You have a major and important role in creating a positive change in the lives of your children and in the community, Insha'Allah (God-willing).

12. What message would you like to give to those interested in joining the Special Education Department?

The major is fantastic. There are a number of diverse areas you can work in and society really needs those specializations. Your society needs you!

Did you know

- Autism affects 1 in 88 children and 1 in 54 boys
- Boys are nearly five times more likely than girls to have autism
- Autism occurrence figures are growing
- Autism is the fastest-growing serious developmental disability in the U.S.
- Autism costs a family \$60,000 a year on average
- Autism receives less than 5% of the research funding of many less prevalent childhood diseases
- There is no medical detection or cure for autism

Red Flags that may indicate your child is at risk for an autism spectrum disorder

- No big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions by six months or thereafter
- No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles or other facial expressions by nine months
- No babbling by 12 months
- No back-and-forth gestures such as pointing, showing, reaching or waving by 12 months
- No words by 16 months
- No meaningful, two-word phrases (not including imitating or repeating) by 24 months

Taking A Leap Into Oceans Of Knowledge, Advancing A Nation Dar Al-Hekma's Research Center

"As research tool, the internet is invaluable"
Noam Chomsky

Dar Al-Hekma University's Research Center was established in September 2012 by Dr. Maryam Ficociello – a Dar Al-Hekma alumna and one of the university's first graduates in 2003. She received her MA and PhD degrees from the London School of Economics and has worked as an Assistant Professor in the Management Information Systems Program at Dar Al-Hekma University.

Dr. Ficociello has extensive experience in a major IT research project with the National Health Services (NHS) in the UK – results of which were published in the British Medical Journal – and won the 'Best Paper Award' for her first publication at the American Conference on Information Systems (ACIS) 2012 during her post-doctoral fellowship.

While the Research Center has only been in operation for a little over a year, it has certainly come a long way. In this interview, Dr. Ficociello shares the center's developments with Noor Al-Hekma Magazine.

1. Why was the Research Center established?

Since the center's initiation in September 2012, Dar Al-Hekma was supposed to be a teaching college, i.e. simply teach students and offer them degrees. Over the year, we felt that we wanted to move towards a university model. Of course, a teaching college is very different from a university - one of the biggest differences is the research component, therefore we established the Research Center.

2. How many people work with you right now?

We have a full-time research office and a faculty research committee of 7 members, their role is also advisory. We also have an external advisory committee underway. In addition, we have created a system to review 20 different projects and registered about 9 projects.

3. What services / facilities does the Research Center offer?

It's not a Research Center with just one focus, it's the research arm of the university. The whole idea is to encourage ethical, productive and skilled investigators among staff, students, and faculty. We try to promote research throughout Dar Al-Hekma University, make connections with other places around the world that are doing research and we're establishing policies at the moment related to research.

We're responsible for everything related to encouraging and facilitating student and faculty research. We ensure that our students take the appropriate measures when conducting research and participating in research. On a faculty level, we make sure it is part of their evaluation that they participate and publish research

just like in any other university. And finally, we make sure we connect with the community in Jeddah and that our research has a good impact on it, by finding out what problems exist in the community and conducting research to find solutions to these problems.

So it's not a center in the typical sense, though it's called one, but it really should become, later on in the future, the Deanship of Research. In Saudi Arabia, they typically combine research with post-graduate studies, so it may be combined into graduate studies and become a Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies.

4. Do you incentivize the faculty and students to do research?

Yes, that is part of our mission: to incentivize faculty, staff, and students to conduct research.

The incentives we now have in place for faculty are part of our promotion policy. As a university, we didn't need to have a full-fledged promotion policy having faculty move from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor and finally to Professor. But as we become a university, we need that structure in place. And the biggest determinant for promotion in academia is research. Teaching is an important component, but research is really what makes it or breaks it.

We like to say we're transitioning ourselves from a teaching institution to a teaching-research institution. We cannot just move from teaching to research, it would take us 10 years to do that.

We're also gradually making it part of faculty evaluation. So this year, for example, research constituted 5% of their performance evaluation. Next year, it will be 10%, the year after 15%, and so on. Research in big universities should be 60% of faculty's performance evaluation; imagine how important it is, but this is for a purely research institution. For students, one of our biggest initiatives is policies. We didn't have an intellectual property rights policy, now we have one. We don't have anything on research

ethics, now we're working on that policy. We're also working with the graduates to have a research handbook as we discovered that it might be useful for students as well. And we're reviewing the curriculum across Dar Al-Hekma. We have a little taskforce that is looking up all the curricula in Dar Al-Hekma for things such as how many times students get mentorship for research.

So we're trying to make people more aware and embed it into our culture. The awareness efforts are for our faculty, staff, and students.

5. Are the students required to do research as part of the fulfillment of their degree?

They don't have to do a graduation thesis/dissertation in all programs. So, for example, in the MIS system, they build a practical system that they write a report on, but it's not research. There's a lot of data gathering for requirements analysis but it isn't publishable research.

I can't say that there's one single program that has a dissertation component involved in it, unfortunately, which is maybe something that we need to look into. In my view of the world, I would like that to become a major piece of it all - that they have graduation dissertations. It could work for two of our schools: the School of Business and Law I can't see how it would work too well for the School of Design and Architecture because their work is mostly practical, but even they need to be very aware of ethical issues and intellectual property rights because for the arts community it's even stricter.

6. What have been the major achievements of the center so far?

We're still building up the structure of the center, but we have increased the participation in the Fourth National Saudi Scientific Conference from one participant last year to 26 this year on the student level. On the faculty level, we've built research transitional plans that incorporate incentives for faculty to conduct and participate in research. We've also built policies to encourage the



“Research is creating new knowledge”
Neil Armstrong

faculty to do more research. These are the main achievements that have been on every level of the institution. It is the first time in Dar Al-Hekma's history that we have applied for 3 different grants from King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) and they're all collaborative: internal, national and international. In total, they come to a sum of about 2 million Saudi Riyals. This will result in job creation for students and graduates as research assistants.

7. How does the Research Center reflect on the quality of education at Dar Al-Hekma?

The drive is behind quality education because without research we would become outdated. It is important that the faculties are always updating their own knowledge through research. It is vital for our ranking as a research institution.

We are aiming to increase Dar Al-Hekma affiliated publications over the next 5 years that are indexed in the web of science/knowledge as this is the only way to receive international recognition. Research is not only important for the quality of education, it also raises the standards of our faculty and students, which will also help us attract high caliber faculty and students and better employers for our students.

Dar Al-Hekma University's Research Committee Members:

Dr. Nancy Aarts (Faculty, SLSH)
 Dr. Areej Asseri (Director, SLSH)
 Dr. Azza Eleish (Faculty, Arch)
 Dr. Michelle Kelly (Faculty, SPED)
 Dr. Olga Nartova (Faculty, LGLS)
 Dr. Ishrat Suri (Faculty, CPP)
 Dr. Khawla Zahran (Faculty, Gen Ed)

Snippet: Dr. Basma El-Zein Wins Laurels on PhD Thesis

Dr. Basma El-Zein, Assistant Professor in the Management Information Systems Program at Dar Al-Hekma University, received an exceptional accolade from her Jury Examiner on her PhD thesis defense. Specializing in the field of Nanoelectronics at Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille (Lille I), Dr. Basma wrote her thesis on "Growth & Characterization of ZnO: Nanostructures for Photovoltaic Applications".

In recognition of Dr. Basma's distinguished research, her Jury Examiner, Dr. D. J. Rogers said: "It is a little difficult for the non-initiated to grasp just what the work in this thesis represents. As someone who is active in the same research field, I would like to point out that the study is not only remarkable in its' [sic] scope (from concept, through materials to device fabrication and testing), but also because the topic is very challenging indeed...the work in this thesis is actually comparable to the output of a whole research group and could easily have served for the generation of several theses."



Some of the Research Team

Quotes

“We are aiming to increase Dar Al-Hekma affiliated publications over the next 5 years that are indexed in the web of science/knowledge.”

Dar Al-Hekma's Student Support Center: One of a Kind

The Dar Al-Hekma Student Support Center provides a range of unique services available to all students for free. Students may receive confidential services ensuring that they get professional top-notch assistance in both their psychological and academic development. The Student Support Center recognizes students as individuals with different needs, aiming to provide specialist services to enhance student experience and to support them throughout their studies. The Student Support Center is divided into two main support areas:

1. Counseling & Career Services

The Counseling & Career Services Department is managed by Dar Al-Hekma Consultant Dr. Fouzia Ashmackh. Prior to joining Dar Al-Hekma University, Dr. Fouzia Ashmackh was an Assistant Professor at King Abdulaziz University. It has always been Dr. Fouzia Ashmackh's personal mission to educate people on the importance of professional assessment to understand what the best major and career is for each individual. She continuously visits schools on her own and gives frequent lectures on the importance of professional interests. She also has a clinic where she provides family counseling.

In 1998, Dr. Fouzia joined Dar Al-Hekma University as a part-time counselor. She interviews, tests, and evaluates job applicants to guide them into choosing the most suitable career. The process in evaluating each individual is psycho-technical. During the employment process, Dr. Fouzia recognized that many employees studied majors that they did not want because they were placed there from the university.

As the department manager, Dr. Fouzia has developed policies and procedures for the career and counseling development department.

She realized that students were not selecting their majors for the right reasons. Instead, they chose majors based on influence from friends, family, and society which is not the ideal way to choose a major. In 1999, a program was initiated where students were assessed to help them figure out the most suitable major for them. However, only highly-motivated and concerned students took the test. She would speak to CPP (College Preparation Program) students about the importance of the assessment; however, not all students were proactive. Within 5 years of implementing the program, admissions realized that many students that did not take the professional assessment test ended up switching majors later. Students who changed majors were upset and demotivated due to lost time and money.

In 2005, it became a requirement for all students to meet with Dr. Fouzia for a systematic assessment before choosing a major. Each student would take a personality assessment test before sitting with Dr. Fouzia to discuss her history and interests.

Based on different variables following the analysis, each student is given 3 recommendations for majors. After the implementation of this program, Dar Al-Hekma University admissions noticed a drop in the percentage of students changing majors or dropping out. It was not until recently that other universities began to see the importance of professional assessment in selecting a major and career path. Fortunately, many universities are in the process of

providing similar services to their students.

The Counseling and Career Services Team includes:

Dr. Fouzia Ashmackh - Consultant
 Ms. Rolla Ashour - Lecturer
 Ms. Basma Gazzaz - Student Counselor



Dr. Fouzia Ashmackh

2. Academic Support Center

Dar Al-Hekma University's Academic Support Center is the only center in the Kingdom which has become an integral part of the educational experience, in combination with the institution's existing career advising and counseling services. It offers its services to any student that faces any learning difficulty and helps her identify her learning style and succeed accordingly.

The center is directed by Dr. Rasha Mashmoushi, an educational psychologist who has completed her Masters and PhD, as well as trained in the UK. She has also acquired further experience in Dubai in both educational institutions and clinical

setting before joining Dar Al-Hekma.

"A major problem for people with a learning disability is that other people don't understand what it means for someone to have a learning disability" (Calderstones Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, n.d.)

People with learning disabilities are largely undiagnosed, commonly marginalized, and greatly misunderstood. With the necessary support and timely intervention, all this can change. The primary trigger for this change has to come from us – we need to be informed, have an understanding, as well as provide those with learning disabilities with equal opportunities.

Dar Al-Hekma University's upper management was aware that students with learning difficulties were not getting the necessary support, as they were being taught using the same methods as students without any learning difficulties. Therefore, Dar Al-Hekma introduced the Academic Support Service to provide students, with learning difficulties, with an equally fruitful educational experience. The center involves every student that faces any learning difficulty when taking a course and tries to accommodate their challenge.

It is not very easy to identify a student with a learning disability. As such, Dr. Rasha follows a process that can be summed up as follows:

1. Identify the student with learning difficulties through referral (instructor, program director or staff)
2. Some students don't really have a learning difficulty and just need to

Hajj in the Year 1908

“They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, coming from every remote path” – Surat Al-Hajj (22:27)

strengthen their skills in some areas. They too will receive help from the center.

3. Once identified, Dr. Rasha conducts an initial interview with the student (background information, school grades, emotional and personal changes)

4. If needed, Dr. Rasha performs a full assessment which includes: cognitive IQ, curricular achievements and emotional challenges

5. Last but not least, the results and the advice of what needs to be done, if the student consents to that then her information can be shared with the instructors. The center also provides educational assistance when it comes to adaptation to accommodate the needs of the student, such as changing the time or location of her tests, which is possible due to the cooperation of the instructors who wish to see all their students succeed.

The Academic Support Center should not be mixed up with the College Preparation Program (CPP) as it is for senior students who struggle with learning itself and require special support as it accommodates students' needs in what they have to learn as opposed to offering courses like the CPP.

Dr. Rasha aims to develop the Academic Support Center further into a proper support system by acquiring the necessary resources – human and financial. She hopes to get everyone on board and that everyone understands the need for special education through conducting awareness campaigns.

She has led one on learning difficulties in general and another campaign on ADHD.

“We need to accept that there are students who have learning difficulties and we need to support them because the lack of it is leaving a very negative effect on their self-esteem and confidence. They're reaching a point where they're thinking they're failures. So we need to support them emotionally and academically and make them believe in themselves,” commented Dr. Rasha.

The Academic Support Team includes:

Dr. Rasha Mashmoushi - Educational Psychologist

Ms. Sarah Jamjoom - Academic Support Assistant - Special Educator

Ms. Randa Awad - Instructor, MSC

Ms. Maha Aljohani - Teaching Assistant, MSC

Ms. Alaa Rajab - Academic Support Assistant

Ms. Alaa Rajab - Academic Support Assistant



Dr. Rasha Mashmoushi

Visitors to Dar Al-Hekma University were given the chance to witness how Egyptian pilgrims experienced and performed Hajj in the year 1908 - a period long before Saudi Arabia was even conceived. Titled 'Pilgrimage to Makkah 1908', a four-day photography exhibition, held from September 29 to October 3, showcased the entire Hajj journey from Egypt. Dar Al-Hekma organized the exhibition in cooperation with Al-Turath Foundation and the French Consulate General in Jeddah.

The photographs document the 1908 (1325 Hijri) pilgrimage that began in Egypt, ending all the way in Makkah and Madinah. The collection was found in the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies (IDEO) archives in Paris and is the original work of Dr. Muhammad Al-Husayni, a Muslim photographer who worked in Jeddah's British Consulate. His collection, comprising 53 images, was on display with captions and



Dr. Nancy Aarts Admiring the Photography

History

The pilgrimage to Mecca has been going on since pre-Islamic times, as Makkah's economic prosperity during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was largely due to the income from visitors.

Muslims believe that the steps of the Hajj correlate to the story of Hajer, the second wife of Prophet Ibrahim whom he married after Sarah was childless. After Ibrahim (PBUH) left her and her infant son, Prophet Ismail (PBUH), in the desert, she frantically ran between the hills of Safa and Marwa to look for food and water for her baby after their provisions ran out.

As she prayed to Allah for mercy, Ismail's heel hit the ground and the well of Zam-Zam sprang forth to nourish them. When Ibrahim (PBUH) returned, he built the Ka'abah with the Ismail's help.

portrayed the different stages that pilgrims had to go through during their trip. Examples of a few scenes captured on camera were pilgrims boarding ships, pilgrims arriving in Makkah and riding on camels as means of transportation to reach the holy sites. The pictures also show a number of officers who were in charge of the Western region, Hijaz, prior to the unification of the Kingdom in 1932.

Two lectures were offered on different days of the exhibition: "Hajj and the Universal Order" and "Prophetic Monuments in Hijaz and Makkah".

"As part of our efforts to preserve Saudi heritage in all forms, we supported the 'Pilgrimage to Makkah 1908' exhibition, in with the cooperation of the French General Consulate, particularly Dr. Louis Blin the Consul General of France," said Dr. Osamah Al-Gohari, Director of the Al-Turath non-profit foundation.

He added, "53 pictures we provided for the exhibition are a rare documentation of the Hajj and serve as an opportunity for researchers to study."

Aside from the photographs documenting the 1908 Hajj journey, an additional 50 paintings were displayed at the exhibition to shed light on the Holy Ka'abah throughout the ages, before its great expansion.

Dar Al-Hekma University shows great interest in the arts and has a long history of supporting and encouraging art exhibitions and programs, both nationally and internationally. "It is such a pleasure to be a part of this experience and to be able to facilitate the opportunity for women in my country to enjoy these historic heartwarming photographs," said Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi, President of Dar Al-Hekma University.

Dr. Saleha Abedin with Dr. Louis Blin the Consul General of France



"Ever since childhood days, I've always dreamt of meeting an astronaut," said Hind AlSahtout, a student of Management Information Systems. And who would have thought that one day her dream would actually become reality at Dar Al-Hekma University when two female astronauts - Linda Godwin from USA and Korea's first astronaut Yi So-yeon - visited the Dar Al-Hekma and shared awe-inspiring experiences of space exploration, confinement in a shuttle and life above the stratosphere.

Astronauts Linda Godwin and Yi So-yeon, along with 100 others from 18 countries, were in the Kingdom to participate in the Second International Space and Aeronautics Technology Conference 2012 in Riyadh to discuss latest developments and research in space and aeronautics technologies, particularly those of major interest to Saudi Arabia. Space and aeronautics systems and technologies have become a fundamental part of the Kingdom's economic, scientific and national security competences.

"We feel totally removed from our normal cycle, lacking the sense of time as we sometimes rotate the earth over 15 times a day," said Godwin describing her life in the space shuttle during her talk at Dar Al-Hekma's auditorium. Linda also talked about the "rumbly" take offs that are "not as violent as a roller coaster." And she warned the girls about "space hair," and, "It's probably best to be bald," she joked.

Female astronauts inspire students at Dar Al-Hekma

'It was emotional to see Earth from such a far distance'

Dr. Linda Godwin is not just an astronaut but also a scientist who has accomplished several important space missions. As a child, Linda was interested in math and science. "I grew up watching a lot of the early U. S. space programs," she said. These programs fueled Linda's interest in science as well as her classroom science teachers who kept her fascinated and curious. When Linda was in college, majoring in physics and math, she started thinking about becoming an astronaut. She researched about the degrees she would need to get into the NASA program. She completed a Master of Science degree in 1976 and a PhD in physics in 1980. She then went to join NASA in 1980 and became an astronaut in 1986.

On the other hand, Dr. Yi So-yeon never really wanted to be an

astronaut. It all came to her as a matter of chance when she was selected from among 36,000 applicants to serve as her nation's first astronaut. According to her, this was rather a national than personal accomplishment. She is treated as a celebrity in her homeland. She has a master's degree in mechanical engineering and a PhD in biological science. She currently serves as a senior researcher at the Korean Aerospace Research Institute and as an adjunct professor at the Korea Advances Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) where she lectures on space experiments, bio-systems and human space flight. She wrote a book, "The 11th Endeavor: The First Astronaut in Korea, Yi So-yeon's Full Story," which was published in August 2012.

"Every mission has a lot of learning involved. It was so emotional to see the Earth for the first time from such a far distance," said Yi who made history by becoming the first South Korean astronaut to travel into space. Only two other countries (Iran and the UK) have had a woman as their first space explorer.

The enthusiastic students of Dar Al-Hekma, joined by students from Dar Al-Fikr School were released early to attend this fascinating and universal event, and they asked many questions after the astronauts' presentation.



The Astronauts lecturing the students

Attendees learned about the training process, space exploration, life in a space shuttle, and the challenge of being selected to a male-dominated team of astronauts. The girls also learned about the importance of looking ahead, aiming high and taking risks.

The students loved every part of the event and consider themselves lucky to have had the opportunity to meet with 2 of the world's 500 astronauts. "I'm very fortunate to be studying at an institution where people of success and high ambitions come to share their life journeys and great achievements," said Hind.

Dar Al-Hekma regularly organizes such events as part of its mission to enhance creativity, excellence, intellect and independent thinking

among its students. And this event in particular was to motivate the girls to achieve excellence in science, mathematics and engineering, fields meant to be mainly for men.

"Don't think of yourselves as women. You are not women. You are people. Don't victimize yourself. The fact that I'm a woman is my greatest advantage, because it makes me work so much harder. Even when I know I am being discriminated against, I try not to think of myself that way, work harder and work the situation to my advantage," is Yi's message to all the women out there.

The sky must not be your limit, reach higher if you want.



Dr. Ghada Fakieh, Dr. Lamyia Gazzaz, Dr. Linda Goodwin, Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi, Ms. Yi So-Yeon, Dr. Linda Robinson, Dr. Amal El-Tagani, Dr. Saleha Abedin

Facts

- In 1985, Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, President of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA), became the first Muslim, Arab and Saudi to travel into space.
- In 1969, Neil Armstrong was the first person to walk on the moon's surface.
- Neil Armstrong is one of only 12 people that have walked on the moon's surface in the 20th century.
- Valentina Tereshkova was the first woman in space in 1963.
- First earthling in space was Laika, a dog.

Ten Women, Ten Stories, One Ruwais

Hekayat Ashara Photography Exhibition



On a cool December evening, Park Hyatt witnessed a great rush of people headed towards its Sohba Garden. This time, it was not to attend a wedding, nor to get an unrivalled view of the Red Sea or the beautiful Jeddah fountain, but to marvel at the photographs taken by 10 extraordinary women from the Al-Ruwais District at the "Hekayat 10" photography exhibition.

The "Hekayat 10" photography project is a Dar Al-Hekma University community service initiative dedicated to empowering ten selected women living in Al-Ruwais District by giving them the power of expression through the mastery of the art of photography. This project was very unique and had caught the interest of Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi, President of Dar Al-Hekma University, that she awarded the "Hekayat 10" project as the "Most Innovative CS Project in Dar Al-Hekma's History".

Though the "Hekayat 10" women were of different nationalities (4 Saudis, 3 Somalis, 2 Yemenis and one Filipino), they shared one common thing - their residential district, Al-Ruwais. It is considered to be one of the oldest areas in Jeddah, dating back to over 300 years ago. The streets of that district represent 3 centuries of Jeddawi history, heritage and culture.

During the opening of the "Hekayat 10" exhibition, the photographer with the best collection was announced and honored. Ms. Ashwag Al-Muallad, a Dar Al-Hekma employee, was the lucky winner and won the 1st prize of SR 10,000 for the best photograph.



Mr. Mohammed Alwafi, governor of Jeddah, Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi, Ms. Zaynab Odunsi

The two-day exhibition was a remarkable success. It showcased a collection of 40 photographs, 4 from each participant, featuring and documenting the different areas and historical parts of Al-Ruwais. "The Story of 10" is a project that came to life through Ms. Zaynab Odunsi, a passionate photographer and a lecturer at Dar Al-Hekma University. The project involved over 40 participants from various departments such as Graphic Design, Interior Design, Architecture, Continuing Education and the CS Office.

Dar Al-Hekma University President Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi stated, "Through the project, and with the support and guidance of 10 of our students from Hekma School of Design and Architecture, 10 women that live in Al-Ruwais were given the chance to uncover their own potential and talent in mastering the art of photography and use it to their advantage."

Ms. Zaynab Odunsi, founder of the "Hekayat 10" photography project, is a photography teacher and lecturer at Dar Al-Hekma. She described the

project as an interactive mission to involve less fortunate women and focus on their capabilities through teaching them the art of photography.

I came up with the idea of the project after a trip with some of my students to distribute food and toys to some communities in Al-Ruwais and other districts. I thought it would be nicer to do something with long lasting results that benefit a wider society as part of the college's commitment to service the community," said Ms. Odunsi.

This project was inception less than a year ago and had taken a life of its own. The next logical step was to organize a photography exhibition and a great exhibition it was indeed!

Ms. Roua Basaad, the buddy captain, was still a student when Ms. Odunsi told her about the idea of the project, explaining what she had in mind, sparking Ms. Basaad's interest with three words: culture, documentary, and empowerment. She described the project as a rewarding and challenging experience which allowed her to

grow personally and academically.

"Being involved from the onset of the project allowed me to see many sides of the "Hekayat 10" project, getting a piece from every cake! Observing the evolution of the project closely; from ideas on sticky notes, sketches on paper to an actual fully developed project, and best of all watching how the 10 women progressed week after week, their enthusiasm, and eagerness was the fuel to our energy as they pushed us on even on those rare dark days," said Ms. Basaad who was a graduate by the time the project started.

Ahaad Al-Amoudi, another buddy, learned a lot from this experience, "We have been involved in this project for almost one year, working alongside one another. The beauty of the project stems from the opportunity it allowed us in being a part of a community initiative that gave these women a chance to learn and expand their horizons. Working on a project that gave back on a one-to-one level and a community as a whole is extremely inspiring," she said.

Moreover, Dr. Lamya Gazzaz, Vice Dean of Student Affairs, described the project as a "rewarding experience in which Dar Al Hekma students took on the role of mentors to 10 remarkable ladies from Al-Ruwais District, teaching and assisting them on how to master the art of photography." She added, "As a result, inspiring pictures were captured and a collection of images from Al-Ruwais District will remain in the Hekayat Ashara book as a reference for future generations."

"Hekayat 10" was created with passion to empower women, as well as to engage the community. At the same time, the ladies of the "Hekayat 10" project are encouraging the younger Saudi generation to care more about their community and heritage by portraying the beauty of their surroundings.

Samar Al-Ammari, a college student and one of the Hekayat 10 participants said, "I had a camera in my hand six years ago, and I was the family photographer just because I loved photography. I wanted to take this hobby to the next level, but was not sure how.

As a Saudi, I feel proud to have participated in this project. It enabled me to link between my hobby of six years and my life and memories in Al-Ruwais. I was born and raised in Al-Ruwais, and once behind the camera, I saw things I never noticed before - the beauty in the streets I pass by every day. The project brought a great change in my life and my family's life. Initially, it was challenging for me to engage with people from other nationalities, but now I feel like I can do many things to make my people and my country proud. Photography has always been a dream to me, but now I can say I can dream, and for that I am so lucky. Zaynab has been a good mentor and has inspired us to believe we can do anything we set our heart and minds to do."

When the ceremony finally came to a close, Dr. Suhair thanked everyone who made the event a success and said, "My sincere gratitude to all sponsors, participants and audiences that made this event a reality. Let this project be the start of other community service projects and let "The Story of 10" be the beginning of many new stories that are waiting to be told!"

Quotes

"I want to teach these girls a creative skill, like photography, that has an undeniable power to communicate to a varied and wide audience."

• Zaynab Odunsi, Hekayat Ashara Founder

"I've always been an ambitious dreamer and when people put me down I was still determined to make a difference someday. Hekayat Ashara is giving me that opportunity."

• Deema Al-Quraishy

"The Hekayat Ashara photography project allowed me to expand my horizons, increase my knowledge and experience in the art of photography and meet brilliant people."

• Hayat Ali

"The Hekayat Ashara photography project is one of the best experiences I've ever lived."

• Burkeya Al-Jahdali



One of the 10 photographers explaining the story behind her photograph

“Break Barriers, Open Doors”

Special Education (SPED) Students Perform a play for Special Needs Kids

Over 1 billion people, about 15% of the world's population, live on this planet with some form of disability.

People with disabilities, the world's largest minority, often face obstacles in many aspects of society. These hurdles could be related to their physical environment, hindrances resulting from legislation or policies, or even from societal attitudes and discrimination. As such, people with disabilities do not have equal access to education, employment, health care, transportation, justice and more, when compared to their more abled peers.

In 1992, the United Nations proclaimed December 3 as the official International Day of People with Disability and has since been celebrating the day with varying

degrees of success all over the globe. The objective of this yearly jubilation is “to increase awareness and understanding of disability issues and trends, and to mobilize support for practical action at all levels by, with and for persons with disabilities. It also seeks to increase awareness of gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.”

Each year, a theme is selected to highlight a specific issue. The theme of 2013's International Day of People with Disability was “Break Barriers, Open Doors: For an inclusive society and for all”. Dar Al-Hekma University was invited to take part in a four-day celebration, from December 3 to 6, by the Disabled Children's

Association at King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Center. Dar Al-Hekma SPED students, as well as volunteers from other departments, were heavily involved in the event and did everything from scratch - from designing and implementing activities, to entertaining the children with special needs.

On the first day of the event, the students acted out the story of “Little Red Riding Hood” on stage in the Arabic language. The performance was also timed to match the attention span of children with special needs. The children were overjoyed, their eyes twinkling with enthusiasm and wonder. Dar Al-Hekma's SPED Department were the only participants in the event who catered to children with special needs by entertaining using games



and the interactive skit.

We should all be proud of our SPED girls for their dedication to helping children with special needs and for striving to spread awareness that these children should receive the same privileges as “normal” people do and be given the chance to participate within society.

Following the event, the Disabled Children's Association thanked Dar Al-Hekma University for their outstanding efforts in organizing and coordinating the affair and expressed their desire to invite the university once again next year.



“Without the devotion, enthusiasm and efforts of the SPED students and volunteers this would have not been possible! I would also like to give my special thanks to the senior SPED students for supervising the event and helping SPED shine,” remarked Ms. Randa Hariri, SPED lecturer and event organizer.

Ms. Randa Hariri with Dar Al-Hekma Special Education students



Facts

- People with disabilities represent the single largest minority group seeking employment in today's marketplace.
- Globally, people with disabilities represent an emerging market on par with the size of China.
- Eighty per cent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries, according to the UN.
- Development Program (UNDP). Disability rates are significantly higher among groups with lower educational attainment in the countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), non-disabled peers. says the OECD Secretariat. On average, 19 per cent of less educated people have disabilities, compared to 11 per cent among the better educated.
- In most OECD countries, women report higher incidents of disability than men.
- Women with disabilities are recognized to be multiply disadvantaged, experiencing exclusion on account of their gender and their disability.
- For every child killed in warfare, three are injured and permanently disabled.
- In some countries, up to a quarter of disabilities result from injuries and violence.
- Persons with disabilities are more likely to be victims of violence or rape, according to a 2004 British study, and less likely to obtain police intervention, legal protection or preventive care.
- Research indicates that violence against children with disabilities occurs at annual rates at least 1.7 times greater than for their non-disabled peers.



Pearl Initiative from a Dar Al-Hekma student's prospective

By Laraine Anne Valles

Every so often, life throws us new experiences that inevitably and irrevocably change the way we view the world we live in. My participation in the Pearl Initiative Student Case Study Competition was definitely one of those profound eye-opening experiences and I feel incredibly fortunate to have been a part of it.

Eight months, three weeks, six days, nineteen hours and seven minutes ago... if anyone had asked me to define the term 'corporate governance', I probably would have shrugged and said something along the lines of "Oh, isn't that what happens after a coup d'état?".

Not to worry though. Thanks to the Pearl Initiative, I am now able to produce a far more eloquent and cognizant response these days.

Developed in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Partnerships, The Pearl Initiative is the leading independent, non-profit, by-business-for-business, institution working across the Gulf Region of the Middle East to positively

influence and improve corporate accountability and transparency.

I was in the second semester of my senior year at University when our Faculty Champion, Dr. Maryam Ficociello, told us about the case-study opportunity. I, along with my two team-mates, Yasmin Moosa and Nada Rashid, immediately went online to find out what it was all about. What we read really inspired us to join the competition, as the Pearl Initiative aspiration is to improve transparency and accountability among businesses in the Arab world. The Pearl Initiative experience reinforced what we learned from Dar Al-Hekma University - to always act with integrity, honor and truthfulness.

Participating in this competition was, especially for us as University students, quite frightening to say the least. The concept of corporate governance and accountability and transparency were all very new to us and was not something frequently encountered in academic conversations and class discussions in Saudi Arabia. Nonetheless, we took it as a challenge. It was like being introduced to a whole new world - it felt refreshing to discover all these ideas that the three of us were now suddenly privy to.

Deciding on a target company for our case-study was possibly one of the toughest parts of the contest. However, having one of the best mentors that anyone could ever ask for on your side really helps, and my team-mates and I were lucky to have Dr. Maryam Ficociello guiding us as Faculty Champion. Out of all the businesses on our list, we found that Dr. Soliman Fakeeh Hospital (DSFH) had one inspiring story to tell about their quest for transparency. Right then, like sweet serendipity, we knew we had found the jackpot. It was a story that just had to be shared and announced to the world!

During our study, we were astounded by the tremendous effort we discovered that DSFH actually puts into ensuring that sound corporate governance procedures are in place. The hospital's commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) began as early as 2008 by forming a CSR team. From

that point on, DSFH moved swift and determined with perseverance. Simply put, DSFH is the paragon of Corporate Social Responsibility reporting and transparency in the Kingdom and we were elated to have found them as our target company.

Determined with perseverance. Simply put, DSFH is the paragon of Corporate Social Responsibility reporting and transparency in the Kingdom and we were elated to have found them as our target company.

Our victory was sweet and unexpected. When you are twenty-year-old University senior determined in surviving the most stressful 4 months of your life, and have participated in a nation-wide competition with over 500 other competitors, it becomes pretty hard to believe that the odds would ever be in your favor. In this case, they were and BOY were we thrilled! Needless to say, we learnt a whole lot about the application of integrity, ethics, social responsibility, governance and transparency within a real life context:

1. Transparency is a necessity, not a choice. I believe this concept fits really well with the purpose of transparency and accountability. It's okay to make mistakes.
2. Transparency is a process, not an outcome.
3. Sustainability reporting: doing it right takes commitment - even if it means small but continuous steps.
4. It pays to spread the good! During our research, we learned that community engagement is invaluable.

Our experience in the real world

As an incentive to win the case-study competition, the Pearl Initiative promised the winning team an exciting three-day trip to the United Arab Emirates to attend high-profile forums and

workshops. They did not disappoint.

Our coveted prize trip was every business graduate's dream - forums, workshops and company-visits galore! Like all great adventures in life, our three-day trip was exhilarating and exhausting, intimidating yet inspiring.

Our first stop was the 4th Annual Standard & Poor's Financial Leaders For those of you who do not fully comprehend my over-excitement, allow me to elucidate. Attending the S&P Financial Leaders Forum is basically like attending the Oscars: invite-only, exclusive, intimidating and when you get the chance to attend, it feels incredibly surreal.

On this momentous occasion, the rock stars of the financial world (global business leaders, economists, investors, business and policy makers) all come together in convergence to discuss alternative solutions to prevalent challenges in the region. Titled "Transforming Middle East Markets: Competing, collaborating and driving economic growth", the focus of this particular forum was on how to guarantee the long-term sustainability of recovery across the GCC after its strong emergence in the aftermath of the global financial crisis.

The session was engaging and very informative. I would say that one of the best parts of the forum was getting to watch the chief global economists (the economic-clairvoyants and financial-soothsayers) in action, sharing their insights and findings on the world's economies. I could only stare in dumbfounded amazement as they with calculated prowess, provided the audience with insightful details and predictions about the financial market. As a fresh graduate, I was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the event and I still can't believe I was given the chance to actually attend and listen to the views and opinions of such great minds. This experience is definitely something to tell the grandchildren someday.

In addition to the company visits, the Pearl Initiative team managed to squeeze in a surprise tour of the Abu Dhabi Women's College in our oh-so-busy schedule. We were graciously received by a pair of student representatives and a faculty member who enthusiastically gave us a lovely tour of their college facilities.

Business aside, we managed to do 'fun' activities during those three days. Hard to believe, but despite our busy schedule, we were able

to visit: Dubai Mall, Souk Al Bahar, Burj Khalifa, magnificent Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Atlantis Hotel, and sea at Palm Jumeirah.

So there you have it! All in all, it was quite a superb adventure, and dare I say it, AWESOME.



Dar Al-Hekma students, winners of the Pearl Initiative

Major Victory for Law Students in VIS-Middle-East Pre-Moot

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
Margaret Mead

Throughout this epic journey, I have come to appreciate that corporate governance is more than just a system of rules and good practices. It is a worthwhile endeavor and championing such an admirable cause across the Arab world is a truly commendable feat. It is known that almost every law student craves the chance to one day get to practice their legal skills, defend clients and make certain that justice is served. The 3rd Vis Middle-East Pre-Moot, held in Abu Dhabi this past 2013, provided Dar Al-Hekma University's very own law students with an excellent platform to live out their dream whilst competing against other law students who hail from six different Arab universities in Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Tunisia, the UAE and Bahrain.

The Vis Moot is a legal competition for law students worldwide on the topic of international commercial law and arbitration. It is held annually in Vienna, attracting over 300 law schools from all over the world. The first Moot was held in 1994 with 11 law schools from 9 countries. By 2011, the Moot had expanded to 254 teams from 63 countries.

The Pre-Moot Competition takes place before the actual Vis Moot and brings together a number of schools to participate in sessions that provide Vis competitors the opportunity to practice the presentation of their arguments. Typical pre-moots round up about 4 to 12 schools to practice their arguments.

Dar Al-Hekma University's participation in Abu Dhabi's Pre-Moot Competition could not have come at a more perfect time, as it was during this period that Saudi women were finally granted licenses to practice law. Months ahead of boarding a plane to Abu Dhabi, the students dedicated hours of prep-time to studying and researching the case provided, writing memorandums, and going through rigorous preparations.

Asmaa Al-Bakri, Badriya Modir, Daliya Sayed, Fatima Al-Kuhlani, Layan Al-Khouli, Noor, Zahran, Reem Zahid, Sarah Abu Taleb, and Yasmeen Al-Kathiri of the Legal Department all put in tremendous effort that eventually led to their marvelous victory. After having gone to Abu Dhabi and experienced an intensive three-day training session, the Dar Al-Hekma delegation pleaded against four other teams in the general rounds. They managed to qualify for the semi-finals, reach further into the final round of the competition, and finally, come out as the 2013 victors.

The five days spent by the students in the Pre-Moot was one intense roller-coaster ride as they were made to feel like they were preparing for an actual case, and they were very determined to win. From writing up their speeches, to structuring solid arguments in every round, not only roller-coaster ride as they were made to feel like they were preparing for an actual case, and they were very determined to win. From writing up their speeches,



Dar Al-Hekma Winners of the pre-moot

to structuring solid arguments in every round, not only did the students learn a lot, but they were also able to utilize their sharp skills well to seize their titles as champions.

A lovely dinner at the Rotana Beach Hotel concluded the competition where the Dar Al-Hekma delegation was honored for the hard work they had put in throughout the past four months. The team brought home 9 individual awards for participation, the honorary award for winning the Pre-Moot competition, and last but not least, the Best Respondent Oralist award given to Layan Al-Khouli.

Winning the Pre-Moot was a great honor for our students as the judges in this competition comprised esteemed arbitrators, practitioners, lawyers, and partners of law firms in the international legal community. The panel consisted of a mix of Australian, Romanian, British, American, Dutch, and Arab arbitrators.

The passion and tenacity of Dar Al-Hekma University's law students have taken them thus far, and they continue to aspire to even greater opportunities that will, hopefully, empower them to ultimately become some of the best lawyers in the region.

At the World Economic Forum

Our Alumna Dina Madani

The World Economic Forum is an independent global organization committed to improving the world through the engagement of political, business, academic and other global leaders of societies to help shape and improve global and regional policies. The World Economic Forum is a community of communities that forms groups of interest through formal interaction, and thanks to the power of engaged interconnectivity binds them into communities of purpose and hence into communities of achievement.

And it is with great pleasure and pride that our alumna Dina Madani, a member of the Global Shapers Community, took part in the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting

2013 that is held every January in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland. She was among the panelist in "The Arab Context" session along with H.R.H Prince Turki Al Faisal, Chairman of King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, H.E. Mr. Kamal Bin Ahmed Mohammed, Bahrain Minister of Transportation, Mr. Mustapha Kamel Nabli, Member of the Global Agenda Council on the Arab World and Mr. Ibrahim Dabdoub, CEO National Bank of Kuwait. They discussed unemployment as being the underlying issue of the Arab Spring and agreed that the economic and stability ramifications of the Arab Spring, especially the conflict in Syria, will get worse before they get better. Dina was also asked to

contribute to a session on Faith Factor: Religion and Spirituality as Transformative Forces in Society.

Dina Madani graduated from Dar Al-Hekma in 2006 and was amongst the first group of Saudi females to study International Relations and Diplomacy in the joint program offered by Dar Al-Hekma in collaboration with the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. And because Dina has always urged for a more positive and active role for women in today's society she participated at the Jeddah Economic Forum in 2005. She is a very active individual when it comes to women's issues and youth development and was a

speaker at the 4th United Nations Forum on "Minority Rights", in Geneva, Switzerland. Dina is also the Founder and the first President of the Dar Al-Hekma University Alumnae Association. Additionally, she is the first Saudi female to act as an International Observer at Presidential Elections in some Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) since April 2010 and introduced the "Go Green" project at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah.

Dina is a member of the Global Shapers Program, an initiative called to life by the World Economic Forum. This program was launched in 2011 and includes highly motivated and extraordinary individuals in their twenties who have great

leadership potential that they want to take advantage of to serve their society. Global Shapers are organized into local Hubs based in over 180 cities worldwide and are engaged in projects that aim to improve their cities. The Jeddah Global Shapers Hub, for example, is currently working to sustain the fishery profession in the Western Region through providing creative solutions and implementing sustainable projects for the benefit of the fishermen community of Rabigh. On the international level, Global Shapers make sure the voice of 50% of the world's population under the age of 27 is heard within all of the Forum's activities. The Dar Al-Hekma community and alumnae are very proud of Dina Madani's

achievements for truly becoming a role model for many Saudi girls wishing to make a difference in society. The University continues to support her mission and will do everything in it is power to make her voice heard all over the Kingdom and the world; and as her family, Dar Al-Hekma wishes her all the best in her future and hopes she will travel many more untraveled roads with the help and support of Saudi women.



Dar Al-Hekma Alumna Sara Batterjee Wins Employer Achievement Award

The Employer Excellence Awards honor Saudi Arabia's most innovative, supportive and diverse employers. It was a double-win for Dar Al-Hekma this past 2013, as not only did the University manage to win the Employer Achievement Award, but so did Dar Al-Hekma alumna, Ms. Sara Batterjee.

Sara Batterjee, a Dar Al-Hekma alumna who graduated in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in Interior Design and an MA in Environmental Design of Buildings from BUD (British University in Dubai) was also a lucky winner in the category "Best Employer for Small Start-Up Business" with her company Focal Buildings Solutions - another reason we at Dar Al-Hekma should beam with pride as the university continues to uphold its promise of graduating "accomplished women, leaders and entrepreneurs."

Ms. Batterjee won the award for successfully managing her company, Focal Buildings Solutions. Since

2006, her establishment has been specializing in commercial projects and providing interior-design consultancy, furniture supplying, civil work execution and supervision, and building maintenance.

Between 2006 and 2009, Ms. Batterjee pursued her master's degree (MSc), her own company and often traveled to Dubai whilst working on her thesis in Environmental Design of Buildings from The British University in Dubai. She opted to do a Master of Science, aiming to complement her creative and artistic skills that she acquired from Dar Al-Hekma.

Many friends and family members had discouraged Ms. Batterjee from starting her own company, reasoning that there was a very slim chance of her success in a male-dominated field. She defied them all and persevered nonetheless, backed by the enduring support of her loving parents and husband.

Seven years later, Ms. Batterjee was bestowed the 2013 Employer Achievement Award.

Upon being asked if she had expected to win, she remarked, "I honestly didn't see it coming. I was very surprised that we were selected amongst all these big organizations. Our application must have been really unique and impressive!"

Thrilled about her recent victory and proud to see her firm being appreciated for their recruitment efforts in hiring talent, Ms. Batterjee added that she is grateful to the Ministry of Labor for their recent efforts. She predicts that once things have settled and the chaos in the civil work execution eventually subsides, her company will be able to provide even better services and projects - the opportunity to be a market leader in the field of commercial projects, consequently, at her fingertips.



Owner & CEO of Focal Design
A winner of 2013 Employer
Achievement Award

A Leader



Hanan Taleb, PhD

One day during February 2013, while going through some paperwork in my office at the British University in Dubai, I received an unexpected visit from the Dean of the College of Engineering informing me that Atkins Company wants to meet with me in person. My first reaction was disbelief for why would a leading company like Atkins want to see me? It is after all one of the most prominent engineering companies in the world, their portfolio includes Burj Al Arab, the new Jeddah International Airport and many other international projects. I was perplexed but at the same time curious to know why they had

come to visit me. I kept wondering and questioning their visit nonstop until a senior manager with a group of Atkins employees opened the door of the meeting room. My curiosity was satisfied only when I discovered that Atkins has been looking like a needle in a haystack for a qualified architect to serve as their "consultant"; and after they had read my CV selected me from a wide range of local and international architects.

They asked me in a very polite and professional manner to go through the unpublished designs and offered to pay me any consultation fee I

would charge.

The situation in itself was great and made me feel proud and honored, but when they revealed the designs, an unexpected feeling arose within me and tears welled up in my eyes. I gently asked to be excused for a few minutes, went to my office, wiped away my tears and spread my prayer mat and prayed to Allah thanking Him for all the blessings in my life and when I finished I raised my hand in supplication saying: Thank you Allah Almighty for giving me an education that led this company to seek me out for consultation on the purest spot on earth, "The House of Allah in Makkah".

It is interesting to that our alumna Hanan Taleb is the first DarAl-Hekma Alumna to receive a PhD from Sheffield University, UK and is currently working as an Assistant Professor at the British University in Dubai, UAE.

When I was done, I went back to them in the conference room and said: "I would like to thank you for choosing me. Kindly give me one week to review the proposal and prepare a team of my masters students from my course "Urban Design" and we will prepare an evaluation for you, and regarding the fees, I won't accept a penny, because what my students and I will be doing is the least we can do for Allah the Almighty as a sign of gratitude; but if you require any other consultation for your other projects then that would be another story."

Over the week, I went through the proposal, which included the first train station "Al-Mashaer" in Makkah and when the day of the presentation arrived, I stood in front of the senior engineers and presidents of Atkins. My presentation went very well and received a round of applause, praise and handshakes.

At the end of the presentation and during the celebration, memories appeared and my mind took me back to the year 2004 when I was celebrating with my peers the graduation of the first batch of interior design. We were so happy wearing our heavy graduation

hats and gowns. The hat at that moment in time felt more precious than any diamond encrusted crown. Our smiles never left our lips; we were constantly smiling whether we were in front of our mothers, sisters, friends, or in front the cameras. I also remembered the song of our graduation march which increased the flow of our happiness hormone and gave us an adrenaline rush we never felt before.

And before we went out for the graduation ceremony and march, our big sister and role model, Dr. Suhair Hassan Al-Qurashi smiled at us and said, "my beloved daughters, today we are not celebrating the graduation of students but the graduation of leaders," and during that moment I saw myself in her eyes as a "leader" carrying the torch of knowledge, and serving the religion of Islam and making my country proud wherever I may be. With pride I can say this is me, not a "graduate" from Dar Al-Hekma but a "leader" who left Dar Al-Hekma, promising to return one day and give back to this great university which made me an exceptional person. I would also like to thank everyone who enlightened my way and helped me be everyone's pride.



Hanan Taleb being recognized for her achievement

Time to Say "Goodbye"

Interview with
Dr. Lamya Gazzaz

Vice Dean of Student Affairs

Student learning doesn't just happen in a classroom nor does student experience solely rely on academic programs offered. Opportunities for learning and development exist everywhere and anytime on campus and it is the Student Affairs responsibility to seize these moments. The Student Affairs Department at Dar Al-Hekma University plays an important role in providing the students with a pleasant experience through a comprehensive, creative and caring approach that supports and empowers the students socially, emotionally and mentally.

And the Students Affair would not be the Students Affair Department if it wasn't for Dr. Lamya Gazzaz's hard work, commitment and dedication. Dr. Lamya has been with Dar Al-Hekma for over 10 years and has gradually built the department nearly from scratch to become a one-of-a-kind leading program across the Kingdom

And in light of Dr. Lamya's retirement plan, we took the opportunity to meet up with her for an interview for Noor Al-Hekma and below is what she had to say to us.

Hello Dr. Lamya, we heard that you will be retiring soon from Dar Al-Hekma. But before you leave us we would like to take this opportunity to ask you a few questions for the Noor Al-Hekma Magazine.

1. Before we start with a few questions, would you kindly introduce yourself to our readers, talk a bit about yourself; who is Dr. Lamya, what did you study and how did you join Dar Al-Hekma

Well, I was born in Taif, grew up in Makkah and lived my life in Jeddah at a time when young women had limited career opportunities and could only choose between teaching or medicine. I didn't like the idea of becoming a teacher then, how ironic it seems now, so I decided to join the Medical Program in KAU in 1979 instead. After two years of going through human anatomy and medical sciences, I discovered that it wasn't something I saw myself

doing all my life so I decided to switch to the College of Nursing & Allied Sciences with the support of Dr. Suhad Bahijri, who was then Vice Dean of College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences at KAU. She also counseled me before switching major; I thoroughly enjoyed studying nursing and in 1984 I received my BS in Nursing.

studying nursing and in 1984 I received my BS in Nursing. After my graduation, I joined the National Guard Hospital as a diabetic nurse before being sent to the UK to do a Post Graduate Diploma in Health Education in Developing Countries then a master's degree at Leeds Metropolitan University. Pursuing my master degree was actually postponed for a year

because the first Gulf War broke out in 1990-1991 and I had to work with UK-MoD team to train National Guard soldiers on First Aid and Managing War Casualties. Once the war was over, I went back to Leeds and picked up where I had left off and finally received my MS in Health Education and Health Promotion in 1993. With my Masters in hand, I established the first nurse-managed diabetic clinic at the National Guard Hospital. I was also able to initiate other health education programs "Maternal Child Health" and "Management of Chronic Disease" at NG Primary Healthcare Centers. I stayed with the National Guard Hospital for a total of 10 years. In 1994, I was one of few who were selected to work at Abdul Latif Jameel Rehabilitation Center, a



center that deals with victims of road traffic accidents and other patients who are in dire need of rehabilitation and therapy. This experience was unique because everyone of the initial team worked together to plan the strategies/ services/structure of the center. While representing ALJ in a conference in Eastern Region, I met with a group of Quality Improvement from Aramco who eventually offered me a job with Aramco's Medical Designated Facilities Department in Jeddah. Under the umbrella of this huge department, I was one of few nursing representatives responsible for monitoring and overseeing the network of contracted hospital facilities of Aramco across the country. While with Aramco, I climbed the ladder of success and

got promoted on a regular basis and one other step towards promotion was the move to the Eastern Province where I reached a fateful crucial decision that I won't be able to live away from my mother and the rest of my family even for a promising career path. Shortly after returning to Jeddah, I received an offer to work at Dar Al-Hekma; the offer was prepared by Dr. Suhair Al-Qurashi and Ms. Fatma Bayoumi. In September 2000, I started working as a lecturer in Dar Al-Hekma. I did realize that it was a complete career change, switching from healthcare to academia but it was a challenge I happily accepted so here I am still 13 year later. Dar Al-Hekma was a small community when I first joined, all the students, faculty and staff knew one another and we used to meet

up for lunch with the Dean. It was the "golden age". A year later I was part of the division of Student Affairs.

2. How did you become Vice Dean of Student Affairs?

After having worked with Dar Al-Hekma University for a year, I was appointed as Acting Vice Dean of Student Affairs between 2001-2002. Since I couldn't become a Vice Dean without a PhD, I decided to pursue my studies and I went once again to the U.K to get the degree. In 2009 and with a PhD in hand I returned to my second home Dar Al-Hekma where I got promoted to Vice Dean.

3. Dr. Lamya, in your opinion what do you think makes Dar Al-Hekma so unique. What are the opportunities that are found only at Dar Al-Hekma?

Amongst all educational institutions for women, Dar Al-Hekma provides the best extra-curricular activities in KSA and we have even shared the extra-curriculum plan with other institutions. In addition, Dar Al-Hekma is the first college in KSA to have a Student Government Body with a constitution, which was given to the Ministry of Higher Education as Social Responsibility on DAH part. The Student Development program focuses on 5 dimensions: intellectual (e.g. Toastmasters & MUN Club, etc); physical (e.g. sports activities like basketball and table-tennis); spiritual (e.g. Dar Al-Quraan & the LIFE 'Let Islam Fulfill Everyone' Club); self-development (e.g. students' employment wherein students may work a maximum of 10 hours per week); and social & psychological (e.g. community service scheme & leadership training). All co-curricular activities promote these dimensions with the purpose of building holistic individuals with well-rounded personalities. Our students are also required to perform 100 hours of community service before they graduate. We also provide Career Advising, Counseling and Academic Support services. Dar Al-Hekma is a great institution and I'm proud to be part of its progression.

4. What were your best and most memorable moments in Dar Al-Hekma?

The most memorable time for me was the graduation ceremony of the first batch. It was like seeing my own daughters graduate or get married. I taught them all and I was so very proud of them and extremely happy to see them standing there wearing the academic robes and hats. A lot of emotions were involved. After all,

it was at a time when we all knew each other- a big happy family that is witnessing the growing up of its daughters who are leaving their nest.

5. Why did you decide to retire now? How did you know that this was the right time?

I have achieved a lot at a professional level, both in healthcare and academia, and I had a fruitful and outstanding career. I was really blessed in my career and life but there comes a time when one needs time for oneself and for the family. My mother is the most important person in my life and I have decided that it is her time now. I want to dedicate my time in taking care of her and myself. I enjoy reading, exercising and travelling and now is my chance to sit back, relax and enjoy the blessings in life and do the things I never got the chance to really do.

6. Last but not least, do you want to give your students any advice on their way?

It is not enough to have ambitions; you must work hard to achieve your goals. I want to remind them that education and learning is a life-long experience. Take it seriously, enjoy it and grab every opportunity. There is no harm in working hard for four years; it is like growing a fruit – watch yourself grow and flourish- so enjoy every minute of it. I also highly recommend that you get some work experience before continuing your higher education to get a clear idea of what you want to do in your career.

And please do come back to Dar Al-Hekma after graduating, it is always nice to see graduates return to work or participate in events like the career fair. Keep in touch with Dar Al-Hekma, we are one family and do keep in touch with me for I would love to hear from you once in a while and see what you are doing.



Dr. Lamya opening speech in the MUN conference

From Dr. Suhair:

"It saddened me deeply when Dr. Lamya informed me of her wish to retire and leave DAH. We have spent over a decade working together, seen ups and downs and were able to put DAH in the lead. Dar Al-Hekma won't be the same without you. As much as it saddens me to see her go I am quite happy and honored to have worked with such a talented and dedicated person and would like to thank her for all her efforts and constant support and wish her the best for the future." Dr. Suhair

From Students and staff:

"You may be leaving Dar Al-Hekma, but your words of wisdom will stay in our hearts forever. Farewell, Dr. Lamya"

"We don't need to wish you good luck for your future endeavors. You need to wish us good luck because we will need it more in your absence."

Founders and Current BOT



Dr. Zuhair H. Fayez

Co-Founder and Chairman, Dar Al-Hekma Board of Trustees.
 President, Zuhair Fayez Partnership

Dr. Zuhair H. Fayez is the Co-Founder and Chairman of Dar Al-Hekma's Board of Trustees. Dr. Fayez, President of Zuhair Fayez Partnership (ZFP), established his Architectural and Engineering consultancy in Saudi Arabia in 1975, on his return from his studies and initial professional experience in the U.S. The company ranks with the most eminent consultancies in the world and has offices in Jeddah, Riyadh, Al-Khobar, and Cairo with over 3,200 employees. It is licensed by the Ministry of Commerce for the practice of Architecture, Engineering, and Information Technology (IT) throughout Saudi Arabia. ZFP was the first company in the field of architecture and engineering and IT consultancy in the Middle East to receive the ISO9001 and Tick-IT Certificate. Involved in a number of companies and organizations, Dr. Fayez is Chairman of Ewa Al-Dera for Real Estate Development and Jeddah Advanced Yield for Investment and Development Co. Ltd. He is also a Board Member of Jeddah BioCity and Jeddah Holding Company for

Development. He serves the academic community in a number of roles, including Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Dar Al-Hekma University for Girls in Jeddah, Founding Member of Dar Al-Fikr Schools in Jeddah and Fazlur Rahman Khan Chair at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, and is a Member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Colorado Foundation in Denver.

Dr. Fayez was a Member of the Provincial Council for the Makkah Region from 2005-2009. He was also appointed to the membership of the 1st Session of Consultative Council of Saudi Arabia from 1993-1997. Dr. Fayez received his bachelor's and master's degrees in Architecture and Architectural Engineering from the University of Colorado in 1970 and 1971, respectively. Dr. Fayez is a Member of a number of professional organizations, including the Saudi Council of Engineers, Al-Omran Society, Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitats, the American Institute of Architects, Construction Specifications Institute, and NFPA.



Eng. Yahia M.A. Binladin

Member, Dar Al-Hekma Board of Trustees
 Managing Director and Board Member,
 Mohammed Binladin Establishment

Eng. Yahia M.A. Binladin is the Managing Director and Board Member of the Mohammed Binladin Establishment. Eng. Binladin holds a bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering from North Western University in Boston, USA. He has had extensive experience in a number of Executive Management positions throughout his eminent career and has participated in numerous seminars and debates pertaining to said field.

Eng. Binladin has served as a member of various Boards of Directors with organizations such as: The Arabian Cement Company Limited, TIBA Company for Investment and Real Estate Development, The White Cement Company, the District Council of Makkah, as well as other various firms outside the Kingdom

of Saudi Arabia.

Eng. Binladin is renowned for overseeing the construction, operation and maintenance of a number of prominent holy sites, including the Holy Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah. In addition to all his contributions in the Kingdom's Industrial Engineering sector, Eng. Binladin has also been involved in Egypt, holding the following positions: Board Member of the Arabian Company for Real Estate Development (Al-Rihab) and the Industrial Arabian Company for Food (DOMTA). Moreover, he was the Chairman of Egypt's TIBA Company for Food Industry and the TIBA Company for Agricultural Development.



Eng. Kais I. Julaidan

Member, Dar Al-Hekma Board of Trustees
Owner & Chairman, Al-Ibrahimia Real Estate Company

Eng. Kais I. Julaidan is the Owner and Chairman of Al-Ibrahimia Real Estate Company and a member of the Saudi-Swiss Business Consul. Throughout his illustrious career, Eng. Julaidan has held the following positions in the field of Construction, and Real-Estate Development and Investment: Vice Chairman and CEO of Madina Contracting and Trading Co., Owner and Chairman of Al-Ibrahimia Real Estate Co., Founder and Board member of Al-Shamia Co. For Real Estate, Partner and Vice Chairman of Hattan Real Estate Co., and Executive Partner of Ibtakar for

Real Estate Development.

Under Business Development, Eng. Julaidan has served as Executive Partner and Vice Chairman of THARA Co. for Mineral, Mafaz Co. for Development and Anhar Co. for Development. In the Education sector, Eng. Julaidan has held the positions of Founder and Member of Dar Al-Hekma's Board of Trustees, as well as the Founder and Chairman's Assistant of Al-Bayan for Higher Education (colleges for boys and girls).



Eng. Abdullah A. Bugshan

Deputy Chairman, Dar Al-Hekma Board of Trustees.
Owner and CEO, Arabian Consulting Engineering Center

Eng. Abdullah Ahmed Bugshan is the Deputy Chairman of Dar Al-Hekma's Board of Trustees. He is also the Founder and CEO of House of Invention International (HOI). He graduated as a Civil Engineer in 1977 from King Fahd University of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Dhahran. He is a Director of M/s. Abdullah Said Bugshan and Bros. - one of the oldest and most diversified business establishments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Eng. Bugshan also holds the following positions:

Owner and CEO of Arabian Consulting Engineering Center, Founder and CEO of House of Invention International Co., Owner and CEO of Abdullah Ahmed Said Bugshan Est., Chairman of the Board of Directors of Saudi Engineering Council, Vice-Chairman of the Saudi-Yemen Business Organization, Chairman of the Board of Directors - Arabian-Yemeni Cement Co., Chairman of the Board

of Directors - Dubai and Aden Ports Dev. Co., Chairman of the Board of Directors - Yemeni Fish Company,

Member Board of Directors - Tanmiah Ind. and Com. Investment Co. Member Board of Directors - Al-Hijra Arabia Development Co., Member Board of Directors - The Commercial Center, Chairman Board of Managers - Al-Khabeer Financial Investment Co.; as well as business partner in Mukalla Real Estate Development Co., Alahli Takaful Co., Yemeni Development Group, etc.

Eng. Bugshan is a member of the Support Fund for Educational Research in the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals and in the Institute of Research. He is also one of the originators of chairs for various engineering research works in King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Dhahran; King Saud University, Riyadh and King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah.

A Final Word

By the grace of God, we did it!



After a victorious 14 years of outstanding success, Dar Al-Hekma has finally received University status and once again proven itself as an exemplary academic institution of higher-education. We are immensely proud to now be called Dar Al-Hekma University.

This achievement is the outcome of the collaborative efforts of the entire university community in the pursuit of excellence and innovation, endeavors that continue to shape our direction for the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every person at Dar Al-Hekma University for their commitment and contribution. With the qualities and capabilities of our talented staff, faculty and our bright student body, we have witnessed wonderful successes for all. I would also like to thank our Board of Trustees for their unwavering faith in our abilities and their enduring support for our expansion plans.

We look forward to another eventful year with promising challenges ahead. Dar Al-Hekma University proudly marches on, ready to take on the challenges met by academic institutions built on standards of excellence.

Dr. Suhair Hassan Al-Qurashi
President of Dar Al-Hekma University



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DAR AL-HEKMA UNIVERSITY