

Al Akhawayn University Newsletter

February 2013



International Education Leader Addresses Al Akhawayn Community on the 21st Century Education

Peter Relic, former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education and well-known leader in international education, addressed Al Akhawayn community in a lecture entitled "A 21st Century Education: Old Questions, New Answers" as part of the University Presidential Lecture Series.

Relic shared his experience as an educator and engaged students, staff, faculty, and executive officers in an interactive lecture. He first examined the 21st century education relating to Al Akhawayn University's mission committed to educating future citizen-leaders of Morocco and the world. He emphasized the individuals' capacity to connect in today's world and the importance of an inter-disciplinary curriculum putting aside the silos approach in education so as to face competition today. Relic also talked about public policy and its role towards citizenship and building leadership; and the human rights in quality education with no discrimination on the basis of religion, race, gender, or physical handicap.

"Within our different communities of scholars and citizens, we live and learn together and so we understand our needs and priorities," said Relic "We

should be part of the dialogue and say how we can do it."

Dr. Relic had met before the students in a discussion entitled "So you think you have a plan...?" He discussed the changes in today's world and the different careers and jobs an individual can have, how society also changes, how to be a productive citizen and help improve the lives of others, and more. "It's up to you to provide the participation and the leadership to continue to contribute to society ... and realize the contribution of your University's mission to this," said Relic to Al Akhawayn students.

"We should be part of the dialogue and say how we can do it..." Dr. Peter Relic has a Ph.D. from Harvard University and a B.A. from Bowdoin College.

He was appointed President emeritus of the National Association of Independent Schools for ten years. He served as U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education, and Superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District. He also served as a Trustee for the Council for American Private Education and on the Boards of Trustees for Bowdoin College, The Hawken School and the Kodaly Institute, Hartt School of Music.

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US Deputy Chief of Mission Visits Al Akhawayn

Judith Chammas, US Deputy Chief of Mission, visited Al Akhawayn University campus and met with several Moroccan and international students. "It was a fascinating day. I wish I came here earlier during my tenure in Morocco. I have been inspired," said Chammas at the end of her first visit to Al Akhawayn and Ifrane. "I will remember the enthusiasm of students, teachers, and administrators that I have met."

Chammas' day-long visit comprised different meetings and interactions. She met with several university officers and was introduced to Al Akhawayn University's major strategic goals, activities, and projects; as well its extra-curricular activities, its student-run organizations, its community service program its student exchange programs. Chammas met and interacted with many international students, Moroccan students back from their study-abroad journeys, and students interested in her talk about Morocco-US Relations.



"Hearing about the community involvement projects at Al Akhawayn University is amazing. [Al Akhawayn] is a real model and I hope we can find a way with the US Embassy to support them. All those activities that students are involved in giving back to the community and learning to be citizens that have a life-long commitment to their country is just inspiring. The e-learning project is also inspiring and I am happy that it is working and we see the teachers implementing those courses that are accessible online," she said.

Al Akhawayn Students Join World Top-Tier in the Largest World Student Competition



Five Al Akhawayn students reach the regional finals of the Hult Prize, a social entrepreneurship business plan competition organized by Hult International Business School and the Clinton Global Initiative. The final competition will take place in March 1-2, 2013, in London.

Hult Prize is the world's largest student competition and crowdsourcing platform for social good, recently named by former President Bill Clinton and TIME Magazine one of the top five programs changing the world. Al Akhawayn team joins global top-tier schools that will go head-to-head in the competition in quest for social good and a \$1 million in start-up funding.

"The Hult Prize is thrilled that Al Akhawayn University has joined the initiative," said Stephen Hodges, President of the Hult International Business School, in the Hult Prize press release. "This year's competition has received a record number of entries, bringing together some of the most talented students to help solve global food security which can benefit nearly a billion people."

In Spring 2012, the Al Akhawayn team composed of students Maha Laziri ('13) from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mohammed Wael Khobalatte ('13) from the School of Science and Engineering (SSE), Ayoub El Mamoun ('13) from the SSE,

Imane Remmal ('14) from the School of Business Administration, and team captain Mehdi Nassih ('13) from the SSE, took part in Hult Prize competition and reached the regional finals in Dubai. The team will now be joining top European universities and schools such as Oxford University, Cambridge University, HEC Paris, Copenhagen Business School, and the London School of Economics, in the finals in London. The project that Al Akhawayn team will present is entitled *Can we build sustainable, scalable and fast-growing social enterprises to reduce food insecurity in slums by 2018?*

"As we spend an important part of our lives at Al Akhawayn volunteering in student-run organizations, we develop a sense of leadership and social responsibility towards local and global issues," said Mehdi Nassih, reflecting his learning experience at Al Akhawayn University.

Student teams competed in five cities around the world for a chance to win \$1 million in start-up funding to launch a sustainable social venture. Each team selected was chosen from more than 10,000 applications received, totaling over 350 colleges and universities, representing over 150 countries. The Hult Prize regional competitions will take place at the Hult International Business School's five campuses in Boston, San Francisco, London, Dubai and Shanghai.



Al Akhawayn student **Ismael Mohammed Chiba Bennani** ('13) won the 1st prize of the FX Championship, a three-week national trading competition organized by Elite Brokers LLC on November 11, 2012 in Casablanca.

Chiba Bennani, the only student representing Al Akhawayn School of Business Administration among 80 other students from different business schools in Morocco, won a trading account of \$500 with the partner broker. "This championship was very interesting for me because I studied by myself technical analysis charts of prices and it was an opportunity to showcase my skills," said Chiba Bennani.

"Moreover, the classes I have taken in investment and international finance, and the trading room sessions at Al Akhawayn have enhanced my knowledge and helped me avoid many mistakes other contestants fell into while trading on the foreign exchange market." Starting with an account of \$10,000, the contestants were challenged to grow this capital as much as possible through a simulation of trading in the foreign exchange market. Chiba Bennani's performance was the best as he increased his capital with a 151.25%, i.e. \$25,125. The runner up prize went to Ilias Amharech from Institut des Hautes Etudes de Management (HEM) in Casablanca, with 125.94%. The Third prize went to Hicham Boubga student at Institut Supérieur de Commerce et d'Administration des Entreprises (ISCAE) in Rabat, who increased his capital with a 77.79%.

Microsoft Open Day at Al Akhawayn

In collaboration with Al Akhawayn's Information Technology Services, Microsoft-Morocco organized an Open Day at Al Akhawayn University campus. Jalal Alaoui, Development and Platform Manager at Microsoft-Morocco, introduced Microsoft' products and services, such as Microsoft Office 365, DreamSpark, and ImagineCup.

The Open Day was marked by the recent Microsoft Education Alliance agreement signature between Al Akhawayn University and Microsoft-Morocco. Al Akhawayn University has become a member



of Microsoft IT-Academy program, a global IT learning solution that connects educators, and Microsoft-Morocco. Al Akhawayn University has become a member of Microsoft IT-Academy program, a global IT learning solution that connects educators, students, and communities with higher education and research tools. "Microsoft is involved in education worldwide," said Alaoui.

"We are glad that partners like Al Akhawayn University agree to work with us on a platform that

will benefit the educational system here in Morocco, and that will better prepare the students for the future."

An Aesthetic View of Art and Theology

Christopher Evan Longhurst, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Al Akhawayn School of Humanities and Social Sciences, presented his published papers on "Discovering the Sacred in Secular Art: An Aesthetic Modality that Speaks of God" and "Theology of a Mosque" in the thirteenth installment of Honoring Al Akhawayn Authors, held on campus by Al Akhawayn's Mohammed VI Library.



"Theological aesthetics is an interdisciplinary study between theology and art," explained Longhurst. "'Discovering the Sacred in Secular Art' is about deconstructing the terms sacred and secular applied to all works of art to provide some kind of key to uniting the disciplines of theology and art."

Longhurst also presented his paper "Theology of a Mosque" which he described as a work "applying the message of Islam to the physical manifestation of the mosque to help westerners particularly understand the meaning of the architecture and decoration of a mosque inside the Western tradition."

Al Akhawayn Students Learn About Wind Power Farm in Morocco

Mohammed El Khalfi, Project Director at the National Office of Electricity and Water, presented at Al Akhawayn University the Wind Power Farm in Taza in a talk organized by Al Akhawayn School of Science and Engineering.

"While Morocco knows a fast social and economic growth, the need for more electric energy has increased as well," said El Khalfi. El Khalfi explained to Al Akhawayn students the project process and phases, its economic and social impacts from creating jobs in the region of Taza to offering touristic and educational visits, and some statistics on Moroccan electric energy. The project, according to El Khalfi, will contribute to the development of the country and its economy.



A Q&A session followed with further inquiries and explanations on the environmental impact of the project, the contractual and the development phase, workforce and maintenance, and research activities through the collaboration between the National Office of Electricity and Water and Moroccan universities in related field research.

The Ministry of Moroccans Living Abroad Signs Partnership Agreement with Al Akhawayn University

The bilateral agreement was signed by Minister Abdellatif Maazouz and Al Akhawayn University President Driss Ouauouicha. This new agreement came as a concrete manifestation of the university's as well as the ministry's strong will to reinforce their collaboration within the framework of a fruitful integration which will better answer to the needs and aspirations of Moroccans living abroad with regards to learning Arabic language and learning about Moroccan culture, cultural exchange, executive education as well as research on immigration.

The agreement aims, most importantly, at strengthening the relationship of young Moroccans living abroad with their homeland and preserving their linguistic and cultural identities through classes in Arabic language and Moroccan cultures, while enabling them to participate in various cultural and educational activities organized by Al Akhawayn University.

Award Winning British Documentary Film Maker Shows Film on Single Mothers in Morocco

Deborah Perkin, award winning British documentary film maker and former BBC senior producer, talked to Al Akhawayn students on her work experience and shared excerpts of her independent documentary "BASTARDS: sex and single mothers in Morocco" during Al Akhawayn Community Service Seminar on February 13, 2013.

Under the theme of "The Role of Civil Society in Moroccan Human Development," the seminar was organized by Al Akhawayn Community Services as part of a platform for experiential learning where students can draw upon the intellectual challenges that they face in the classroom, reevaluate them within a social reality, and get actively involved in the community.



"Being involved in community service is a good opportunity for you to be open to the world in general and to the Moroccan society in particular and reflect on your own individual life," said Perkin in her opening remarks. "Throughout my personal work experience, I have learnt a great number of things and I continue to learn all the time. What you do here is also impressive and I encourage you to make the most out of it and I am sure you will give a huge contribution to Moroccan society. "

BASTARDS is about illegitimate children and the fathers who abandon them. By following single mothers fighting for justice, the documentary addresses big social issues through small human stories, heart-warming and heart-breaking stories captured in the raw, as Moroccan men and women clash about sex, children, marriage and money.

Spotlights

Al Akhawayn alumn **Khalid Baddou** ('01) featured in a news brief entitled "Les Managers qui Bougent" published in the newspaper *L'Economiste*, on February 20, 2013. Baddou has recently joined Merck Sharp & Dohme as the Director of Communications in the region of Morocco, Tunisia and Francophone Africa. Baddou earned his Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences at Al Akhawayn School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Al Akhawayn alumnus **Mohamed Rherrass** ('99), currently working as Director of the Bouregreg Institution, featured in the Moroccan TV channel Arrabia through "Ecologica Magazine", a show that aims at promoting the natural resources of Morocco while addressing the various natural disasters afflicting the world.

Commencing Spring 2013 a special edition of the **International Marketing** (MKT 4306) course is offered in collaboration with Evansville University, US. The course examines current global marketing issues and includes a project that requires students to develop a plan to export Moroccan products to the US in partnership with local Moroccan NGOs.

In an effort to engage the School of Business Administration (SBA) faculty in international experience and provide students the opportunity to meet faculty from other cultures, the SBA has sought to initiate agreements with several universities for faculty exchange. In the first of these initiatives, one SBA Finance faculty taught a short term course in Islamic Finance at Kufstein University, Austria, early Spring 2013. In exchange a faculty from Kufstein University will be teaching an event management course at SBA at the end of Spring 2013.

Al Akhawayn Executive Education Center organized on January 16-17, 2013 a two-day training for twenty managers of the National Water and Forestry Office under the theme "The Manager Coach". The training aimed to identify the added value of coaching, learning different management and coaching tools, and adopting the coach attitude to develop cohesion and collective intelligence within the team.

Al Akhawayn Executive Education Center launched the third installment of the program "Formation des Inspecteurs de l'Etat Civil" on January 28, 2013. The programs comes within the framework of a partnership between Al Akhawayn University and "La Direction Générale des Collectivités Locales" of the Moroccan Ministry of Interior. The training is a six-month long program, including a two-month stay in Ifrane, a one-month internship in a Civil Status Office, a one-week training at the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Courts, and a Learning Trip to France.

Students and Alumni Explore New Career Paths

Michelle Khoury, Senior Talent Acquisition Specialist, at the international Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) addressed Al Akhawayn students and alumni on January 30 at Al Akhawayn campus in Ifrane, and on January 31 at Al Akhawayn Executive Education Center in Casablanca.

The talk, which was part of SCB's Graduate Program Presentations, was organized by Al Akhawayn Career Services to help students and alumni explore new career paths, their inner selves, and SCB career opportunities.

"Whatever your field of studies is, do not let it hold you back from what your future career choice will be," said Michelle Khoury. "What you studied may not necessarily equal the career opportunities available to you, so be open to what the world offers you."

Both sessions held in Ifrane and Casablanca knew the presence of about 100 students and alumni. Khoury presented thoroughly SCB Graduate Programs, and focused particularly on the bank's HR, wholesale, and consumer banking programs while explaining the different processes that candidates go through from entry requirements to the deployment phase.

Several members of the audience described Khoury's presentation as an inspirational one that encouraged them to re-think their career choices and to reflect on their personal and professional assets. A vivid interaction between the attendance and Khoury took place during the Q&A session. It was a moment to further explore assessment and interviews processes, job requirements, diversity of SCB's employees, job performance, job security, and much more.

Career Talks Connect Students and Alumni

Al Akhawayn alumni Wadia Ait Hamza ('05) and Inass Msaidi ('08) addressed current students during a career talk session organized by Al Akhawayn Alumni and Career Services on "AUI-ers in the Job Market: How to make the best of the AUI experience" on February 7, 2013, at Al Akhawayn campus.

Both alumni speakers shared their personal experiences with students. The speakers shed light on how their experiences at Al Akhawayn helped them seize good job opportunities in the market, and gave their insight into the challenges fresh graduates may encounter. Ait Hamza and Msaidi walked the audience through their academic background, their career path, and the main assets they acquired while studying at Al Akhawayn.

"You are lucky to be now at Al Akhawayn University," said Msaidi to the students. "Al Akhawayn campus life gives you the opportunity to go through a rich experience that helps you build your personality and acquire leadership skills, particularly through the out-of-class activities and clubs."

Along the same lines, Ait Hamza emphasized the importance of getting involved in campus life and field practice. "What you earn from Al Akhawayn is not only a diploma, but rather an added value of what you would have learnt during your whole experience on campus," said Ait Hamza. "Although the professional world is different from the classroom, you have the chance to get ready for that while you are here," he added.

Wadia Ait Hamza earned his Bachelor of Arts in International Studies at Al Akhawayn School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) in 2005, a Master of Arts in Euro-Mediterranean Affairs in Italy and Spain, and he is currently Public Affairs Manager at the School of Governance and Economics in Rabat.

Inass Msaidi earned her Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies at SHSS in 2008. She is currently a journalist at the national TV station SNRT in Rabat.

Al Akhawayn University Mission: Enhancing Morocco and Engaging the World.

Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane is an independent, public, not-for-profit, coeducational, Moroccan university committed to educating future citizen-leaders of Morocco and the world through a globally oriented, English-language, liberal arts curriculum based on the American system.

The university enhances Morocco and engages the world through leading-edge educational and research programs, including continuing and executive education, upholds the highest academic and ethical standards, and promotes equity and social responsibility.



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