

Al Akhawayn University Newsletter

June 2013



Al Akhawayn Confers over 340 Degrees to the Class of 2013

Saturday, June 15, was a festive day at Al Akhawayn University celebrating the 16th Commencement with 347 graduates majoring in the humanities, social sciences, business administration, sciences, and engineering. The Class of 2013 increased the number of Al Akhawayn alumni to more than 3,400 students.

"Our graduation ceremony is the highlight of the year at Al Akhawayn University," said Cherif Bel Fekih, Vice President for Student Affairs. "This is the time we applaud the achievements of our students in academics and extracurricular activities, and walk them out to the real world, confident that the skills they have acquired here will make them leaders of tomorrow."

William Gaston Caperton III, former President of the College Board and current Vice Chairman for Leeds Equity Partners, delivered the keynote speech for this year.

In a speech interspersed with words of wisdom and encouragement, Caperton declared: "You have a great education, you have a great start, but this is just the beginning of preparation.... The real lessons to be learned from the lives of successful people have to do with hard

work, great teachers and mentors, and excellent preparation."

The Class of 2013 includes 266 undergraduates and 81 graduates from the three different schools of which 52, 7% females.

"Al Akhawayn University enjoys the reputation of good, solid programs that train graduates who are trilingual, tri-cultural, technically competent, culturally aware, and socially responsible," said Driss Ouauouicha, President of the University.

This year's commencement ceremony featured parallel activities. Al Akhawayn declared the official launch of the free Wi-Fi access zone downtown Ifrane — a project that benefits local populations and visitors and that goes in line with the strategic vision of the institution to contribute to the development of its city and its region.

Al Akhawayn also inaugurated, with the presence of members of its Board of Trustees, a new residential hall on campus to answer to the growing student population. The university signed on the day of commencement a partnership agreement with the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises (CGEM) that aims at developing cooperation in fields of common interest, such as industry training and research.

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جامعة الأخوين
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UNIVERSITY



Student Houda Lamqaddam Receives Best Social Activism Award



"The film is further evidence of Houda's commitment to national social issues particularly those relating to the status of women"

Student Houda Lamqaddam ('13) won the 2013 Best Social Activism Award at the Deutsche Welle Global Media Conference in Bonn, Germany, on June 17-19, 2013.

Under the theme of "The Future of Growth: Economic Values and the Media," the sixth installment of the conference gathered distinguished guests such as Avram Noam Chomsky, American political critic; Vandana Shiva, Minister of Foreign Affairs in Germany; and other renowned German political actors.

Houda Lamqaddam attended the conference as a representative of the crew that made the documentary *475: When Marriage Becomes Punishment*, produced by Nadir Bouhmouch with her assistance directing, writing the script, and narrating the story of Amina Filali, a 16-year-old Moroccan girl who, in 2012, committed suicide after she was forced to marry her alleged rapist.

475 refers to Article 475 in the Moroccan Penal Code that makes young girls marry their rapists to save the family's honor, thus freeing the criminals from all charges. 475, the film, was released online in February 2013. The Deutsche Welle's jury members honored the work done to promote democracy and human rights through social media.

Earlier this year, Lamqaddam was also nominated for the Morocco Web Awards for her article "Ce n'est pas de Votre Faute." "The film is further evidence of Houda's commitment to national social issues particularly those relating to the status of women," said Cherif Bel Fekih, Vice President for Student Affairs.

Arabic Linguistics at the Heart of Discussions in Al Akhawayn



The Arabic Linguistics Society (ALS) and Al Akhawayn University School of Humanities and Social Sciences organized for the first time in Morocco and North Africa the 6th International Arabic Linguistics Symposium at Al Akhawayn campus in Ifrane, on June 27-28, 2013.

The symposium is a multidisciplinary platform that aims at disseminating knowledge and catalyzing needed research in Arabic linguistics. This year, the event attracted participants from 11 countries (Algeria, Austria, Canada, France, Jordan, Morocco, Poland, Turkey, the UAE, the UK, and the US). Researchers and members of the ALS from Morocco and overseas presented their works on Arabic and theoretical linguistics.

"The conference is a great opportunity to foster exchange, collaboration and networking opportunities among the participants and institutions involved," said Abdellah Chekayri, Associate Professor of Arabic and Coordinator of the Arabic Language and North African Studies Program at Al Akhawayn School of Sciences and Humanities.

The symposium featured keynote speakers Abdelkader Fassi Fihri, Keith Walters, and Leila Messaoudi. Abdelkader Fassi Fihri, Professor Emeritus at Mohamed V University in Rabat, and founding and acting President of the Linguistic Society of Morocco since 1986, presented his paper on "The Ingredients for Linguistic Justice in the Arab World". Keith Walters, Professor and Chair in the Department of Applied Linguistics at Portland State University in Oregon, US, presented his paper on the "Failures of Pan-Arabism to Build a Lasting Linguistic Heritage". Leila Messaoudi, Director of the Laboratory Language and Society at Ibn Tofail University in Kenitra and Professor of Sociolinguistics in the Department of French Language and Literature, presented her paper on "Urban Sociolinguistics".

"Their distinguished contribution helps describe the current state of the field and indicate new directions to follow to keep up with developments in linguistics and to help with the development of the Arabic language as a world language," declared Chekayri.

For two and a half days, a panoply of presentations revolved around morph-syntax, phonology, sociolinguistics, as well as topics on computational linguistics and neuro-linguistics. The program of the symposium included a sightseeing tour of the city of Fez, and a post-conference workshop on "Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language Study Day" which offered the opportunity to participants to explore and exchange research findings, perspectives, insights, and experiences of professionals and stakeholders of Arabic programs.

As a Moroccan campus with an international body of students and faculty and where Arabic is taught as a requirement within the liberal arts curriculum, Al Akhawayn University attracts international students through an exchange program or independent study of Arabic in its cultural context within the Arabic and North African Studies summer program.

Al Akhawayn Students Complete Joint Marketing Class with University of Evansville

At the end of the spring semester, students at Al Akhawayn University completed a joint marketing class with students from the University of Evansville. The joint class was a first for Al Akhawayn and afforded students the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with students from the United States.

The course was taught by Nicolas Hamelin, Assistant Professor of Marketing in the School of Business Administration at Al Akhawayn, and Peter A. Rosen, Associate Professor of Management Information Systems at the University of Evansville.

The course on international marketing required significant collaboration between the two schools as students found it necessary to complete coursework through video conferencing and email as they worked toward their semester project. For the semester project, students had to collaborate to develop an export plan for a Moroccan product to the United States. This required the students to perform and consider market research and selection, consumer behavior, advertising, and distribution, all while taking into account both Moroccan and American regulations.

The collaboration culminated March 7-12, when the groups of students from the two universities met at Harlaxton College in the United Kingdom in order to finalize and present their projects for the class.

"I consider this course as one of the best and the most enriching marketing courses I had," said Soukaina El Omari ('13), marketing student at Al Akhawayn. "This course combined hard work and fun. In it, we have not only learnt about international marketing, but also about how to handle international teams."

Trevathan Appointed New Director of ASI



Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane has announced the appointment of Stephen Trevathan as Director of Al Akhawayn School of Ifrane (ASI), a K-12 school affiliated to Al Akhawayn University.

As the principal pedagogical and administrative officer of ASI, Trevathan has the main responsibility of providing the leadership necessary to make progress towards the School's overall mission.

"I am strongly committed to the overall development and progress of each individual student and to the welfare of the school community as a whole and intend to work hard to ensure this," said Stephen Trevathan.

Former faculty member at Al Akhawayn's Center for Academic Development and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Trevathan brings to ASI nearly 30 years of experience in teaching, teacher training, and school management. Trevathan taught for 8 years as Senior Lecturer in Education at Roehampton University in the UK. He also was principal of two state-maintained schools in the Greater London area.

He holds an MA in Philosophy of Education from the University of London and has recently submitted his PhD in Philosophy and Theology from the University of Birmingham in the UK.

"With a strong background in school education and with his educational leadership, we are happy to welcome Stephen Trevathan as a school principal of Al Akhawayn School of Ifrane," said Ahmed Legrouri, Vice President for Academic Affairs. "I am certain that Trevathan will spare no effort in continuing the development of the School and enhancing its commitment to excellence."

Al Akhawayn School of Ifrane was founded in 1995 as the first English language, co-educational K-12 school in Ifrane, Morocco, delivering classes via an American curriculum. The history of the school has been defined by excellence and achievement in a balanced program of academics, arts, sports and community service which prepares students to thrive in a changing world.

Spotlights

Al Akhawayn students **Saad Benrouyne** ('14) from the School of Science and Engineering, and **Youness El Gharbi** ('15) from the School of Business Administration were selected along with 15 other Moroccan students to participate in the Coca-Cola MENA Scholarship Program. The month-long Global Business Institute program takes place at the Kelley School of Business in Indiana University.

Karim Moustaghfir, Associate Professor and HRD Program Coordinator at Al Akhawayn University, was one of three keynote speakers during the 8th installment of the International Forum on Knowledge Asset Dynamics held in Zagreb, Croatia, on June 12-14, 2013.

Christopher Evan Longhurst, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Al Akhawayn School of Humanities and Social Sciences, published an article entitled "Mir'ab: Symbol of Unity and Masterpiece of Islamic Art and Architecture" in *Lonaard Magazine*, an art and architecture peer-reviewed periodical by the London Art and Architecture research and Design Group. *Lonaard Magazine* is catalogued in the British Library ISSN (Print) 2045-8150, (Online) 2048-7673

A hundred Al Akhawayn Alumni gathered on campus for the **3rd Alumni Homecoming** on June 8-9, 2013.

The Al Akhawayn Leadership Development Institute organized its first **annual international conference** on "Leadership in Strategic Planning for Realizing Extraordinary Results" on June 8, 2013 at Al Akhawayn Campus.

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences launched the **SHSS Scholarship Fund** through the 1,000 MAD contribution of alumnus Aomar Boum ('98). President Driss Ouauouicha committed the University to match all incoming donations. All alumni are invited to contribute to this fund.

SSE Celebrates Outstanding Science and Engineering Students

To reward Al Akhawayn engineering students on their capstone design projects, Al Akhawayn School of Science and Engineering (SSE) organized the yearly 2013 Stonehenge Ceremony, as is tradition, on the eve of Commencement, on June 14, 2013. The 10th installment of the SSE Stonehenge Ceremony featured the presence of Al Akhawayn alumnus Houssam Haitof ('05) as the Keynote Speaker. Haitof earned a bachelor's degree from Al Akhawayn School of Science and Engineering in 2005, and a PhD from the Technical University of Munich (TUM) in Germany in 2011. He is currently working at TUM as a researcher and project manager for a European research project on high performance computing. Haitof shared with members of SSE Class of 2013 his personal, academic, and professional experience. "The SSE provides you with a strong foundation for the future; but it is up to you to design and build it," said Haitof. "What Al Akhawayn gave me is much more than a degree. It opened doors for me because what I learned and experienced throughout the years I spent in it built my character and smoothly guided me to the path I wanted to choose for my life." In his introductory remarks, David Wyrick, Dean of the SSE, qualified the Stonehenge Ceremony as "a really nifty tradition... because it celebrates the success of our students." Wyrick highlighted the main achievements of the school, drawing attention to the originality of pursuing a liberal arts education.



"[The Liberal Arts Education] makes you think and put things in perspective; and that makes you a unique graduating student from Al Akhawayn," said Wyrick. "It is not all about the latest technology... It is about doing what is right in society... doing what is ethical and what is best for the Planet." The 2013 award for the best SSE capstone design project with the monetary prize of 8,000 MAD went to student Sara El Alaoui for her project "Gonarthrosis' Osteoarticular Surgery Assisting Software" under the supervision of Naeem Sheikh, Assistant Professor of Mathematics at SSE. According to the Stonehenge committee, "the software proved to be the perfect example of original project that requires innovation, research, strong programming skills, and disciplined execution. The project demonstrated the student's readiness to design, implement, and deploy original, complex, and useful real-life multidisciplinary applications."

The Stonehenge award was initiated by two Al Akhawayn alumni and who set the award's overall objective to the creation of an academic competition that drives the quality of capstone design projects forward. According to them "the underlying motivation is to incite students to conduct capstone projects that are original, challenging, and industry- or research-oriented."

The runners-up in the competition were Mohammed Taha Elgraini with the project entitled "Network Intrusion Detection Using Feature Selection and Rank Aggregation" and Saad Bahri, Mohamed-Amine Lechgar, and Yassine Mhanna with their project entitled "C-GOV: Commune Rurale On the Cloud: The Private Cloud Deployment". The Stonehenge Ceremony also celebrated other SSE achievements and handed out certificates of recognition to outstanding students for the following:

- Sara Aba and Afaf El Aroui: Runner-up in the 3rd IEEE E-Week' 13 of Robotic & Electro-Mechanic Contest – jointly organized with the AUI's 8th Engineering Design Competition – with her project "Enhanced SIM Card for Automated Transportation System" under the supervision of Dr. Yassin Salih-Aj
- Sara El Alaoui: Winner of the Outstanding SSE GPA award, active member of Al Akhawayn's extracurricular activities, mainly within the Islamic Art Club.
- Sara Alaoui, Omar Bougamza, and Fatima Zohra Smaili: Team winners of the Al Akhawayn Undergraduate Research Contest supervised by Dr. Mohamed Riduan Abid
- Dounya Barrit: Contributor in a research project headed by Dr. Asmae Khaldoun and funded by IRESEN
- Driss Benarafa: Winner of the Most Active SSE Student in extracurricular activities through the organization of numerous activities in the Islamic Art Club
- Ntissar Hardaf: Selected Best Student Speaker at the annual International Colloquium of the Association of Human Resource Managers and Trainers held in Marrakech
- Driss Lahjouji: For his achievements in research related to his master project in Sustainable Energy Management under the supervision of Dr. Hassane Darhmaoui.
- Amine Kouame: Winner of 7 gold medals in the Moroccan Swimming Championship in 2013, with two new national records.