Al Akhawayn University Newsletter

May 2013

Will there be Life on Mars? What if there were no Moon?

Curiosity drove students from Al Akhawayn University in addition to local high schools Lycée Militaire and Al Akhawayn School of Ifrane to join Kamal Oudrhiri, Moroccan scientist working for NASA as well as the founder and president of Grove of Hope Association, to deliver a lecture on what space involves at Al Akhawayn University on May 15, 2013.

Along with his fellow colleagues from Grove of Hope, Oudrhiri presented videos showing the team who worked on the Curiosity Rover Mission that touched down on Mars in August 2012, some of the tools used, and the process of landing the rover.

He then moved to a discussion of the mission itself and an exploration of space in general.

Together with the members of Grove of Hope, students explored various features as the distance, speed, and fuel involved in such a mission, the Milky Way, the discovery of the number of existing moons, and more.

"Your childhood dream can always come true … success doesn't exist without failure, just don't let failure stop you from reaching your

"I enjoyed interacting with the students and it is really impressive to discover how their level of knowledge about space is good," said Oudrhiri.

objective … it's not all about intelligence, rather it's about hard work." With these words, Oudrhiri succeeded in inspiring the audience and in encouraging them in their endeavors.

Grove of Hope is a nonprofit organization founded in Los Angeles, California, with the objective of providing science education in their surrounding neighborhoods and around the globe.

جامعة الأخوين
AL AKHAWAYN
U N I V E R S I T Y

African Digital Libraries Move Beyond Embryonic Stage

"The conference was a good initiative to contribute to the global road map for digital libraries at the international level"

Al Akhawayn University hosted the 3rd International Conference on African Digital Libraries and Archives (ICADLA) under the theme Digital Libraries and Archives in Africa: Changing Lives and Building Communities, on May 30—31, 2013.

ICADLA 2013 constituted a platform for African institutions to examine best practices for the development and sustainability of the digitization of library collections. The conference attracted participants from different countries across the globe including Australia, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Uganda, the US and more.

Participants shared initiatives undertaken by the different institutions represented on the preservation and management of digital collections. They also discussed the opportunities for collaboration and partnerships in developing digital libraries and archives in Africa, and they shared expertise in the digital infrastructure and information management, policies and strategies frameworks, and the challenges.

"We expect to build a network of highly motivated and passionate librarians across Africa so that they can lead the advocacy action within Africa to build more digital libraries as this is a weak field in the African continent," said Misako Ito, Advisor in Communication and Information at UNESCO Office for Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia. "The conference in Ifrane has succeeded in that as I have seen friendship develop among the participants, collaborative actions and discussions also took place even outside the sessions. The conference was a good initiative to contribute to the global road map for digital libraries at the international level."

In addition to the two-day conference on May 30—31, the ICADLA activities started earlier with a three-day workshop on Digital Futures, a one-day workshop on Sustainable Records Digitization Program, and a guided tour of the city of Fez and its Medina (Old City).

International Computer Science Experts Confer at Al Akhawayn University

A scientific and technological meeting called on 250 participants from all over the world to gather around the premier Computer Science and Engineering Conference in the Middle East and North Africa organized by the Arab Computing Society (ACS) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) on May 27-30, 2013.

Held every year in an Arab country, the International Conference on Computer Systems and Applications (AICCSA) intends to enhance the participation and contribution of the Arab world in the domain of information technologies. The conference took place this year in the city of Fez during the week and in Ifrane at Al Akhawayn University on May 29. Present at the one-day conference at Al Akhawayn was President Driss Ouaouicha. The participants joined together around a plenary session and a series of workshops to share theory practice, and knowledge on computer science and information technology.

"As imagined by its founders, our campus was created to foster intercultural understanding, to marry tradition and modernity, and to bridge between east and west," said Driss Ouaouicha, President of Al Akhawayn University at the opening speech. "While we train our students for Morocco, we also teach them global competencies and transformable skills for an international horizon."

In general, the topics discussed in AICCSA 2013 included areas such as cloud and distributed computing; networking, sensor networks, and mobile computing; IR, data and knowledge management; BPM and web; services and SOA; data quality and integration; social computing; and more.

Al Akhawayn University Partners with CorpsAfrica

Al Akhawayn University cemented a partnership with CorpsAfrica on May 2, 2013, that will bring about new opportunities for AI students and alumni to volunteer within Morocco.

The objectives of the joint partnership would be to work together to provide comprehensive training programs and high-quality experiences for participants to collaborate on community development projects inside Morocco, and promote awareness toward community involvement. Liz Fanning, Founder of CorpsAfrica and a former Peace Corps volunteer, offered several reasons why AI Akhawayn was an ideal partner for CorpsAfrica.

"AUI has strong ties with other Moroccan institutions in terms of higher education, nongovernmental organizations, and expertise. Many of the executives at AUI worked for Peace Corps at some time in their career, so they understand the model of service that CorpsAfrica is building towards. In short, AUI is an open, understanding, and positive partner who will help us broaden our connections in Moroccan higher education and civil society in general," she said.

Currently, CorpsAfrica is in an initial pilot phase of three years during which the organization will work on perfecting its organizational approach. In addition to the Moroccan component, benchmarks are in place to expand to two sub-Saharan countries by the end of the pilot phase.

World Bank International Conference at AUI

After Lille (EQUIPPE Laboratory) in 2008, Washington DC (World Bank) in 2009, Paris (Economy School of Paris) in 2010, Harvard (Center for International Development) in 2011, and Paris (AFD) again in 2012, Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane hosted the 6th international conference on Migration and Development on May 18-19, 2013 at Al Akhawayn campus.

Under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the conference was jointly organized by the Ministry of Moroccans Living Abroad, The French Development Agency (AFD) Research Department, the World Bank Development Research Group (DECRG), the Center for Global Development (CDG) in Washington DC and the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) in Marseille.

According to Çağlar Özden, Senior Economist at the World Bank, "The conference is devoted to investigating channels through which international migration affects economic and social outcomes of developing countries."

Over 120 participants from 16 universities and research centers mainly from Belgium, France, Great Britain, Mexico, Morocco, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and USA, presented and discussed the results of their research and shared ideas and opinions on Migration and Social Media, Migration and Institutions, Determinants of International Migration, Migration and Development in the MENA Region, Political Economy of Migration, Return Migration and the Selection of Migrants, Migration and Family, and more. "This important meeting allows us to look at migration phenomena from social, economic, and policy angles in connection with development in an ever changing world, continuously growing smaller and more interconnected " Said Minister Mazouz.

Speed Recruiting: A New Way of Hiring

Over 100 Al Akhawayn students met with recruiters on May 3, 2013, during the first installment of Speed Recruiting organized by Al Akhawayn Career Services on campus.

The Speed Recruiting exercise let recruiters and students meet on a determined schedule with candidates changing seats every seven minutes to meet with a new recruiter. Among the companies present were BMCE, Dell, Deloitte, Near Shore, Wincor Nixdorf, Bull Maroc, and Amorsys.

"The Speed Recruiting was an opportunity for us to get close to the job market through the different companies present. I visited four stands and it was a good opportunity for me to practice," said student Hicham Idrissi Alami ('13)

Recruiters from different firms were fully booked for their speed recruiting appointments and enjoyed meeting Al Akhawayn candidates.

"This is a good exercise to make the companies known by the candidates and help them get ready for the employment market," said Fouad Benjoudar, Cloud Director at Bull Maroc. "I was very impressed with how well prepared they were; showing their rich and diverse culture of their training and their intellectual curiosity."

LDI Recognizes Community Leaders with Annual Awards

Each year, Al Akhawayn Leadership Development Institute (LDI) students recognize local associations for their efforts in reinforcing community leadership during the Leader of the Year (LOTY) award ceremony, organized this year on May 5, 2013.

"Making a positive impact is an ultimate responsibility for noble leaders and I commend values of caring for others, the commitment to act responsibly and actively, encouraging others to do their best, and the determination to carry out the vision of the organization facing the challenges met," said Avis Rupert, Coordinator of the LDI.

The 2013 LOTY went to the association Al Atlas for Sport and Human Development and included a prize of 10,000 MAD to support their educational and human development projects. A second prize was awarded to Ait Tizi for Social Work and included 2,500 MAD to help with mosque construction supplies. A third prize went to Ifrane and the World for Development and also included a check for 2,500 MAD to be used for buying musical instruments for the children who benefit from the association's activities.

"We thank the LDI students for their initiative and we hope with this prize we continue our efforts in improving the development of the social conditions and the needs of our community," said Fatima Benachour, member of Al Atlas for Sport and Human Development.

The Leadership Development Institute offers an annual competition and prize for the outstanding leader of an association in the Ifrane-Azrou area. Students in the institute help promote, select, and award this honor at a ceremony during the spring semester. The money for the prizes is mainly provided from donations. The prizes help associations continue their work and impact the lives of many people in their community.

The LOTY award is held with the main objectives of reinforcing the quality of community leadership in Morocco, promoting development in Morocco through the consolidation of community leadership, strengthening the links and ensuring a positive impact between Al Akhawayn and the surrounding community, and recognizing great leadership qualities and efforts among local associations.

Spotlights

Student **Mohamed Nidal Ouazzani** ('15) won the first prize in *The Power of the Pen*, a panel presentation and a student writing competition held at Al Akhawayn University on April 25, 2013.

Christopher Longhurst, Assistant Professor of Philosophy in the Al Akhawayn School of Humanities and Social Sciences, has published an article in the English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, the official Vatican newspaper. The article critiques the controversial statue of Pope John Paul II recently unveiled in Rome. Longhurst is one of few who gave the statue a favorable appraisal.

Hyung Joon Yoon, Assistant Professor of Human Resource Development at Al Akhawayn School of Humanities and Social Sciences, published an article in the Australian Career Practitioner magazine. (Reference: Yoon, H. J. (2013, Winter). "Career development is to answer "When I grow up, what will I be?"" in *Australian Career Practitioner*, 24 (2), 13)

Abderrahman Hassi, Lecturer of Management in the School of Business Administration at Al Akhawayn University, delivered a seminar on Integrating Entrepreneurship in Academic Programs at l'École Nationale Supérieure d'Informatique et d'Analyse des Systèmes (ENSIAS) on May 20-21, 2013.
The workshop was designed for academic faculty teaching entrepreneurship-related courses at ENSIAS, l'ENSET, Hassan II University, Mohammed V University, and the International University of Rabat. The main objective was to discuss efficient approaches to teaching entrepreneurship to tertiary-level students. The seminar was organized by Intel Corporation in partnership with the University of California at Berkeley.

Karim Moustaghfir, Associate Professor of Human Resource Development at Al Akhawayn University, was appointed member of the Senate of EMUNI University (the Euro Mediterranean University). Moustaghfir represents Morocco as member of the Union for the Mediterranean. The EMUNI Senate is composed of distinguished professors from different member countries. Al Akhawayn University is also a member of the EMUNI University General Assembly.

The Model United Nations Club of Al Akhawayn University, under the supervision of its advisor Jack Kalpakian, Professor of International Studies, held its first High School Model UN on May 24—26 where Al Akhawayn hosted students from six high schools and five cities (Ifrane, Rabat, Meknes, Marrakech, and Taza). Two committees were simulated: the UN Security Council on Kashmir in 1948, and the UN Security Council on the Rwanda genocide in 1993. After negotiations and heated discussions, both committees reached agreement positions and approved resolutions. Parallel activities were held throughout the event. The best delegates of each committee received awards in recognition for their hard work.

Engaging the Development of Renewable Energies

Aimed at promoting the development of renewable energies in the Mediterranean countries, the Mediterranean Institute of Renewable Energies organized "The First Training Symposium on Renewable Energies in the Mediterranean Region" on May 29-30, 2013, at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane.

The conference was organized in close collaboration between the Moroccan Association for Solar and Aeolian Industries and Al Akhawayn University. Experts in different fields of renewable energy and participants from different countries gathered at this meeting with the goal of creating a network of competencies that would provide a basis for an international education throughout the Mediterranean area.

"Our university has strategically embarked in the field of renewable energies, both at the level of academic programs and applied research. This event is an excellent example that demonstrates the university's approach based on effective collaborations between academic institutions and the industry," said Khalid Sendide, Coordinator of the conference and Associate Professor of Chemistry and Program Coordinator in the School of Science and Engineering at Al Akhawayn.

"We tried, through these two-day workshops, to adopt the state-of-the-art practices in order to identify academic programs and engineer profiles that would satisfy the national and Mediterranean upcoming needs for the flourishing renewable energies industries."

The two-day conference comprised a series of workshops led by national and international speakers. Participants fielded current inquiries on the competencies and career options of the industry, development on the horizon for various countries of the Mediterranean basin during the years 2015-2020, and brainstormed on the possibility of launching bachelor's and master's degrees specialized in the Mediterranean field in order to introduce students to this area and its advancements.

Objectives of the meeting included identifying and defining training themes in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency, liaising with the Tempus project at the University of Paul Sabatier in Toulouse, France, developing exchanges between professors, and establishing a steering committee that would ensure the implementation of the program and its evaluation.

National Youth Voices Gather at AUI

Connecting future leaders of Morocco, such was the mission of the city version of the Youth to Business Forum at Al Akhawayn University organized by the local Atlas committee of the International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences(AIESEC) on April 27, 2013.

"Today's youth is more than ever eager to share and unite their voice, to create, influence and be productive in the business sphere," said a member of AIESEC at Al Akhawayn. "The Youth 2 Business Forum provides a unique experience to the participants empowered by AIESEC which operates at the global, national, and regional levels."

The forum included workshops and talks by young Moroccan business pioneers whose objective was to inspire the future leaders in the audience on the importance of entrepreneurship and its impact on national development. The forum's strong point was the success stories laid out by speakers Ahmed Salmi, Managing Director of Vendor Plus, Sales, and Customer Service Training; Ali Elouafiq ('12), Al Akhawayn alumnus and founder of "JabekLah", a social network application; Driss Slaoui , Al Akhawayn student and founder of WeLoveBuzz, a popular website for news and trendy topics; Salaheddine Cherkaoui, founder of Zero-intruders, a new identification system based on pace; and Hamza Fasiki, co-founder of the Moroccan Center for Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship (MCISE).

"We all learn one way or another... Experience is like a game: the more you play it, the better you get. A dream is like music and every person listens to the music inside them," replied Salmi to the audience's inquiries on the secrets behind success.

What can Social Responsibility Also Involve?

For the past six years, it has been a tradition for members of the Al Akhawayn student-run Rotaract Club to assist local families, especially the ones with low incomes, through the circumcision campaign. This year's event took place on May 1, 2013, and saw a record 401 children from the communities of Ifrane, Azrou, El Hajeb, and Immouzer helped by the promotion. The campaign was in collaboration with the Ofoq Association in Sale and included the participation of four doctors, seven nurses, and more than 60 students and additional volunteers.

"As 'Rotaractors,' our goal is not only to help those in need but also to promote sustainable development at the Ifrane region as well as good citizenship," said Mounia Injihari, student member of Al Akhawayn Rotaract. "Although it is a hard work for us students, we feel a great deal of pride, fulfillment, and motivation out of it. Rotaract is, for us, an opening to the outside world. A myriad of opportunities are there to interact with the community, in part, but also to improve the quality of life for people in need."

The student organization operates in four different areas of action – internal, professional, social, and international – and works with many different organizations and partners to expand their activities within a challenging action plan. Previously, the Al Akhawayn Rotaract Club has organized health awareness days, blood drives, and other social activities. The club was awarded a prize in March 2011 for Best Action for Public Interest during the Rotaract MENA District Conference in Tunisia.

Service Learning for Civic Engagement

The Service Learning program of the Al Akhawayn Language Center united local high school and Al Akhawayn University students on May 7, 2013, to celebrate their third semester of joint activities.

The Service Learning program at Al Akhawayn University joins students from Al Akhawayn and the local high school, Allal Al Fassi, to work together to improve their English through communicative activities and group work. The program also involves a leadership team comprised of both institutions' students who manage all aspects of the program from curriculum design to the preparation and evaluation of final projects.

The final program showcased the efforts of the four student group projects, which included "Painting and Restocking the Allal Al Fassi Library" and "Picking up Trash in a Public Area in Ifrane," in addition to a research project into poverty and a research project about homosexuality.

"The program continues to be a model of service learning for Al Akhawayn and the local and global community," said Brian Seilstad, the Program Coordinator at Al Akhawayn Language Center. "In the past year, we have been able to share the program design and results in national and international conferences."

The innovation of this semester was the introduction of civic-based projects during which the students identified a problem in their community and addressed it through a project. One group chose to repaint the library at Allal Al Fassi and collect used and new books to increase the library's selections. In addition, this group negotiated a more open-access policy with the administration of the school so that students would have more chances to use the books. Another group chose littering as a project and decided to clean up a public area in Ifrane.