

Al Akhawayn Newsletter

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Students Receive Pertinent Career Advice from Alumni



Al Akhawayn students got a glimpse of life after graduation during the semestral Career Orientation Session sponsored by the Al Akhawayn Career Services.

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Students and Professors Gain New Perspectives at Islamabad Conference



University of Duisburg-Essen and brought together students and faculty from Morocco, Germany, and Pakistan.

Organized under the theme of “Youth, State and Social Change,” the conference afforded the students the opportunity to participate in poster presentations on topics related to the theme. Zaid led a presentation titled “Digital Media and Political Mobilization during the Arab Spring: The Case of Egypt,” while Oumlil contributed a presentation titled “Inspiring Social Change: The Creative Interventions of MENASA Women Artists.”

Four students and two professors from Al Akhawayn participated in an international academic exchange in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Al Akhawayn faculty members Bouziane Zaid, assistant professor of media and communication, and Kenza Oumlil, assistant professor of communication and gender, travelled with students

Saadia Dinia (‘13), Kenza Benkirane (‘12), Meryem Eljarroudi (‘13), and Nourredine El Khattaby (‘13) to a one-week workshop at Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, Pakistan, on September 9-14, 2013. The workshop was promoted by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Institute for Development and Peace at the

Students Receive Pertinent Career Advice from Alumni

Many Al Akhawayn students dream of the day they will graduate, but for many what awaits them in the real world is a bit of a mystery.

To help better prepare them for the challenges that lie ahead post-graduation, Al Akhawayn Career Services conducted its semestral Career Orientation Session September 28-29, 2013, at the Al Akhawayn campus in Ifrane.

The first day focused on defining the career landscape, explaining personality and business types, and dispelling myths about employers and the job search. Students were encouraged to build a career plan by choosing an area of interest and determining how to get there by creating milestones that would contribute to the overarching goal. Another key piece of advice was for students to keep an open perspective and to be flexible during the job search, keeping in mind the fact their premier job would mainly serve as a vehicle to gain experience.

The second day allowed students to focus on the hard skills required to obtain a job. Students were coached on how to properly organize a CV and participated in mock interviews in order to hone their interpersonal skills.

The career sessions were bolstered by the participation of several Al Akhawayn alumni currently working in the job market. Adil Chaouki (‘06) coached the sessions, while Houda Ougaddoum (‘09), Mounia Mansouri (‘10), Rkia Slaoui (‘04), and Wifak Slaoui (‘05) told their success stories to students. In addition to alumni testimonials via Skype, the coach and storytellers contributed pertinent advice about life after graduation and helped to provide students with experienced, real-world answers to their questions.

A video report of the event can be viewed on the university’s [YouTube channel](#).

Ambassador Highlights 800-Year Relationship Between Morocco and England



In a world of constantly changing political boundaries and affiliations, centuries-old partnerships between countries are oftentimes becoming anomalous.

In this context, former Ambassador Mohamed Belmahispoke on one such anomaly to a crowd of about 30 interested parties in the boardroom of Al Akhawayn on

the topic of “The First Diplomatic Contact between Morocco and England in the Year of 1213: Its Genesis and Impact,” October 2, 2013.

In his lecture, Belmahi explained in depth how the

historical relationship between Morocco and England began 800 years ago. The current British monarch at the time, King John, was facing a series of domestic and international challenges to his reign. Reaching out for support, the king sent emissaries to Morocco to ask the current sultan

for support. The sultan’s refusal eventually helped contribute to the demise of King John’s reign and ultimately the signing of the Magna Carta into British law. Despite this initial refusal for assistance, Belmahi explained how Morocco maintained close ties to the British monarchy after this initial contact, up until the beginning of the French protectorate.

A frequent guest of Al Akhawayn University, Belmahi is a Moroccan diplomat with a long career of public service. Among his numerous postings, he was the former ambassador to Nepal from 1996-99 and Great Britain from 1999-2009.

Facets of North African Music Discussed in “Honoring AUI Authors” Lecture



The genre of rai music, a form of Arabic folk music concerned with social issues, was the topic of a discussion during the 36th edition of Honoring Al Akhawayn Authors held October 9, 2013, in the Mohammed VI Library. John Shoup, Professor of Anthropology in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, presented his paper “Rai: North Africa’s Music of the Working Class” during the event.

By examining the state of the genre in each major decade of the 20th century, Shoup was able to present a comprehensive history of the music’s development into its present day form. He traced the history of rai music from its origins in the 1920s as the music of rural migrant

laborers to its current status as a fusion genre tackling complex social issues.

Despite rai music’s origins in the MENA region, Shoup explained that immigration has helped the genre to develop a more significant fan base in Europe where the majority of the music is now being produced.

“Rai has definitely changed. Its major area of development is in France, so it’s going to be much more the music of the Franco-Maghreb community,” Shoup said. “It’s because it has been taken as the symbol for resistance against racism.”

Shoup developed an interest in rai music in 1987 when he first became interested in Arabic music while living in

the Kingdom of Lesotho in southern Africa. In researching his paper, he used secondary sources such as CDs and cassette tapes, as well as websites of the singers and interviews to collect data.

Sponsored by the Mohammed VI Library of Al Akhawayn University, the Honoring Al Akhawayn Authors series is an ongoing project aimed at highlighting the academic and cultural contributions of Al Akhawayn University professors and staff members.

A video report of the 36th edition of Honoring AUI Authors can be found on the university’s [YouTube channel](#).

College Presidents Discuss Benefits of International Student Exchanges



Ideas on academic networking, the internationalization of universities, and the international mobility of students were the topics of discussion during a breakaway session of the 3rd Japan-North Africa University Summit held October 24, 2013, at the Al Akhawayn campus.

During the session, Al Akhawayn President Driss Ouaoicha met with collegiate level administrators from countries as diverse as Japan, Egypt, and Libya, among others, to discuss how an international exchange of students can be beneficial to both the institutions and the students themselves.

“The importance of mobility often lies in the experience and the mobility of the student, in learning a different culture and going to a different institution, and in developing themselves,” he said.

Last year, 58 percent of Al Akhawayn University graduates completed their degrees having obtained some form of international experience. The university aims to increase this number to 75 percent by 2016 and 100 percent by 2020.

In addition, the president also discussed how the implementation of a liberal arts system at the university made

great strides in attracting foreign students, as well as how the strengthening of academic programs can provide a symbiotic benefit for universities who participate in international exchanges.

The session held at Al Akhawayn was part of a larger series of events taking place for the 3rd Japan-North Africa University Summit. In addition, as part of the conference President Ouaoicha gave a presentation titled “Mobility and Academic Networking: The Case of Al Akhawayn University” at a plenary session in Rabat.

Al Akhawayn Professor Discusses Phenomenon in Urban Senegal



The decision was in the hands of the audience, and after hearing the speaker's choices the crowd decided on a lecture highlighting the integration of the catholic representation of Jesus in the identity and practice of a Senegalese Sufi order for the 37th edition of the Honoring Al Akhawayn Authors series.

Eric Ross, Associate Professor of International Studies at Al Akhawayn University, was the speaker for the evening and provided the audience with other options from his published works, such as a study of public squares in Senegalese cities and a study of Senegalese Sufi disciples and institutions abroad, to consider for the topic of discussion.

The theme decided, Ross presented on "Christmas in Cambéréne," an event held annually on Christmas day that encompasses a blending of Christian and Islamic beliefs.

As Ross explained, central to this event is the famous personality called Issa Rohou Lahi (1876-1949). In the area of Cambéréne, Senegal, he is considered to be a sacred personality and a central figure of the religious event. In the ceremony, participants refer to this man as the prophet Issa (Jesus, in Christianity), beget upon him a status as a person of hope and trust, and they pray for him to bless them, as well as recite "Dikr" and "Hadith" following Islamic tradition.

In order to obtain research material for his study, Ross directly observed the event, mapped out its locations within the city of Cambéréne, and conducted an interview with the Senegalese humanitarian Cherif Ousseynou Laye (1945-2009) in addition to other primary source interviews.

Further information about the event can be found in a detailed description on the [author's blog](#).

The Honoring Al Akhawayn Authors series is an ongoing event aimed at supporting and promoting the scholarly research of faculty members at Al Akhawayn University. It is sponsored by the Mohammed VI Library of Al Akhawayn University.



Spotlights

Al Akhawayn Assistant Professor of Media and Communication **Bouziene Zaid** presented his research on "Online Freedom in Morocco" at the 8th Internet Governance Forum (IGF) held in Bali, Indonesia, on October 22-25, 2013. The IGF is the United Nation's flagship conference for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue on global Internet policy. Zaid participated as a member of the Freedom House delegation.

At the conclusion of the conference, participants drafted a joint statement that highlighted concerns and provided recommendations on how to best protect Internet freedom. The joint statement can be viewed in its entirety at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/article/joint-statement-civil-society-delegates-2013-internet-governance-forum>

Rachid Belmokhtar, former President of Al Akhawayn University, was appointed to the position of Minister of National Education and Vocational Training by His Majesty King Mohammed VI on October 11, 2013.

He had previously served as the Minister of Education from 1995-1998. Shortly after his first tenure as Minister of Education, he was appointed President of Al Akhawayn University by the late King Hassan II in 1998. Belmokhtar served in this capacity until 2008.

Al Akhawayn Assistant Professor of Media and Communication **Bouziene Zaid** has recently provided significant additions to the field of media research.

Zaid has recently contributed to two publications. He contributed a chapter on the state of Internet freedom in Morocco for the publication Freedom House Freedom of the Net Report, as well as a chapter entitled "Morocco's Media System in a Democratic Transition" for the publication Media and Democratization: The African Experience.

In addition, on September 23-24, 2013, Zaid presented "Analysis of the programming of public service TV" at the first meeting of the expert working group on data collection on television and on-demand audiovisual services in the countries of the partnership of the EUROMED Audiovisual III program, organized by the European Audiovisual Observatory and the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) in Tunis, Tunisia.

The complex topic of information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D) is the topic of a new book E-Government for Good Governance in Developing Countries by **Driss Kettani**, Associate Professor in the School of Science and Engineering at Al Akhawayn University.

Aimed at decision makers in developing countries, the book focuses on the implementation of ICT4D through the auspice of the eFez Project, an endeavor aimed at implementing the automated procurement of birth certificates from municipal government offices. The book presents the findings and practical methods developed by the eFez Project as a potential formal framework for academics, practitioners, and decision makers.

Spotlights

Karim Moustaghfir, Associate Professor of Human Resource Development at Al Akhawayn University, participated in the 2013 Symposium of the Performance Measurement Association (PMA) held in Glasgow, Scotland, on October 2-4, 2013. During the conference, Moustaghfir presented his research on "Towards a behavior-based performance management system: Assumptions and perspectives." This paper was co-authored with Giovanni Schiuma, University of Cambridge, and Daniela Carlucci, University of Basilicata. The PMA is the world's largest professional association in the field of performance management and measurement. The symposium was conducted jointly with the Centre for Business Performance of the Cranfield School of Management of Cranfield University.

The perception and attitudes of consumers toward ethical consumerism is the focus of the journal chapter "Ethical Consumerism: A View from the Food Industry in Morocco" recently published in the *Journal of Food Products Marketing*. In the chapter, the authors explore what factors other than price drive the purchase and consumption of food items.

The chapter was authored by Al Akhawayn scholars **Nicolas Hamelin**, assistant professor of marketing, and MBA student **Yamina Benhari** ('11), in collaboration with **Talha Harcar**, an associate professor at Penn State University – Beaver.

The Al Akhawayn Alumni Association, the official association for graduates of Al Akhawayn University, recently signed an agreement with Accor Gestion Maroc to offer its members or guests preferential rates on all Accor hotels located in Morocco. As part of the agreement, the association agrees to book a minimum of 250 nights for its members or guests throughout the year. The special rates exclude festivals and the New Year period, and are subject to room availability and prior booking. To benefit from the preferential rates, bookings must be done directly through the hotel of choice.

