

Lending a **Helping** Hand

Thanks to the generosity of Maryland-based Lebanese expatriates Annie and Sami Totah, LAU is pleased to have awarded a new scholarship for high-achieving students this semester.

Known as the Sami and Annie Totah Scholarship, this \$5,000 award was established as a way to provide academically gifted Lebanese students with the financial support that they need to pursue their dreams through higher education.

Annie Totah, who moved to the U.S. with her husband more than forty years ago and established a commercial real estate business in the Washington, D.C.

area, says her family values inspired the scholarship.

“My mother, who was a survivor of the Armenian Genocide and an orphan who worked hard late in her life to become a successful nurse, instilled in me two things: First, that I should always do my best no matter what. Second, to do what I can to make this world a better place,” she says. “With this scholarship I am trying to put the lessons that my mother taught me into practice. I also wanted to be able to give back to Lebanon, the country that helped me achieve my own dreams.”

Totah’s idea was to establish a scholarship that will be awarded annually

to a student who displays academic excellence and leadership potential at either LAU, or Totah’s own alma mater the American University of Beirut. The two institutions will alternate giving the scholarship each year. The scholarship is officially presented at a ceremony during the American Task Force for Lebanon’s annual gala in Washington D.C. each spring.

Totah says she hopes the scholarships will enable gifted students to excel in their chosen professions. “Behind every success story there has almost always been a big challenge. Hopefully, with this scholarship, we will help eliminate some of the challenges for these students so they can achieve their dreams.”

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IWSAW director Dr. Dima Dabbous-Sensenig speaking at a conference in the United States.



Did You Know?

LAU's Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) has introduced two new courses this semester at the university designed to promote gender expertise in the Arab world.

Undergraduates can now opt to take electives in "Introduction to Gender Studies" and "Representations of Women in the Arts and the Media." LAU already offers a number of courses relating to women's rights and feminism, including classes relating to economics, sociology, psychology and media.

"LAU's history is rooted in education for women and the courses are a natural extension of that," said Dr. Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, Director of IWSAW. In line with LAU's unique heritage of having evolved from Lebanon's first school for girls, LAU's 2011-2016 Strategic Plan includes a commitment to strengthening gender perspectives across all disciplines and programs.

Established in 1973, IWSAW is committed to development work and academic research on women in the Arab world. One of LAU's oldest institutions, IWSAW also publishes "Al-Raida," an interdisciplinary journal on gender scholarship and activism in the Arab world.

ON OUR WEBSITE

Check out the website for *Fulfilling the Promise: LAU Campaign for Academic Excellence*:
<http://campaign.lau.edu.lb>

If you would like to make a donation to *Fulfilling the Promise* please visit:
<http://campaign.lau.edu.lb/ways-to-give>

The *Fulfilling the Promise* website includes:

- Updated information about the campaign
- Its goals and progress
- Additional information, profiles and articles not included in the newsletter

Be sure to visit often for the latest news and updates.

LAU matters

LAU Matters is published quarterly by the New York Office of Lebanese American University and distributed free of charge to friends and supporters of the university in North America.

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Cover Photo: Former Chairman of the Board Dr. Charles Elachi and Annie Totah at the American Task Force for Lebanon dinner in Washington last April.



LAU faculty, staff, and alumni gathered with Consul General Majdi Ramadan (center) on September 27.

Working Together

LAU alumni and 160 members of the Lebanese community in the New York City area gathered at the Consulate General of Lebanon in September for a networking reception for recent Lebanese university graduates arranged by new Consul General Majdi Ramadan. The event brought together alumni from both LAU and the American University of Beirut, as well as LAU's Dean of the School of Business Said Elfakhani, and Lebanese professionals from the business, media, journalism and academic sectors.

"I hosted this event to give recent graduates a place to get to know each other and network. I want to get to know

the younger Lebanese community in the area and attract those who usually do not come to the consulate. I also wanted to update people on our services and encourage people to step forward and register in the upcoming parliamentary elections," said Ramadan.

In recent years LAU has worked hard in North America to cultivate and maintain an excellent relationship with Lebanese government officials and offices. In 2010, LAU honored Lebanon's ambassador to the United States Antoine Chedid, as well as Lebanon's ambassador to the United Nations Nawaf Salam, for their service to their nation at the university's first gala in New York. In 2011, then-Vice Consul

Antoine Azzam hosted that year's gala honorees, Suad Juffali and Ray Irani, at an event at the consulate prior to the gala. Ambassadors Salam and Ramadan also attended LAU's Chairman's Dinner earlier this fall.

Ramadan plans to continue hosting events and building the Consulate's relationship with LAU.

"Ed Shiner from the LAU New York Office has been very helpful and we hope to host future events with LAU in their new space in midtown when it opens next year," said Ramadan.

If you are a Lebanese citizen in North America and interested in registering to vote in Lebanese elections, please visit:

United States: <http://www.nylebcons.org>
Canada: <http://lebanonembassy.ca/doc/Election-EN.pdf>

LAU events

(Top): Board Members and guests gather at the cocktail reception before the Chairman's Dinner. (Bottom): President Jabbra and Dr. Paul Boulos present Dr. Charles Elachi (center) with a plaque of appreciation for his service on the Board.



Hello & Goodbye

In September, President Jabbra, the Board of Trustees, LAU faculty and staff, and guests including foreign dignitaries, academics, and alumni gathered at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City for the Chairman's Dinner.

President Jabbra and the Board bid farewell to three individuals: former LAU Provost Dr. Abdallah Sfeir, Dr. Lynn Eckhert, Interim Dean of LAU Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine, and former Chairman of the Board Dr. Charles Elachi. However, the Board welcomed the newly elected Chairman of the Board, Dr. Paul Boulos, the first chairman who is also an alumnus of LAU.



UPCOMING EVENTS

December 8: Toronto Alumni Chapter - *Annual Gala Dinner - La Grille, Concord, Ontario*

January 12: New York/New Jersey Alumni Chapter - *Presentation on Lebanese Language Program by Alumnus Tony Faddoul - Alwan for the Arts*

March 1: Seattle Alumni Chapter - *Gala Dinner*

March 2: Northern California Alumni Chapter - *Presentation by Todd Fine on Amine Rihani's "The Book of Khaled"*

If your alumni chapter has an upcoming event, please contact:

Ed Shiner, Director of Alumni and Special Projects
(212) 870-2578, ed.shiner@lau.edu



Seattle

The Seattle Alumni Chapter met on September 21 for dinner at Café Munir, a new Lebanese restaurant in the city.



Montreal

(Top Left): The Montreal Alumni Chapter met on October 7 at La Magie de la Pomme for a family apple picking outing. (Top Right): The officers and committee gathered on July 26 for dinner with LAU's Executive Director of Alumni Abdallah Al Khal.



Detroit

The Detroit Alumni Chapter gathered on September 28 at Nicola's Bookstore in Ann Arbor for Salma Abdelnour's book reading and signing event for "Jasmine and Fire: A Bittersweet year in Beirut." (See page 8 for more information about Salma and her book).



Boston

The officers of the Boston Alumni Chapter met on July 27 for dinner at Maggianos in Boston.



On October 19, the Houston Alumni Chapter held a Halloween party for alumni, family and friends. Ninety-five people attended the event that included a live band, a belly dancer, the famous singer Jabbour, prizes for best costumes and raffle drawings.



Houston



The Toronto Alumni Chapter gathered for its annual family picnic at Etobicoke Centennial Park on September 9.

Funding Future Alumni

For the past six years, the Toronto Alumni Chapter has made an annual donation to directly help current LAU students achieve their dreams of a higher education. The chapter has donated over \$10,000, which has directly helped many students attend LAU.

“When the Toronto Chapter started donating to LAU, we told the university we wanted our donation to go directly to a student to help pay for part of their tuition,” said Fady Allos, former president and current member of the Toronto Chapter.

In order to raise funds for their annual donations, the Toronto Chapter organizes different events including breakfasts, picnics, and a gala dinner each year. The chapter also has donors and sponsors who provide funds and donations, “Volunteers and other members who have connections with different companies and retail

stores help with coordinating funds and donations,” said Georges Ayoub, current president of the chapter.

The Toronto Alumni Chapter plans to raise more money for scholarship support in the future, “We will keep on sending these donations to LAU students and try every year to increase our donations,” said Allos.

In order to achieve this goal, the chapter is searching for more alumni by using social networks and by reaching out to friends of LAU and the American University of Beirut and inviting them to participate in and organize events. The chapter then encourages those in attendance at events to bring more family and friends to their future events, helping the organization build momentum.

Other alumni chapters have raised money for scholarship support. In October, the Houston Alumni Chapter sold raffle

tickets at its Halloween party to raise money for LAU students (See page 5 for photos). In addition, the Alumni Chapters of Northern California and New York/New Jersey have made donations as well.

“When individuals know that their money is going to a student, they know that a little bit of money can make a big difference in the student’s life,” Allos said “When the members know where the money is going, they feel like donating.”

For information on your local alumni chapter or to learn how your chapter can create a scholarship fund contact:

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Sami and Annie Totah Scholarship

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LAU's Rima Khabbaz, a senior Pharmacy student, is the first recipient of the Totah's scholarship. Khabbaz says she was honored to be chosen. "The scholarship has given me even more motivation to maintain a high GPA. I've worked hard over the last two years so it's nice to see that my efforts have not only paid off but have also been recognized." She adds she was "very touched" that LAU President Dr. Joseph G. Jabbara met her personally to congratulate her on the scholarship.

LAU is more committed than ever to attracting the brightest students in Lebanon and the Arab world, believing matriculation should be based on academic ability, not ability to pay. During the 2010-11 academic year, LAU extended financial aid or scholarships worth over \$15.4 million to over 2,000 students in all.

With the help of generous donors, the university's Financial Aid and Scholarships Office also continues to expand its assistance to students through merit-based scholarships or grants, work-aid programs and loans. "Education is the best weapon, or rather the magic wand, for achieving success and for creating good citizens," says Totah. "That is why we are so interested in supporting deserving students at LAU."



The inaugural Sami and Annie Totah Scholarship recipient Rima Khabbaz.

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Any Amount.**

Once a year, make a gift of any amount to the LAU Annual Fund. Every gift makes a difference—including yours.



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This list denotes donors from North America who have graciously supported LAU during the third quarter of 2012.



Abdelnour at Tawlet in Beirut during her book tour. Abdelnour's recipes from "Jasmine and Fire" were featured on Tawlet's lunch menu.

Salma Abdelnour

Where do you live and what do you do?

I have homes in New York City and Beirut, and I work as a writer and editor on various publishing projects, including books, magazines and websites.

How did you become involved with LAU?

I became involved several years ago when I copyedited articles for LAU Magazine. Also, a number of my relatives and family friends have studied or taught at LAU, and I grew up near the Ras Beirut campus.

What was the most interesting or surprising thing that you learned during the process of writing and promoting "Jasmine and Fire: A Bittersweet Year in Beirut?"

When I moved back to Beirut in 2010 after not living there since 1981, I was worried that I'd feel like a foreigner in Lebanon too, the way I'd been feeling on some level everywhere else. But I discovered that because so many Lebanese left during the war and eventually returned, the sense of being simultaneously a local and an outsider in Lebanon is quite common. So that was a relief.

I also discovered that so many people in the world are in the same situation as me: Since we left our country because of the war or for other reasons, we've thought constantly about returning, and wondered if we can truly go home again--and if the political situation and *kahraba* (electricity) will ever get fixed...