



LAU Takes Over Global Model UN Conferences

The Model United Nations program has touched the minds and spirits of many students, giving them tools to succeed in high school, college and beyond.

The United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) has been running their *Global Classrooms International Model UN* program for 16 years, a job that includes setting up and administering conferences for students in 24 major cities around the world, engaging more than 25,000 students and teachers annually, all with the mission of helping to bridge the gap between experienced and new programs, as well as those in underserved schools.

When Troy Wolfe, director of education at UNA-USA, saw how the Lebanese delegations, all of whom were trained

by LAU staff and student trainers, were performing during the annual *Global Classrooms* conferences, he knew there was something special about the way the university was running its MUN program. "The delegates from Beirut kept winning," he exclaimed.

With UNA-USA seeking to hand over the running of the conferences to an external partner, a seed was planted in his mind.

"Through a series of conversations with Elie, from educator to educator, I realized that this man was very passionate. He really gets the program and what its about," added Wolfe, referring to Elie Samia, the AVP of the Outreach and Civic Engagement Unit, which has brought the Model UN program to prominence at LAU and throughout Lebanon. Not to mention there were tangible results.

In the 11 years LAU has run its renown MUN program, it has sent 64 high school students to participate in the *Global Classrooms International Model UN* conferences, bringing home 64 awards.

When LAU's New York Headquarters and Academic Center was inaugurated in September 2013, giving the university an institutional presence in Manhattan, Wolfe's mind was made up. He floated the idea of LAU administering the conferences to Samia, and within a few months, a memorandum was drafted, entrusting LAU with the ownership of the *Global Classrooms* brand. The handover become official on May 16, 2015, in a ceremony in the United Nations General Assembly Hall.

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Unveiling the True Identity of Christ



On September 30, Karim el Koussa, author of *Jesus the Phoenician*, gave a lecture at LAU NY. Drawing on historical, geographical, archaeological, cultural and theological sources, el Koussa re-examined the

validity of typically dismissed apocryphal gospels, such as the Gospel of Bartholomew and the Gospel of James. He concludes that Jesus was born in the Bet-Lahem (Bethlehem) of Galilee and not Bet-Lahem in Judea. His book includes a compiled list of references to Jesus’ identity as a Canaanite-Phoenician.

You describe how Jesus opposed not only some Jewish rituals but the entire Judaic religion. Can you give an example?

There are many instances in the New Testament. Matthew 23:15-16 reads, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!” A “proselyte” in this verse means a Gentile converted to the Jewish faith.

If Jesus was not Jewish, what would that mean for the Christian faith?

Some Christians who believe that Jesus was a Jew think his role was to rebel against the Romans and claim himself a king, as if he were a member of the Zealots, known to have been the military arm of the Pharisees. In Hebrew custom, the Mashiah is often referred to as *Mélekh ha-Mashiah*, which means a king-to-be, “the anointed king,” something Jesus rejected as we see during his discourse with Pilate (John 18:33-36). The Mashiha in Canaanite-Phoenician tradition, however, is simply a savior, a son of God, who would sacrifice himself for the life of others.

If Jesus was a Phoenician, why have Christians believed him to be a Jew for over two thousand years?

The writers of the Gospels attempted to connect him to Jewish Kingship through the Davidic line as a result of the first official

Christian Assembly (Council of Jerusalem) convened by James in Jerusalem between 49 and 52 A.D. The connection to the Jewish faith was important at a time when Christians in Jerusalem were being persecuted (Acts 11:19). It is not a coincidence that the Gospel was preached in Phoenicia almost ten years before it was spread around the world as a result of the Assembly. Christianity was well received all over Phoenicia because Phoenicians saw in Jesus the historical manifestations of the Mythological Adon, son of Èl.

Karim El Koussa is an award-winning Lebanese author whose works reflects a combination of religion, history, philosophy and spirituality, with a special focus on the Canaanite/Phoenician civilization. Among his books are “Jesus the Phoenician” (2013), *Phoenician Code*” (2011), and “Pythagoras the Mathemagician” (2010).

LAU NY ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Public Events

December 7: Film screening “Cairo Drive,” 6:30 PM
December 9: Book Launch: “Strangers in the West: The Syrian Colony of New York City, 1880-1900,” 6:30 PM

Courses

January 4 – 13: Top in Management: International Service Management

For more information, please contact:

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LAU matters

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Cover Photo: LAU delegates in the UN General Assembly Hall on May 16, 2015, when LAU was handed the ownership of the Global Classrooms International Model UN program

LAU academic center



From left to right:
1) Nada Saab, Sahar Assaf, Raffi Feghali, Sany Abdul Baki and Robert Myers. 2) Actors performing a scene from the play at LAU NY.

The Dictator comes to New York

On September 14, LAU NY hosted a performance and panel discussion entitled “Conversation on Contemporary Beirut Theater”. The event brought together a group of professors and actors from LAU, the Tahweel Ensemble Theater and The Theatre Initiative at the American University of Beirut.

The evening began with actors Sany Abdul Baki and Raffi Feghali performing a scene from *The Dictator* before an audience of roughly 40 people. Film clips of other Tahweel productions, including Sa’dallah Wannous’s *The Rape, Rituals of Signs and Transformations*, and *Watch Your Step*, a piece about the Lebanese Civil War, were screened to give the audience a broader taste of Beirut’s theater scene.

The actors then sat together with director Sahar Assaf, translator Nada Saab, and playwright and translator Robert Myers, for a panel discussion.

“In some cases, texts are born out of specific historical moments and they make allusions to these moments,” says Nada Saab, assistant professor of

Arabic studies who worked with Myers to translate the play. “And once you transform them into English, you have to make sure they elicit a response from the audience that is similar to what the response would be in Arabic, and that is the challenge.”

The Dictator, by Lebanese writer Issam Mahfouz, is the story of a delusional tyrant posing as humanity’s long-awaited savior.

Mahfouz was a profuse writer, penning 45 books throughout his life. In the modern Lebanese-Arab theater movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, he pioneered the transformation of theatrical writings from formal “literary” mode into dialogue.

Translating those contexts into English, for an American audience, was a collective effort, said Myers, playwright, translator, and Professor of English and Creative Writing at AUB. Saab received her Ph.D from Yale in Religious Studies and taught Arabic for over a decade at Princeton and Middlebury before returning to LAU. Feghali travels extensively as a peace-

builder and is finishing a master’s degree in Switzerland, Adbul Baki studied in London and works in Jordan in addition to Lebanon, Assaf is a former Fulbright scholar who received her master’s degree in the U.S. and was invited to the prestigious Lincoln Center Directors’ Lab in 2014.

Mahfouz clearly had a wide-range of influences from the Arab world, Europe and beyond. “In that sense,” adds Myers, “this seemingly simple play with a minimal cast is the product of a kind of cosmopolitan perspective that one only finds in a place like Lebanon.”

Abdul Baki, a professor of Drama at LAU, says works like these are evolving. “We are always trying to test the limits of the audience. Each time there is a performance, we experiment with when the audience would realize it’s real, or it’s absurd, or it’s both, and we push the absurdity further and further.”

The event took place in conjunction with *The Dictator*’s English-language world premiere at the *Between the Seas Festival*, a festival of Mediterranean performing arts in New York.

On the Road with Abdallah and Ed

Alumni Chapter Tour brings together old and new acquaintances

Sometimes you need to get out of your office and hit the open road. From September 13 - 19, that's exactly what Executive Director of Alumni Relations Abdallah El Khal and Director of Alumni and Special Events Ed Shiner did, embarking on an alumni chapter tour of Eastern Canada and New England. Their trip included stops at the Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Boston and New York/New Jersey chapters, and was aimed at both re-connecting existing alumni, and infusing the chapters with new names and faces.

1. TORONTO



The tour started in Canada's most populous city, with a family picnic at Adams Park that drew a mix of alumni from all generations and their families. Cold temperatures and steady rain kept a few people away, but did not deter the 60 or so alumni who turned out for the festive picnic and dined on hot dogs, burgers and kabobs. A raffle was held to raise money for LAU scholarships, and one lucky boy rode away with a new bicycle!

2. OTTAWA

The next stop was Ottawa, where Abdallah and Ed brought together alums for a dinner at East Side Mario's restaurant. Most attendees met each other for the first time. "I came to Ottawa for graduate school and I didn't know anyone here. As a newcomer to Canada, I was so happy to meet the alumni - it felt like family," said Fouad Olayan ('06), who is studying engineering management at the University of Ottawa. "I'm excited to get more involved in the chapter once I settle down."



3. MONTREAL

In Montreal, alumni gathered downtown at Vargas Restaurant for happy hour and tapas. Chapter President Rami Zein ('12) helped mobilize new members, and did so successfully, as almost all were first-time participants. In fact, the group had so much fun, they stayed past happy hour, talking and networking into the night. Video game producer and class of 2001 alumni Joe Khoury has been in Montreal for 12 years, but never attended an event. "I assumed there was a chapter, but I never knew who was in it, how to join or meet people from there. Rami got ahold of me via LinkedIn, and it was really nice to mingle with people of my generation and younger than me."

5. NEW YORK

The tour's final act was a New York/ New Jersey Chapter event that entailed sunset cocktails on the roof of the Metropolitan Museum, followed by a one-hour tour of the Greco-Roman galleries by LAU's own Tony Faddoul ('96). Building up an appetite over stories of Greek gods and goddesses, the group then went to dinner at Trattoria Pesce Pasta. The event was graced with the presence of President Jabbra and VPUA Marla-Rice Evans. For William Abi Abdallah ('12), it was his first time attending an alumni event. "It was a fantastic evening and a great way to keep in contact my classmates and keep up to date on what LAU is doing. The Met was culturally interesting, and the dinner gave us a chance to speak more intimately."



4. BOSTON

The Boston Alumni Chapter gathering at Byblos Restaurant in Norwood, Massachusetts was hosted by Robert ('84) and Varso ('74) Shafie. Chapter president Rand Ghayat ('06) welcomed the group, which included graduates from 1958 to 2015. What started as a calm evening turned into a raucous one when, unbeknownst to all, a wedding reception was held at the same venue, complete with cake cutting, first dance and bouquet tossing!

"It was great to meet with others from the LAU community, across disciplines and age groups," said Ramzi Naja ('13), an M.Arch. II student at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, a post-professional architecture degree program. "It is always good to be reminded of the sense of belonging LAU offers," added Naja, whose research deals with questions of territory and territorialization.

All shared fond memories of their BCW, BUC or LAU days over kebbeh and tabbouleh.



Leave your Legacy -
Make a Difference

By Attorney Ron Cruikshank

In my previous article, I talked about how you may be able to give a much larger donation to your favorite charitable institution(s) through your estate than you are able to provide during your lifetime. A good example of this is the entire area of “gifts-in-kind.” Gifts-in-kind are donations of “things” rather than actual cash. For example, many of us have hobbies or interests that involve collecting things: coins, automobiles, rare books, stamps, or various forms of artwork. The list of things people collect is almost endless.

Frequently these collections have considerable value. In many cases, however, a collector’s passion isn’t felt by his or her children or heirs, and dealing with a collection can be a burden on those who survive you. A good solution in such cases is to add language to your will specifying that the collection is to be donated to a specific charitable institution – such as LAU— which can then sell the collection.

Taking LAU as the example here, you can further specify that the proceeds of the sale of the collection by the university be used to fund a student scholarship, a professorship, or go toward specific renovation or construction projects.



In some cases, collections themselves have value to the charitable institution. Again using LAU as an example, a collection of rare books might be an important addition to the Riad Nassar Library, thereby keeping your collection intact.

The LAU development office can work with you to ensure that your bequest of an in-kind gift is used by the university in the way you prefer, explain how the value of collections is determined by and independent appraiser, and assist you with the proper wording in your will.

Let me close by reiterating a comment from my previous article: It’s important to have a will, and creating one doesn’t need to be complicated or expensive. I also encourage everyone to consult a lawyer as part of the process. Keep in mind that wills are legal documents, and you’re not going to be around to explain an unclear sentence or paragraph. An attorney knows how to put your wishes into language that will be clear to those who survive you.

Ron Cruikshank is of counsel with Choate & Seletski. He is a former trustee of LAU and a current member of the Advisory Board of the Institute for Women’s Studies in the Arab World.

Model UN Conference

Continued from page 1

While UNA-USA will serve in an advisory role for the next four years, LAU now takes on the tall task of running two international conferences in New York City, one for middle school students and one for high school students.

This means procuring contracts with the Hyatt hotel, where the conferences are held, securing space in the United Nations secretariat building for opening and closing ceremonies, finding guest speakers and volunteer staff, obtaining sponsorship, and registering the more than 1,500 teachers and students per conference.

LAU now owns a Model UN framework that has been in place since 1999, and will have the chance to make it uniquely our own.

“We are already proposing changes that are powerful and impactful and that serve the higher objective of the *Global Classrooms International Model UN*,” says Samia, who notes that LAU could not have reached this milestone alone.

“LAU MUN succeeded through institutional support and through the passion of student leadership to create a legacy of its own,” he added.

That legacy will be put to test in March and May, when LAU runs the conferences for the first time.



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Visit campaign.lau.edu.lb/donate

Alumni Events

Detroit



The Detroit Alumni Chapter gathered for dinner and a show at Joey’s Comedy shop on October 17.

New York/New Jersey



The New York/ New Jersey Alumni Chapter gathered for a holiday dinner on November 18 at Balade restaurant in New York City’s East Village.

UPCOMING ALUMNI EVENTS

- December 7:** Film screening “Cairo Drive,” 6:30 PM, New York Academic Center
- February 6:** Northern California Alumni Chapter UNESCO Heritage Sites in Lebanon Lecture
- February 7:** Southern California Alumni Chapter UNESCO Heritage Sites in Lebanon Lecture
- April:** Toronto Alumni Chapter Annual Dinner
- April:** Detroit Alumni Chapter Spring Dinner
- April:** Boston Alumni Chapter Lecture Presentation

If your alumni chapter has an upcoming event, please notify:
Ed Shiner, Director of Alumni and Special Projects
(646) 255-1099, ed.shiner@lau.edu

Thank You For Your Generous Support

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Peter Taylor

Where do you live and what do you do?

I live between Boston and Beirut splitting my time in both cities. I am the founder of a performance drink called Vitamin 1 which was launched six months ago.

How and when did you get involved with LAU?

I graduated from LAU in January 2015 from the Byblos campus with a business degree (emphasis in banking and finance). I had a tremendous experience at LAU and cherished my time there. Being someone who has grown up in all social classes at one point or another, it was always important for me to give back. Because of my positive experience at LAU, I decided to give back in the form of scholarships for qualified applicants that simply needed a financial push. This fall was my first time giving back to the university.

What made you start Vitamin 1 and did your time at LAU encourage you to become an entrepreneur?

I have always been active and played sports, and have long been searching for an alternative to water. I realized that all of the great tasting drinks were loaded with sugar and calories and all healthy drinks did not taste good. My goal was to create a hybrid product, which led to a drink with no sugar, 5 calories and a great taste. Studying at LAU certainly intensified my desire to transform my thoughts of this drink into reality. Completing courses in business such as Operations and Production Management with Dr. Dia Bandaly and Strategic Management with Dr. Jamal Maalouf has undoubtedly provided me with useful knowledge for this venture.

LAU matters

ON OUR WEBSITES

Visit the LAU Matters website for additional information on events, alumni news and updates:
www.laumatters.org

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

If you would like to make a donation to *Fulfilling the Promise* please visit:
campaign.lau.edu.lb/donate