

# Postcard from New York

By Elida Jbeili



Lina Beydoun, George Helou, Consul General of Lebanon Majdi Ramadan, and Nadia Drake at the Black Holes to Habitable Exoplanets: Our Incredible Cosmos event at LAU NY.



LAU Board of Trustees members, staff and friends of LAU during the Chairman's Dinner at the famous Roosevelt Hotel in the heart of Manhattan, New York City.

LAU's New York Headquarters and Academic Center (LAU NY) summer kicked off with a historic performance by Zajal masters Adel Khaddaj and Dany Sfeir, who squared off in song with musical accompaniment and a chorus. The event was presented in partnership with the Consul General of Lebanon in New York Majdi Ramadan, City Lore, and the New Pen League.

An audience that included many members of the Lebanese diaspora enjoyed the poets' improvised performance in Arabic. Poet Sheikh Youssef Abdul Samad captured the spirit of the evening: "It was a piece of Lebanon, a piece of my culture. I felt like I was in Lebanon when I came to this LAU event."

Also in the spirit of cultural exchange, dozens of Lebanese, Chinese and American students were hosted at LAU NY during the summer as they participated in the five-day annual Global Outreach and Leadership Development

Conference (GOLD). The aspiring diplomats practiced their state-crafting skills in a series of Model United Nations simulation sessions, where they deepened their debate, negotiation, public speaking, and conflict resolution skills.

The participants had the chance to have a unique and memorable "New York experience," through cultural and touristic site-visits, such as a tour of the Headquarters of the United Nations and the Financial District. At the concluding session of the conference, Assistant Vice President for Outreach and Civic Engagement Elie Samia remarked that the GOLD conference had been "a golden opportunity for student leaders to be exposed to real practitioners in the realm of international diplomacy and civic society, with interactive discussions about the value of social service and civic engagement."

In September, the bi-annual LAU Board of Trustees (BOT) three-day meeting was

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—Ed Shiner, director of Alumni and Special Projects at LAU NY

held at LAU NY. The BOT is responsible for seeing that the university's needs are met organizationally, administratively, educationally, spiritually, socially and financially; that adequate facilities are provided; and that a policy framework is established within which the program of the university can be developed and administered by the staff.

As always, the BOT meeting was accompanied by a Chairman's Dinner

hosted by LAU. The event provided an opportunity to acknowledge board members for their service, as well as to thank donors and welcome potential donors. "This dinner gathering is a significant part of LAU's Board Meeting, because it brings together members of the board, university administrators, friends and donors, who interact socially while learning more about each other, as well as the work and development of the institution," said Ed Shiner, director of Alumni and Special Projects at LAU NY.

Welcoming the fall with an exploration of space, LAU, AUB and the Consul General of Lebanon in New York Majdi Ramadan co-hosted From Black Holes to Habitable Exoplanets: Our Incredible Cosmos at LAU NY. The event featured George Helou, executive director of

NASA's Infrared Astronomy Center at the California Institute of Technology, in conversation with Nadia Drake, a contributing writer at National Geographic.

A captivated audience learned about exoplanets beyond our solar system and recent discoveries made using improved infrared space telescopes, as Helou spoke of his work overseeing science operations for space telescopes and for major astronomical archives, both for NASA and ground-based observatories. When asked by Drake why astronomy is important, Helou replied, "Astronomy and all science is a universal aspiration of humanity, because it helps us put earth, life on earth, and our solar system into a greater context."



(L-R) Zajal masters Sheikh Youssef Abdul Samad, Adel Khaddaj and Dany Sfeir.

