

March 2025

ISSUE NO. 01

campus lens

All about college

beyond the fabric: the
meaning behind
university students'
fashion choices

the rise of
sustainable
fashion: thrifting
as a movement

and much more..



19.97  1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

**A HOME AWAY FROM HOME:
HOW THE INTERNATIONAL
EXCHANGE OFFICE FOSTERS
COMMUNITY AND BELONGING** **05**

**HOW TO PERFECTLY PACK
YOUR BAG FOR THE MOST
PRODUCTIVE STUDY SESSION** **08**

**JOIN THE CLUB (LITERALLY): A
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO
JOINING AN ON-CAMPUS CLUB** **12**

**BUILDING A FUTURE WHILE
STUDYING: DUA'A ALSALEH
TALKS BALANCING WORK,
STUDIES, AND PERSONAL LIFE** **14**

**HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS AT
THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
OF SHARJAH** **18**

**HOW TO GET THE PERFECT
VICTORIA'S SECRET BOMBSHELL
BLOWOUT IN SEVEN STEPS** **19**

**MINIMUM EFFORT,
MAXIMUM 'SLAY': ELEVATE
YOUR LOOKS IN 3 STEPS** **22**

**BEYOND THE FABRIC: THE
MEANING BEHIND UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' FASHION
CHOICES** **25**

**THE RISE OF SUSTAINABLE
FASHION: THRIFTING AS A
MOVEMENT** **29**





BREATHE, WRITE, RELEASE: HOW TO FIND CLARITY THROUGH JOURNALING	35
THE QUIET POWERBROKER: HOW A 23-YEAR-OLD IS SHAPING DUBAI'S REAL ESTATE SCENE FROM THE SHADOWS	41
THE ART OF NETWORKING: HOW TO TURN STRANGERS INTO OPPORTUNITIES	43
TRIPLE A: AMNA AL AWADHI'S ARROWS OF APEX	46
VERSES OF SILENCE: ALI AL B'LOOSHI AND POETRY	49
THREAD BY THREAD: UAE STUDENTS ARE TURNING DORM ROOMS INTO DREAM BRANDS	53
BLENDING BUSINESS AND DIPLOMACY: THE JOURNEY OF AHMAD AL MARZOOQI	57
THE MANY FACES OF HOME: HOW PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS DEFINE IT	61
FROM DOUBT TO DEDICATION: PROFESSOR KRYSTIE WILLS' JOURNEY IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION	64
BREAKING BARRIERS: WOMEN IN MALE-DOMINATED FIELDS	66
BALANCING BUSINESS, ACADEMICS, AND A PASSION FOR COMPETITIVE SWIMMING	77

Editor's Letter

Dear readers,

In this issue, we explore the intersection of fashion, identity, and the university experience.

For many students, arriving on campus is more than just the start of classes—it's the start of becoming who they are. And often, the first thing we reach for in that process is our clothing. What we wear becomes a way of finding yourself, especially in a space where we're still figuring that out.

Our feature story, "Beyond the Fabric: The Meaning Behind University Students' Fashion Choices," looks at how students use style to express, connect, and belong. From thrifted denim and Pinterest-inspired layering to Tumblr-core accessories and TikTok trends, campus fashion tells stories beyond the seams.

We also dive into "The Rise of Sustainable Fashion: Thrifting as a Movement," a piece that explores how sustainability is shaping student wardrobes. For many, thrifting isn't just budget-friendly but a lifestyle, a form of resistance, and a creative outlet.

Whether your outfit is planned the night before or thrown on at 8:59 for a 9 AM lecture, what you wear matters because it says something about you.

This issue is a celebration of personal style, conscious choices, and finding confidence in the everyday. So if you're still finding your fit, start with whatever feels like you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Myra Ahmed". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small heart symbol above the first 'M'.

Editor-in-Chief



a home away from home: how the international exchange office fosters community and belonging

by **Mariam J. Massarweh**

What does it take to make a new place feel like home? For exchange students spending their semester abroad at the American University of Sharjah, the answer is simple: the International Exchange Office.

Located in the main building, opposite the main auditorium and adjacent to the Main Building's large-scale wooden doors, is AUS' International Exchange Office, often referred to as IXO for short.

The office welcomes approximately twenty exchange students every semester and takes care of them during their semester abroad.

IXO starts every semester with an orientation, then plans trips around the United Arab Emirates to landmarks like the Burj Khalifa and Dubai Mall in Dubai, and the Louvre in Abu Dhabi, as well as fun outings to areas like Hatta, and always ends with a tear-jerking farewell dinner.

"I've made some life-long friends from these dinners."



To battle culture shock and help students assimilate more easily, IXO hosts an Emirati-style dinner in collaboration with the Emirati Cultural Club, where the exchange students are introduced to aspects of Emirati culture such as clothing, music and history. Students then indulge in different Emirati dishes in a traditional majlis-style seating arrangement.

Omar Al Ali, executive assistant of the Emirati Cultural Club, says the IXO dinner with ECC is one of the events the club members look forward to the most, as it gives them an opportunity to showcase Emirati hospitality to newcomers, as well as make new connections.

Al Ali says, "I've made some life-long friends from these dinners."

It's no surprise that many friendships are formed through IXO as its warm and welcoming atmosphere makes people keep coming back. Many of the student employees at the office, mainly peer representatives, are AUS students who spent a semester abroad with the help of IXO and were satisfied with the office's efforts and support.

Additionally, a handful of exchange students extend their stay by a semester, and in some cases, completely transfer to AUS as full-time students.

What makes IXO special amongst the thousands of exchange offices around the world is its dedication to enhancing the stays of the exchange students. Some peer representatives at IXO did not even experience an orientation in their exchange experiences abroad, let alone have their respective exchange office follow-up about their stay and organize activities and trips for them.

Zarah Manguiat, the junior analyst at the office, says IXO takes care of the exchange students from when their plane lands in the UAE, offering a complimentary pick-up from the airport, and providing accommodation. Manguiat mentions that all activities hosted by the office are covered by the original fee paid by the students, adding no costs, except for food in some cases.

The office takes very good care of students both arriving and departing AUS. Peer Representative Nour Ahmad says the office was helping her every step of the way, whether it be choosing the right program, course equivalency, as well as consistent check-ups during her time away from AUS. Nour's semester abroad in Japan was a little hard in the beginning, experiencing homesickness and feeling out of place. She had to mitigate her struggles on her own, but was thankfully able to find a Muslim community to be surrounded by to feel more at home.

Now back from Japan and working for the office, Nour says she really admires and respects what IXO does for the exchange students, remarking that it does a great job making the students feel less homesick, especially when comparing it to her experience abroad.

Nour said, "In IXO, the office would take the students on a lot of different trips, host events that would put the students together. No student would be alone or left behind. IXO is doing a great job having students interact together, making them feel at home, making them feel included."

Myia Hamed, a current exchange student from the United States, says she experienced some culture shock upon first arriving in Sharjah, but got to familiarize herself with the culture better with the aid of IXO.



Diya Pramod, a student employee at IXO.



IXO Office in the Main Building at AUS

Many activities set up by the office helped her learn about the history and traditions of the UAE, in addition to meeting and engaging with the student body. Myia does not feel excluded or shut out, but feels accepted and welcomed.

She added, "Usually, through that [the exchange batch], makes friends. They become close and just hang out afterwards."

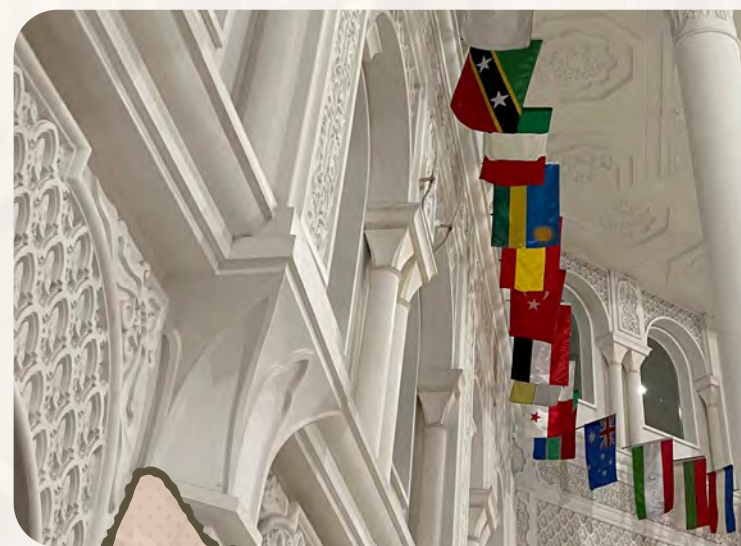
Through her time and experience with IXO, Miss Lillie notes that cases of homesickness are not common. De Gauzman attributes the lack of homesickness to IXO's involvement, which tries to meet with the exchange batch almost weekly to continue fostering a sense of community.

When the semester wraps up, the exchange office hosts a farewell dinner for the students, where exchange students and office employees alike give heartfelt speeches. IXO student employees always mention tears shed and hugs exchanged.

While the dinner can look like a cry fest, it is full of love and connections.

For many exchange students, IXO is not just a pitstop in their journey, but a cornerstone in their global expedition. It is where cultures intertwine, friendships begin, and memories are made.

After all, isn't that what makes a new place feel like home?



Display of the flags of the world in the Main Building, AUS

How to Perfectly Pack Your Bag for the Most Productive Study Session

By Fatima Hassan

We've all experienced it—arriving at the library or café and finding the perfect spot, only to discover our laptop battery is nearly dead, lips are annoyingly dry, and earbuds are missing. Nothing disrupts productivity faster than forgetting an essential item. A well-organized study bag prevents these frustrating scenarios, ensuring you have everything you need right at your fingertips.

Follow this checklist to pack your bag perfectly for maximum efficiency.



Devices (Laptop, iPad, iPhone)

Never underestimate how quickly a low battery can disrupt your focus. Always pack chargers for your laptop, tablet and phone. Investing in a portable power bank is especially useful if your study spot has limited power outlets, ensuring your workflow stays uninterrupted.



Chargers

Never underestimate how quickly a low battery can disrupt your focus. Always pack chargers for your laptop, tablet and phone. Investing in a portable power bank is especially useful if your study spot has limited power outlets, ensuring your workflow stay uninterrupted.



Water Bottle

Staying hydrated is crucial for maintaining mental clarity and focus. Carrying a reusable, insulated water bottle provides easy access to hydration and helps prevent fatigue or headaches.



Quick Packing Tips:

- Pack your bag the night before to avoid last-minute stress
- Use pouches to keep cables, pens, and small items easy to find.



Medicine

Headaches, cramps, or allergies can strike unexpectedly, so always carry a small pouch of essential medicine like painkillers. This prevents a sudden headache or discomfort from ending your study session prematurely, enabling you to push through and complete your tasks.



Dental Floss or Toothbrush Kit

Laugh all you want, but food stuck in your teeth can become incredibly distracting. A small pack of dental floss or travel toothbrush ensures minor annoyances don't disrupt your concentration or confidence.

Focus Essentials:

- Download a study playlist in advance
- Use apps like Forest or Pomodoro timers to stay on track
- Turn on Do Not Disturb mode to avoid distractions



Lip Balm/Lip Liner

Chapped lips might seem minor, but they can quickly become distracting. Keep your favorite lip balm in your bag to maintain comfort. If you wear makeup, pack your favorite lip liner or gloss for quick touch-ups, helping you feel polished and confident during long study sessions.



Notes and Stationery

If you have notes or worksheets, don't forget to bring them along with a pen or highlighter. Having your materials on hand—whether for reviewing or scribbling last-minute ideas can really come in handy.



Headphones

Noisy environments can quickly derail concentration. Pack noise-canceling headphones to block distractions and help you stay immersed. Whether it's instrumental music, white noise, or a podcast, quality headphones keep you focused.

Packing your bag might seem like a basic task, but it sets the tone for how the rest of your study session unfolds. Whether it's a fully charged device, a water bottle within reach, or that one medicine you always forget you'll need, every item plays a role in keeping you grounded and in the zone.

So before heading out, take a moment to pack intentionally. Your future, more productive self will thank you for it.

Student

Your morning routine, study habits, and approach to lectures reveal your academic style. Take this quiz to find out what type of student you are.

are you?

1. How do you wake up?

- a** Hit snooze a couple of times. **b** I wake up with energy, ready to go.

- c** I get up early to stretch or meditate. **d** I wake up slowly and check my phone.

2. How do you plan your day?

- a** I just go with the flow. **b** I make a to-do list to stay organized.

- c** I review my schedule and set goals. **d** I have a loose plan but don't overthink it.

3. What's your approach to taking notes during class?

- a** I write down just a few key points. **b** I take detailed notes and highlight what's important.

- c** I make outlines or diagrams. **d** I record the lecture and review it later.

4. How do you handle study sessions?

- a** I study in short bursts with breaks. **b** I prefer longer, focused sessions.

- c** I study in groups. **d** I study when I feel like it.

5. How do you prepare for exams?

- a** I leave it until the last minute. **b** I plan ahead and work early. **c** I break down the material. **d** I handle things as they come.

Results

- Mostly A's → **The Procrastinator**
 - Plan ahead to reduce stress.
- Mostly B's → **The Organized Achiever**
 - Add flexibility to avoid burnout.
- Mostly C's → **The Strategic Planner**
 - Mix in downtime to balance.
- Mostly D's → **The Chill Student**
 - Set small goals to manage deadlines.

Remember, no matter your score, you can always improve and do better.



The Student Center at the American University of Sharjah is the place where memories are created at every university. We truly feel at home there; it's not just a place to kill time in between classes. We constantly wind up there when we need a rest, a good laugh or even just a spot to sit and chat. On some days, we just sit on the couches and barely communicate, glad to be together. On other days, we engage in long talks about plans, life and absurd stories that make us laugh till our faces hurt.

The Student Center Vibes

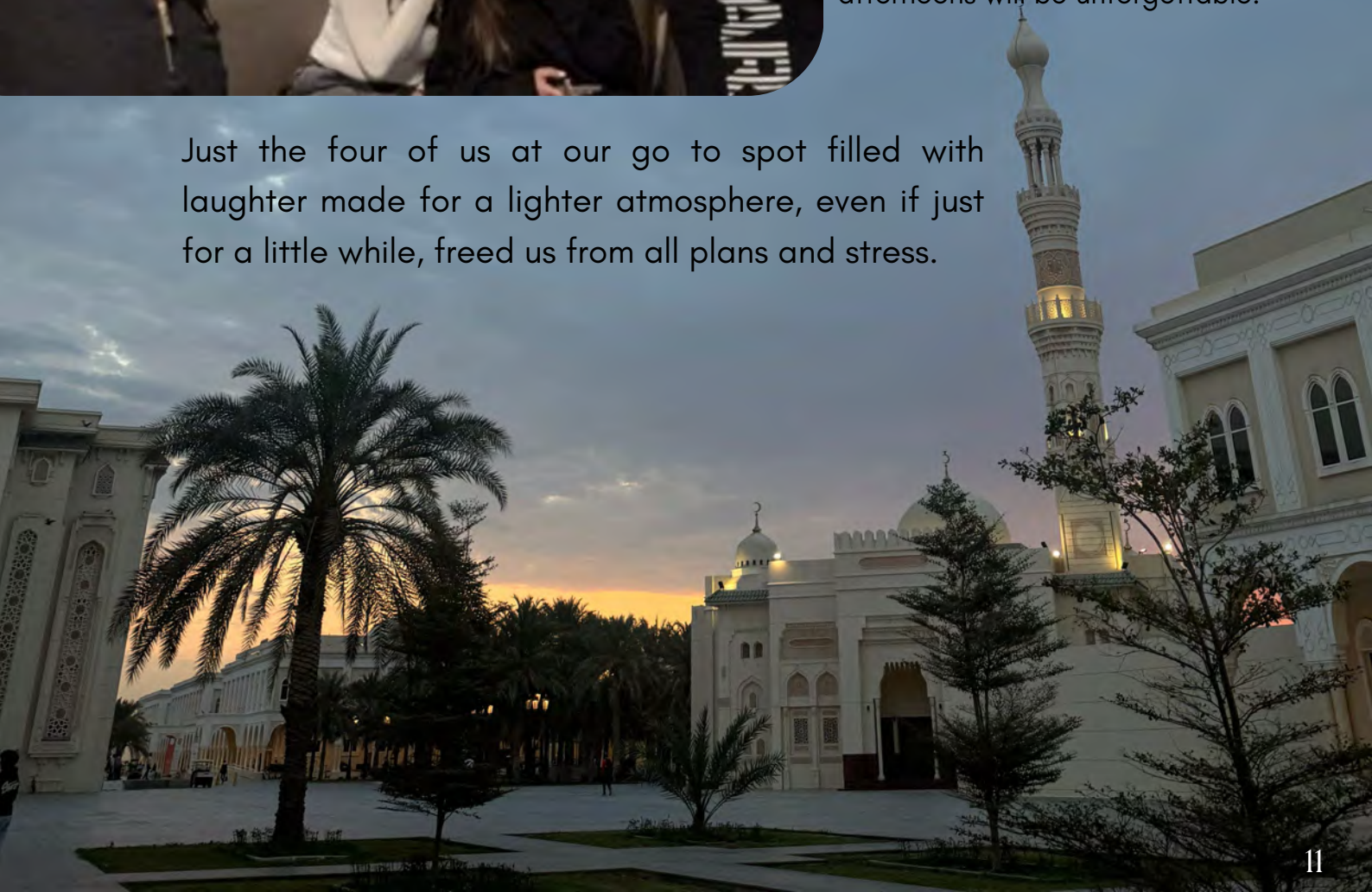
By Kassem Al Assadi

Although the Student Center has a great atmosphere with open areas, lots of seats and plenty of natural light, the decorations aren't the main attraction. The people are what matter. It's about the knowledge that you have of each other and this place, regardless of how hectic life gets or how intense

classes get. It's not even something we plan most of the time, but we're all there. A single person enters, then another. Before you know it, we are all there with snacks everywhere and phones out, sharing jokes nonstop. Remembering the stressful assignments and deadlines will seem life and death now, but these unplanned evenings and mid-afternoons will be unforgettable.



Just the four of us at our go to spot filled with laughter made for a lighter atmosphere, even if just for a little while, freed us from all plans and stress.



Join the Club (Literally): A Step-by-Step Guide to Joining an On-Campus Club

by Mariam J. Massarweh

Extracurriculars are an fundamental part of the university experience. This can range from athletics to clubs to theatre performances. Clubs and other student organizations are a great way to gain experience and network while maximizing your time as a student. With the large number of existing clubs at the American University of Sharjah, it can be a little hard to decide which clubs you would like to join, as well as to know the process of becoming a member. However, there is no need to fret; follow the steps below to make your way onto the board of your favorite clubs.

1.Explore Your Options

Before jumping to application and interview tips, it is good to know which organizations you would like to join. The Club Fair is a terrific way to get familiar with the clubs already existing under the Office of Student Engagement. You'll get the chance to meet some of the board members and get a brief introduction about the organization. Try to find clubs that appeal to your interests.

Social media is another way of finding student associations. Almost every AUS club has a running Instagram page that features the members and events hosted by them. Make sure to follow the pages that interest you to keep up with their upcoming events and potential board vacancies.

2.Show Your Face at Events

By keeping up with your preferred club on their social media pages, you'll always be up-to-date about their events. Remember to make an appearance at said events, both on and off-campus. It will give you the chance to

get familiar with the club members, as well know the crowd that they attract. Networking is a major part of any extracurricular activity, showcasing how much of a social person you are is a strength recognized by many clubs.

Always being there and showing support will make the existing board take a liking to you, as well as show that you are committed to the club and are capable of managing your time. Feel free to inquire about possible openings on the team.

3.Apply. Apply. Apply.

Once you get news about applications opening for your desired club, check their social media page for the application process. Make sure to mention why you want to join this specific club when filling out the application form, and mention any previous experiences that show your capabilities and skills that would set you apart from other applicants.

Tip: An easy way to find certain cultural clubs when searching on Instagram is to follow the abbreviation of "XCC" or "X Cultural Club." For example, the Palestinian Cultural Club's Instagram username is @pcc.aus, and the Indian Cultural Club's handle is @icc_aus.



4. Ace your interview

Keep a calm and cool manner throughout the interview, and be sure to smile. Don't rush into answering and take a moment to process the question and formulate your answer. Club executives don't want to hear about your CV and how you can benefit from them; they want to hear how they can benefit from having you on the team. Highlight your strengths and try to avoid mentioning your weaknesses. If you find yourself in the position of discussing any weaknesses, follow up with a solution for said weakness.

Discuss any assets and skills that you picked up from courses or other past experiences. Mention extracurricular activities you partook in previously, anything as small as a volunteering gig will show your dedication.

Thank your interviewers for their time and consideration, and await an update from them regarding your application.



Students at the AUS Olympics.

After the interview process, you can only wait, wait and wait. If a club representative contacts you with news of admission, confirm your acceptance and thank them for the opportunity. In the case of rejection, don't get too upset. It may sound easier said than done, but see it as a chance to work on yourself and hone your skills until the next application, or even start your own organization with the help of the OSE.



Cultural clubs go head to head on the football field.

BUILDING A FUTURE WHILE STUDYING: DUA'A ALSALEH TALKS BALANCING WORK, STUDIES, AND PERSONAL LIFE

By Dana Bouzo

"Moving away from home to pursue my studies was both an exciting and challenging experience," says Dua'a Alsaleh, a Media Communication student at the American University of Sharjah, minoring in Luxury Marketing.

Dua'a, with a remarkable 3.78 GPA and being on the Dean's and Chancellor's Lists, balances academic success with professional growth. She is a media publicist at The International Exchange Office at AUS, which has allowed her to develop valuable skills in content creation and social media management. Despite the pressures of university life, she succeeded academically and professionally while away from her home country, Palestine.

Moving to the UAE from abroad brought a mix of excitement and challenges for Dua'a.



Dua'a Alsaleh works while studying to gain experience in the media field.

"I learned a lot about being independent and managing my time, but staying connected with my family was equally important," she says.

One of her biggest challenges is homesickness. Dua'a tries to stay connected with her family as much as possible.

"My biggest challenge has been managing my life in the UAE while making sure I stay connected with my family, I try to stay updated with what's happening back home in Palestine so I don't feel like I'm missing out," Dua'a shares.

For Dua'a, working while studying was a wise choice. Her job as a media publicist for IXO has been so helpful to her professional and personal development.

"I wanted to gain experience while doing something I genuinely enjoy, I love creating visual stories through content, so working while studying has been a great way to develop my skills."

Her job provides her with valuable experience in content creation and social media usage, and it enables her to interact with different individuals. It also helps her enhance her time management and problem-solving skills.

Like most university students, Dua'a too has faced overwhelming moments when balancing her studies, work commitments and personal life.

Dua'a shares, "There were times when I felt like I was losing control and things were piling up," Dua'a continues, "But I try to manage stress by staying organized and taking breaks when needed."

She emphasizes the importance of choosing work that is engaging and enjoyable, which keeps her motivated. Additionally, waking up early, organizing the day's priorities, and most importantly, not sacrificing sleep helped her accomplish her tasks efficiently while maintaining a healthy balance between work, studies and personal well-being.

Dua'a believes that learning while working gives her an edge for her future marketing career. Working gives her the insight into the demands of having to meet deadlines and coming up with content for social media posts. Understanding how to design daily posts and stories provides her with the skills she needs for her future career.

Dua'a shared with me more insights on how one can successfully balance work and studying, and provided tips that she wished someone had given her during her first semester at AUS.

For those seeking to excel in university as well as in the professional world, Dua'a emphasizes that they must secure an on-campus job that they enjoy. Time management is also a must. She advises that students plan their tasks in advance and do not wait until the last minute to do work.

"Don't leave everything to the last minute, set your tasks or priorities for the day, either on your phone or calendar," she says.

Reflecting on her first semester at AUS, Dua'a advises her previous self not to worry as much. Even though she faces tension at times, she has realized that she must focus on things she can do.

"I try reminding myself not to stress about the unknown or assignments and to break down tasks into steps to make them more manageable."

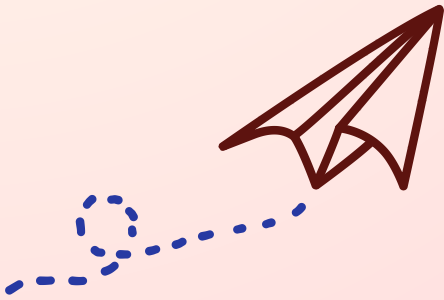
Dua'a finds that over time the academic challenges become easier and the challenges turn into strengths.

"The more assignments and projects you have, the clearer you become about what your teachers want, so your work gets better," she added.

Q&A WITH DUA'A

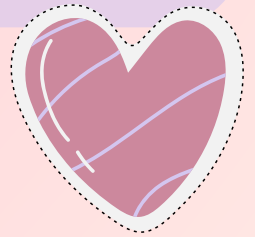
How has your experience been at AUS, moving here from abroad?

Honestly, moving to AUS was a bit exciting but also really challenging. I learned a lot about how to be independent and manage my time. But also how to make sure I stay connected with my family. I do get homesick a lot, especially when I realize how empty my day is without them.



What has been the most emotionally challenging part of being away from home?

Honestly, my biggest challenge was definitely managing my life in the UAE. But still making sure I stay connected with my family. Because a lot of times, the thoughts can be negative. So I try to stay connected with them as much as possible. So I don't feel like I'm missing out on what's happening there or what they're doing in Palestine.



Why did you decide to get a job while studying?

I wanted to gain experience while doing something I genuinely enjoy. I love creating visual stories through content, so working while studying has been a great way to develop my skills.

You maintain a high GPA while working as a media publicist at AUS. How do you manage your time effectively?

I manage my time by waking up at 7 a.m. to finish my work and make sure I go to bed no later than 12. Structuring my day helps me stay productive without feeling overwhelmed.

Have you ever felt overwhelmed juggling responsibilities? How do you handle stress?

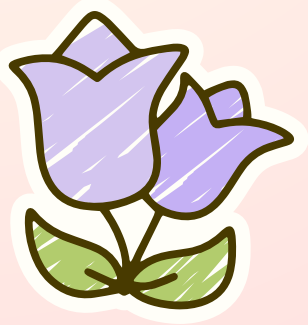
Definitely! There were times where I felt like I was losing control and things were piled up, but I try to manage stress by staying organized and taking breaks when needed. I also make sure to only take on jobs I truly enjoy, which helps keep me motivated.



Q&A WITH DUA'A

Can you walk us through a typical day in your life, balancing work and studies?

I usually start my day early to get ahead on assignments, then go to work and focus on my tasks there. In the afternoon, I dedicate time to studying and working on my projects. I try to balance everything by staying organized and prioritizing tasks effectively.

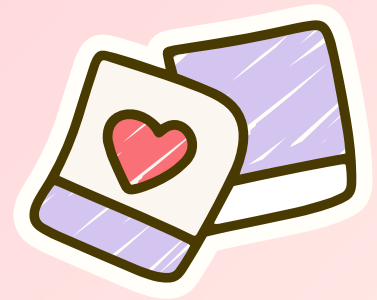


How has your on-campus work experience contributed to your personal and professional growth?

I work on campus at the International Exchange Office, and it has given me valuable experience in content creation and social media while allowing me to connect with diverse people. It has also helped me improve my time management and problem-solving skills. Ultimately, I plan to work as a marketing creative, but getting insights on how to manage a social media account has made me more educated on how to handle that part of marketing and advertising.

Do you think working while studying has prepared you for the future?

Absolutely yes, because it forced me to realize what it means to work under deadlines and manage social media posting. All these tasks that are super realistic when it comes to marketing. Learning how to have a post ready per day, a story ready per day. All of that will be very essential for my career.

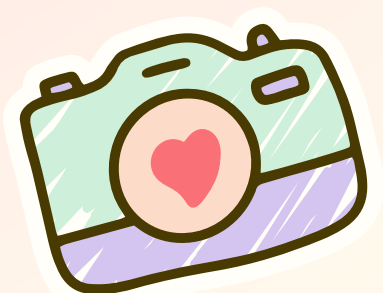


What advice would you give to other students who want to excel academically while working?

I would advise them to find a job on campus that they actually like to do because whenever it gets really stressful, it makes it less overwhelming in a way. Also, definitely plan your time, don't leave everything to the last minute. Also, wake up early, set your tasks or priorities for the day on your phone or on your calendar, and most importantly, don't compromise on your sleep. Because you will be super cranky, and you will not actually get anything done.

If you could go back to your first semester at AUS, what advice would you give yourself?

If I could go back to my first AUS semester, I'd tell myself not to stress too much, especially about the unknown, assignments, and things I can't control. Taking things one step at a time makes them less scary. The more I practice, the easier assignments get, and eventually, I'd learn to use a camera, which I'm proud of.



How to Make Friends at the American University of Sharjah

By Kassem Al Assadi

Making friends in Sharjah can be really easy regardless of your nationality, religion, or race. I never realized how easy it could be to find reliable friends within such a big institution until I indulged in the social side of campus life. Considering we all need a mutual type of friendship; some key factors are important to consider. Indeed, friends are the family you choose; just make sure you pick the right family.

The first step is to embrace spending time with people.

Pick a favorite spot that is buzzing with activities within the campus, as there is a variety of places to choose from, beginning with the student center. At first, you don't have to force conversations; rather just observe and enjoy being amongst your fellow humans. You could take a sandwich at Filli and get to know the waiter; they could give you some insight on other interesting activities around the city. The student center offers much more, including a food court, lounge, club offices, barber shop, and a supermarket.

Other amenities available for students include an Olympic swimming pool, basketball courts, and a tennis court among other indoor /outdoor facilities.

Next, try to join a club and find individuals whose interests align with yours.

By the time you join a club, you will have probably made one or two acquaintances. Regardless, mingle with other club members and get to know more people. One critical thing to consider is openness and approachability. Since the campus is literally an international community, it would be best to avoid stereotypes and be receptive to change. This way, you will find more friends than you might have anticipated.

Lastly, engage in social activities within the campus and in the city of Sharjah.

As an American University of Sharjah student, you are guaranteed that there will be an abundance of social events. Considering the size of the bustling city of Sharjah and neighboring Dubai, new residents are spoilt for choice when it comes to making friends and finding social activities to indulge in. Besides the fun side of campus life, it is also important to find a study peer, preferably from a similar course.

In a nutshell, making friends at the American University of Sharjah does not have to be a complicated feat. The campus provides numerous social activities and facilities that attract scores of students. This free environment enables students to adapt faster to campus life without necessarily struggling. Worth noting, meaningful friendships complement your progress. Therefore, it is important to make sure your interests align and that you are of equal importance to the friendship.

The cities of Sharjah and Dubai are in close proximity. Students can tour both cities at will and visit popular landmarks in the cities.

Campus life is vibrant with a myriad of activities and choices. The choices start with your friend selection.

How to Get the Perfect **VICTORIA'S SECRET** *Bombshell Blowout in Seven Steps*

By Myia Hamed

Have you ever struggled with flat, dull and lifeless hair? A bombshell blowout can be the perfect solution, giving your hair volume, life and the Victoria's Secret model glam you've always dreamed of. Whether heading to an event or just wanting to feel fabulous, here are seven easy steps to achieve a perfect blowout.

1: Start Clean

The first step to any great hairstyle is to clean your hair. Shampoo and condition your hair with high-quality products like Davines to ensure it is free from product buildup, which can lead to dullness or even dandruff. Clean hair also holds styles better and gives you a clean slate to work with.

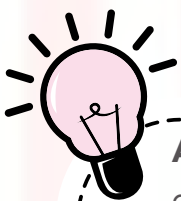


2: Towel Dry and Blow Dry

After your shower, gently towel dry your hair to remove excess water. This step helps minimize heat exposure, which can damage your hair. Then, using a blow dryer, dry your hair until it's damp. Ensure to leave it slightly wet, as this step is crucial for achieving the right texture.

3: Protect Your Hair and Section It

Next, apply a heat protectant to shield your hair from damage. Once your hair is prepped, grab a round brush and clip. Section the top half of your hair and clip it up, leaving the bottom half free to work with.

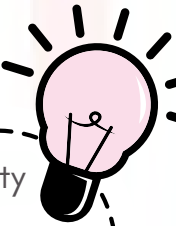


Avoid over-drying: Leaving your hair a little damp helps with the curling process, ensuring your blowout lasts longer.

4: Round Brush and Blow Dry the Bottom Half



Take small sections of the bottom half and wrap them around the round brush. As you roll, direct the blow dryer's heat to the wrapped sections. Keep the blow dryer on medium heat and continue until each section is dry and slightly curled at the ends, giving your hair a voluminous bounce.



Invest in a good round brush: A high-quality round brush will help achieve smooth, shiny curls with maximum volume. Choose one with natural bristles for the best results.

5: Work on the Top Section

Now, focus on the top section of your hair that you previously clipped up. Begin wrapping this section around the round brush, but leave the very front layer framing your face for later. This ensures you keep that natural volume at the roots while working on the rest of your hair.




6: Frame the Face

Take the front framing layer of your hair and wrap it around the round brush in a backward motion, ensuring a voluminous and face-framing curl. This step adds that signature bombshell volume around the face.

7: Flip, Shake and Set

Now for the final touch: flip your head upside down and give your curls a shake for that carefree, tousled look. Then, flip back up and spray your hair with a medium-hold hairspray to keep the volume intact all day.



Use a blow dryer with a nozzle: The nozzle gives you more control when styling.

Now, you're ready to walk the runway vibes, even if it's just through your university hallway. Go grab your brush, cue your Spotify playlist, and channel your inner VS angel!

FASHION 101: THE UNIVERSITY UNIFORM

By Myia Hamed

University fashion isn't just about looking good—it's about feeling like yourself in a sea of people still figuring that out too. Every style tells a story, whether it's a perfectly thrifted pair of pants or Pinterest-inspired accessories. Students aren't just wearing clothes but also building their identities.

Comfort reigns supreme, but that doesn't mean boring. Think cozy hoodies with gold hoops, a slicked-back hairstyle, or a messy bun that still looks intentional. There's power in detail, and students have perfected it. TikTok trends come and go, but campus style sticks around because it's crafted by people with a real story.

What's amazing is how different it looks on everyone. One person's lazy day is another's fashion statement. With such a range of styles, it becomes a fashion community.

So whether it's your favorite thrifted jacket that turns heads or a flashy accessory, university fashion isn't about following the rules—it's about making your own.





MINIMUM EFFORT, MAXIMUM ‘SLAY’: ELEVATE YOUR LOOKS IN 3 STEPS

BY JANNA ALY



Have you ever woken up 30 minutes before class and felt all odds were against you? That nothing looks good anymore and everything doesn't fit? Well, the sandwich method might be the style secret you need in moments like these. With this method, you will have a cohesive and sleek look every day, with any colors, and without effort.

The "Sandwich Method" is all about visual balance. Your outfit is a sandwich: tops and shoes are the bread, and whatever is in between is the filling.

To create the "sandwich," the top and bottom halves of your outfit should be similar in color or tone. The middle, "filling" part should complement them in color or shape. This method naturally attracts the eye to the harmony between the top and bottom parts, especially if the colors are comforting and soothing. Some even take it a step further by adding touches of matching accessories to complete the look.

It is one of the easiest hacks to perfect the "clean girl" aesthetic. Getting dressed will never be easier than this, and here's how you could nail this method in three steps.

STEP 1: CHOOSE YOUR "BREAD"

Start with your top and shoes. Choose items that are visually linked. Ideally, they would be similar in color, preferably on the softer end, like beiges. An example of this step is a white basic tee with sneakers for an everyday look. For a more chic and formal look, substitute the tee for a shirt and the sneakers with heels.

STEP 2: CHOOSE YOUR "FILLING"

Because white is a neutral color, there are limitless possible pairings. Styling up or down would be no issue. For a more relaxed look, a tee with jeans is guaranteed to make you look good with minimum effort. To style it up, dress pants in colors like beige, black, or brown would complement a white shirt perfectly.

STEP 3: ADD YOUR "GARNISH"

Just like in a sandwich, the toppings you add can make it or ruin it for you. That is the case with this method too. The accessories you choose can take your outfit to a whole other level, or completely ruin the "taste." For a simple white-on-black "sandwich" outfit, minimalistic accessories can be perfect for an everyday university look. Add a gold bracelet with a simple necklace and some earrings and just like that, you're going to be the best dressed and first to class.



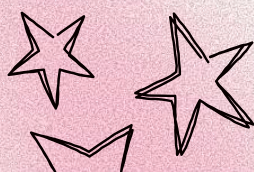
Next time you're in front of your closet, look for your "ingredients" and make the perfect outfit to taste.



TOP
MATCHES
WITH
BOTTOM

SOMETHING IN
THE MIDDLE

BOTTOM MATCHES WITH TOP





Glow Like Never Before: Charlotte Tilbury's Glowgasm Blush

By Myia Hamed

If you want to add a glowy, rosy look to your cheeks, Charlotte Tilbury's Glowgasm blush is your ticket to radiance. It gives an instantly sculpted complexion that looks effortlessly stunning. Whether you're heading to a party or just want to brighten your everyday look, this blush is your secret weapon. With its easy application and liquid formula, Glowgasm blush makes you glow from the inside out.

Why Glowgasm Blush is a Game-Changer

Charlotte Tilbury creates products designed to make everyone feel confident, and Glowgasm blush is no exception. Available in four shades, this blush delivers a luminous finish that enhances your natural radiance. The lightweight, creamy formula melts into your skin, offering a natural glow that doesn't feel heavy or cakey.

Despite its shimmery, dewy effect, the formula gives a soft flush of color that lasts all day without the need for touch-ups.

The Magic of Glowgasm Blush

- **Buildable Glow:** Whether you prefer a subtle, everyday flush or a more intense shine, Glowgasm blush offers buildable color. Its light-reflecting pigments give a soft, dewy finish that mimics the natural glow of youthful skin.
- **Sculpt and Define:** This unique four-tone blush allows you to sculpt and highlight your cheeks with just one swipe. Each shade is designed to flatter a range of skin tones while the shimmer adds a radiant, healthy-skin effect.
- **Creamy Texture:** Unlike traditional powder blushes, Glowgasm blush has a creamy formula that glides onto skin. It gives a smooth finish without settling into fine lines and is perfect for all skin types.





Customer Review

"I've tried so many blushes, but nothing compares to Glowgasm. The texture is so smooth, and the glow it gives is stunning. I love how it gives my cheeks a natural, dewy flush," Isabella Hamed said, a longtime Charlotte Tilbury user.

Why Glowgasm Blush Belongs in Your Makeup Bag

What sets Glowgasm blush apart is its versatility. Its easy-to-use applicator is perfect for quick touch-ups, whether you're on the go or getting ready at home. The long-lasting, lightweight formula keeps you glowing all day, and the range of shades suits every skin tone, making it a must-have addition to any makeup collection.

Get Your Glow On

Ready to add a little glow to your life? Don't miss out on the magic—your perfect blush is only a click away.

Tip for Maximum Glow

Apply Glowgasm blush to the apples of your cheeks and then use a flat brush to sweep a little more of the blush along your cheekbones for an even more luminous finish.



BEYOND THE FABRIC: THE MEANING BEHIND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' FASHION CHOICES

BY JANNA ALY

Academic settings in many countries enforce dress codes on their campuses, but do you think that stops anyone from dressing up? For many students, specifically at university, fashion is more than just putting on clothes in the morning and rushing to class. It is a way of self-expression, an extension of identity, and a boost in confidence for some students. Regardless of any dress code, students persevere and find ways to weave the strings of their personality into the strings of the clothes they wear daily. From statement pieces to mesmerizing color coordination, some students choose certain items to deliver a certain message.

Individuality through Fashion

Many reasons influence students' fashion choices; however, some do so more than others.

Picture a big campus; you look to your left and you see a couple of people wearing cultural clothes; you look to your right and you see a student dressed up to follow a certain trend. It is fascinating to see the differences between each individual's clothing choices. For Rahaf AlHasani, an architecture student at the University of Sharjah (UOS), fashion is a reflection of her true identity. She remembers her interest in fashion always being present in her life, but when she got to a bigger space, such as a university campus, that interest got to expand and fill a bigger space in her mind.

"I definitely see personal style as an embodiment of identity, and I enjoy the attention to detail that goes into assembling an outfit," said AlHasani.

For Rahaf and many of her peers, fashion is one way they can express themselves. They see themselves a blank canvas that is colored through the integration of many pieces.



Rahaf carrying a decorated bag, dressed in a qattan handmade by her mother

✕ "As a woman, I know that
✕ women notice and admire
✕ details, which is why I love
✕ incorporating statement or
✕ interesting pieces into my
daily university outfits that
can work as conversation
starters." ✕✕✕✕✕

That is the case for Myia Hamed, an aspiring journalist studying at the American University of Sharjah (AUS). She noted that putting together an outfit is a form of art, like drawing or painting. She went on to explain that understanding how colors and patterns work together at a specific time is a skill.

✕ **“I like to do my own twists**
✕ **and takes on trends. It is**
✕ **how I express myself, and**
✕ **in a way, it boosts my**
✕ **confidence,” Hamed**
exclaimed. ✕✕✕✕✕

Cultural Influences on Style

Adherence to cultural norms or heritage is one key defining aspect of many students' clothing choices. On a campus as diverse as AUS's, each student interacts with at least a dozen different cultures on a daily basis; Abdullah Al Tekriti is no exception.

Being surrounded by a multitude of cultures can often push someone to conform to the group's norms, but that is not the case for Al Tekriti.

“It's more than just an appearance thing, it's genuinely more convenient. My ancestors wore these clothes to live in this environment, and hundreds of years later, it all still works,” he explained.

Abdullah's choice to express himself in this way opens up opportunities for him to connect with others from the same cultural background, or explain his culture to those who are not aware of it.

Many still style their traditional garments with modern fashion trends. For instance, Shouq AlNakhi, an Emirati student at AUS, is known for her bright abayas that she often styles with sneakers, jeans, and sometimes hoodies.

“I enjoy bold outfits, unique abayas, and fun accessories that stand out,” she said. “I don't like following the norm. I'd rather turn every outfit into something exciting and full of personality.”



Abdullah dressed in his cultural clothing in the desert.

More Than Just Clothes

From a quick glance, students' fashion choices could be attributed to trend-following, comfort-seeking, and even culture or norms-adhering behavior. However, at its core, their choices are about more than just that.

The items they choose carry personality, a definition of who they are, and tell a story about the life they have all lived. Who hasn't gotten a bracelet, a ring, or even a watch from a dear friend? Hanin Mohamed for sure has.

As a physiotherapist in the making, Hanin deals with immense stress daily. However, the sight of one bracelet given to her by her cousin and close friend makes all her worries fade away.



Hanin's most beloved bracelet

Smile😊



"Wearing the bracelet makes me feel like she is around," she said. "Whenever I am at an unfamiliar place or in an uncomfortable situation, I toy around with the bracelet, which instantly fills me with the sense of comfort I experience with her."

Students dress to express themselves, to feel seen and understood, and more importantly, feel comfortable in their own culture and skin. The remarks of the students featured in this article are just a sample of how their peers from all around the world feel.

In a university setting, especially one so diverse in cultures, fashion serves as an unspoken yet powerful tool for one to assert and express their individuality. Their fashion choices tell a story that deserves to be heard.

XXXXXX

"If you are not wearing cute outfits, what are you doing with your life?"

XXXXXX



CARTER & WHITE

Dress Like You Mean Business: Carter & White Is the CEO's Choice for Luxury Wear By Kenzy Amr



In a world where perception shapes power, clothing is no longer just a matter of style—it's strategy. For CEOs, founders, and professionals operating at the highest level, every detail counts. And when it comes to luxury wear that speaks volumes without saying a word, Carter & White leads the conversation.

Born in the UAE and tailored in Italy, Carter & White has emerged as the brand of choice for high-performers who value refinement, precision and quiet confidence. It's not just fashion; it's a mindset.

Whether it's a sharp formal shirt under a bespoke suit or a perfectly cut kandura that bridges tradition with modern luxury, Carter & White delivers timeless pieces that embody leadership. The craftsmanship is deliberate. The fabrics are premium. And the aesthetic? **Effortlessly executive.**

Unlike trend-driven labels, Carter & White takes a refined, minimalist approach, offering a curated collection that fits seamlessly into the lives of those with packed calendars and powerful agendas. Every item is created with purpose: to support the rhythm of those building empires, leading teams and setting the tone in every room they enter.

More than just outerwear, the brand's premium sleepwear and luxury linens have become favorites for entrepreneurs who understand that performance doesn't end at the office door. Recharging is part of the process, and Carter & White provides the reset, one finely tailored robe and one Giza cotton pillowcase at a time.

From C-suite veterans to rising business stars, Carter & White is quietly defining a new standard in Gulf luxury. One that blends heritage and modernity, comfort and control, prestige and practicality.

And let's be honest, if your calendar is fully booked, your inbox in chaos, and you haven't eaten lunch since Tuesday... at least your wardrobe should be holding it together. Because success isn't loud, it's well-dressed.

WHY CEOs CHOOSE CARTER & WHITE?

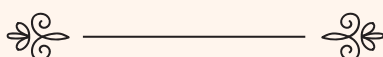
Tailored in Italy,
grounded in Gulf
elegance

Worn by high-level
executives across the
region

Luxury essentials
made for business and
beyond

Timeless pieces that
elevate without effort

Designed to match
ambition with refinement



The Rise of Sustainable Fashion:

Thrifting as a Movement

By Myia Hamed



What happens when the trend shifts from overconsumption to digging for gold? It may sound like a paradox, but it signals a revolution in this case. Thrifting is no longer a niche practice—it has gone mainstream. It has reshaped consumer habits and redefined what it means to be fashionable. Thrifting is not just an alternative to fast fashion but rather a movement in its own right.

The Evolution of Thrifting

Once associated with necessity rather than choice, thrift shopping has always been a resourceful and affordable option. However, today's younger generation has repackaged it into a fashion statement. Thrifting is now associated with being stylish, trendy and environmentally conscious. It has become the modern way to shop, whether scrolling through secondhand shops on social media or digging for a rare find at vintage stores.

Janna Aly, a student at the American University of Sharjah, shares how thrifting is deeply embedded in her Egyptian culture.

"The markets in Egypt are filled with vintage items like jewelry and watches," she says. "I love thrifting for the aesthetic—items like a film camera feel special."

Aamuktha Samrajyam, an EcoRep and chemical engineering student at the AUS, echoes this sentiment.

"Thrifting is a great opportunity to avoid creating excess clothing," she says. "Sharing clothes with the community brings us together in the name of sustainability."





Social media influencers, environmental advocates, and celebrities have all embraced the thrifting movement, making it even more popular. TikTok, Instagram and YouTube have played a significant part in showing the creativity in secondhand shopping. Trends like transforming forgotten pieces into trendy outfits or recreating high-end fashion with secondhand items have tripled support for the movement. Even videos of influencers creating thrift bundles for their followers, tailored to different aesthetics, have encouraged more people to join and support secondhand shopping. Hashtags like #ThriftFlip and #EcoFriendlyFashion have amassed billions of views, demonstrating how eager people are to be part of this cultural shift.

A Sustainable Alternative

The environmental impact of fast fashion brands like Shein, H&M and Zara is staggering. According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the fashion industry produces 92 million tons of textile waste annually, with 85% of all textiles ending up in landfills. Thrifting aims to extend the life cycle of clothing and reduce the demand for continuous mass production.

Sustainability advocate Emma Reynolds, founder of a youth-led thrift collective at the American University in Dubai, believes thrifting is one of the simplest ways to combat waste.

"It's about making conscious choices," she says. "Every piece you thrift is one less item that contributes to pollution and exploitation."



Photo by Myia Hamed

Buying secondhand items also makes a positive economic statement. The affordability and sustainability of thrifting make being fashionable and eco-conscious accessible to everyone. The movement proves that one does not have to break the bank—or the planet—to be stylish.

The Social Impact of Secondhand Shopping

Beyond the sustainability benefits, thrifting also fosters a sense of community. Vintage stores serve as gathering spaces for fashion enthusiasts to share unique finds. Many thrift stores are also linked to charitable causes, such as the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America foundation, with proceeds supporting local homeless shelters and humanitarian efforts.

Thriftling also discourages mass-produced fashion, promoting individuality and personal expression. Finds at thrift stores are one of a kind, allowing for creativity beyond the standard styles found in retail stores.

"When you shop secondhand, you're wearing something with history," says Isabella Hamed, a fashion student at the University of Chicago and avid thrifter. "It's a way to craft a style that's truly your own."

The Future of Fashion

With growing awareness of sustainability and ethical consumerism, the future of fashion is looking increasingly secondhand.

Popular retail brands like Levi's and Patagonia have launched their resale platforms to give consumers what they want. With the growing demand for vintage clothing, everyone wants a piece of the action.



"Every piece you thrift is one less item that contributes to pollution and exploitation."

The movement has even moved online, with marketplaces like Depop, Poshmark, and ThredUp growing rapidly. Thrifting is thriving by bridging the gap between the convenience of online shopping and the push for sustainability.

As thrifting moves from a trend to the new normal, its impact extends far beyond fashion, it represents a mindset shift: ethics over excess, thought before purchase, and sustainability over impulse buying.

Thriftling has become the poster child of the idea of quality over quantity, creating a lasting impact on how the world views shopping.

Consider this the next time you want to shop. Instead of choosing excess, skip the mall and head to a thrift store instead. You just might uncover a hidden gem—all while making a difference for the planet and your community.



Hydration in Its Purest Form: Evian Facial Spray

By Dana Bouzo



Evian Facial Spray provides a natural glow with every mist.

When I moved to the United Arab Emirates, I thought I was prepared for everything that comes with a new place, different surroundings, a new culture and the weather. But one thing I didn't expect was how much my skin would struggle.

The intense sun, dry air-conditioned rooms, and sudden temperature changes made my skin look dull and feel dry and tight. I used several moisturizers, but they didn't help much. I needed something quick and gentle to carry with me all the time. That's when I discovered the Evian Natural Mineral Water Facial Spray. Honestly, it became my skin's best friend.

At first, I was skeptical. After all, how much difference could a mineral water spray make? But after a few uses, I realized it wasn't just any water. Evian's formula is known for its unique mineral balance found only in the natural springs of the French Alps. The spray delivers hydration with a fine mist in the form of ultra-fine micro-droplets without causing the skin sticky or wet.

5 Times I Reach for My Evian Spray

- 1. After walking outside:** For instant cool-down.
- 2. Before applying moisturizer:** It helps it absorb better.
- 3. After makeup:** It sets it and gives a natural finish.
- 4. On flights or road trips:** It keeps my skin from drying out.
- 5. During stressful moments:** It's a tiny moment of self-care that always helps.

Now, it's a part of my daily routine. Every morning, after washing my face, I use it to prepare my skin for makeup. I also keep a small bottle in my bag so I can use it during the day, between classes, during meetings or just when I need a quick refresh. Sometimes, I even use it before bed because it feels so soothing after a long day.

The spray is hypoallergenic and has a neutral pH, so it's suitable for all skin types, including sensitive skin like mine. The canister is leak-proof and recyclable, making it easy to carry around, whether it's in my backpack or my suitcase.

Skincare professionals recommend this spray for a reason. It boosts skin hydration and soothes. It refreshes makeup without much effort.

Since I started using it, my skin feels more hydrated and less irritated, with a noticeable glow.

This small change has made a big difference in how I care for my skin in a new climate. With all the changes that come with moving to a new country, at least my skin is no longer one of the problems.

The best thing is that it does more than just refresh. It hydrates and tones my skin throughout the day. My makeup looks more natural when I use it as a finishing step, and I've noticed it even helps my moisturizer work better.



Lightweight, refreshing, and powered by pure mineral water.

Summer is nearly here, and keeping your skin glowing doesn't have to be hard. Evian Facial Spray is perfect for making your skin look fresh and radiant. If you're interested in finding out more about Evian Facial Spray, check out their website at www.evian.com or follow their Instagram account @evianwater for updates and tips.

The Snack That Gets You Through Midterms

By Fatima Hassan

Running out of snacks mid-study session has to be one of the top 10 worst feelings during exam season. Between the late nights, endless notes and growing to-do lists, nothing sounds better than an easy, reliable snack, and **frozen grapes** might be exactly what you need.

Frozen grapes are cold, sweet and refreshing, and even better, they're simple to make: just rinse, dry and freeze. For an extra treat, sprinkle a little sugar or lemon juice before freezing for a flavor boost. They're light enough to avoid a sluggish feeling but satisfying enough to curb unhealthy cravings. Their frozen texture naturally slows down eating, helping you stay focused without the mindless binging that often happens during stressful study sessions. They also require no cooking or cleanup, making them ideal when energy and patience are both in short supply. Keeping a container ready in the freezer can make late-night study sessions a little more bearable.



Grapes become the perfect study snack after at least three hours in the freezer.

When preparing for finals, it's easy to overdo it on caffeine and instant noodles, but adding a bag of grapes to the grocery list offers a simple, healthier alternative that provides a much-needed boost of energy without the crash from sugary snacks or energy drinks. Small habits like this can make a big difference when it matters most.



Breathe, Write, Release:

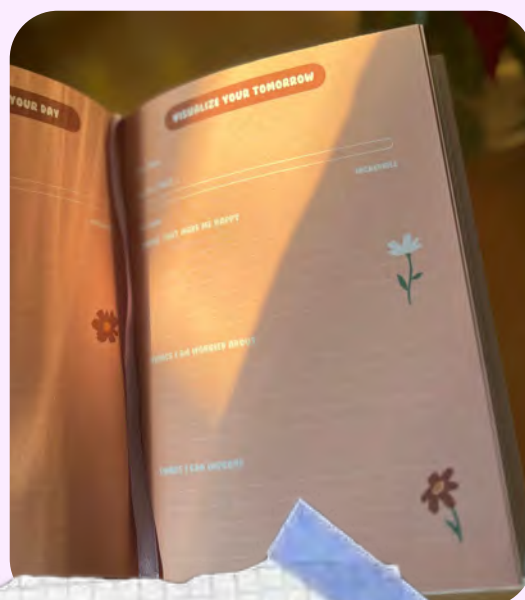
HOW TO FIND CLARITY THROUGH JOURNALING

By Dana Bouzo

In a world that moves at the speed of a swipe, it might seem strange that so many people are turning back to pen and paper. But despite the apps that promise to organize our lives and the endless stream of productivity hacks flooding our feeds, one timeless tool is quietly making a comeback: journaling.

Journaling is not simply about recording your daily activities or letting out your frustration, it's about taking long enough to listen to your own voice. It's about tuning the world out and tuning into the world inside you. While the world is constantly competing for your attention, journaling is that quiet respite, a safe place where you can sort through the chaos and give your inner world purpose.

Whether you are trying to make a tough decision, silence an anxious mind, or simply figure out what you really want out of life, journaling each day can help. It's not just self-care, it's self-discovery.



It takes about 21 days to form a new habit or break an old one. Journaling daily, even for just a few minutes, can help train your mind to seek clarity and calm.



Choose a journal and pen that feel good to use. If you like what you are writing in, you will be more likely to stick with it.

Here is how to begin your own daily journaling practice:



Pick your journaling method.

Choose what works best for you: a lined notebook, a dotted bullet journal, or a digital app. Keep it somewhere accessible, on your desk, by your bed, or in your bag.



Create a ritual around it.

Light a candle, play soft music, or make tea before you write. Turning journaling into a ritual makes it feel like self-care instead of a task.



Set a consistent time.

Morning is great for setting intentions, while evenings are perfect for reflection. Choose a time when you can write uninterrupted for 5-10 minutes daily.



Stay consistent, not perfect.

You don't need to spend hours writing, just five minutes a day is all it takes to start seeing the benefits. Even if you miss a day, simply get back to it when you can. The key is making it a daily habit, even if it is just a quick check-in with yourself.



Start simple.

You don't need prompts right away. Start with how you are feeling, what's on your mind, or something that happened that day. Don't overthink, just write.



Be honest and unfiltered.

Your journal is a safe space. Don't worry about grammar, handwriting, or structure. Write for yourself, not for anyone else.



Use prompts if you're stuck.

Here are a few to try:

- "Right now, I feel..."
- "Three things I'm grateful for are..."
- "I am so excited about..."
- "Today I was stressed because..."





By Fatima Hassan

3 MINUTES, 1 MEAL: THE CONVENIENCE OF INDOMIE FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS



There are two things every university student runs low on: time and energy. Between back-to-back lectures, sudden quizzes, and long nights in the library, eating often falls to the bottom of the to-do list. There's barely enough time to rest, let alone prepare something from scratch. Food delivery apps may seem like an easy option, but they're not always quick or budget-friendly. That's where Indomie steps in: a dorm essential, a budget-friendly solution, and a dependable 3-minute meal that fits effortlessly into student life.

While a few dirhams for a full meal is undeniably appealing, what makes Indomie stand out isn't just affordability; it's the ease with which it blends into a student's constantly shifting schedule. When time is short and hunger hits, you need something that works instantly. Indomie does just that. With no need for fancy appliances or extended prep, it saves you time and stress during the busiest parts of your day.

One of Indomie's biggest strengths is how intuitive it is to make. You boil water, drop in the noodles, stir in the seasoning, and you're done. It takes less effort than brewing coffee and still manages to be far more satisfying. This is exactly what makes it a dorm room staple. No pots, no pans, no dishes piling up. It's ideal for those moments when you want to eat well without losing momentum during a packed day of classes or studying.

Its flavor options also make it more than just a convenient choice. From the comforting warmth of Chicken Curry to the bold heat of Mi Goreng, there's a packet for every craving. Even better, Indomie is easy to upgrade. Got an egg? Crack it in. Have cheese, hot sauce or frozen vegetables? Toss them in. With just a few extra minutes to spare, the basic pack becomes a flavorful, filling dish that's tailored to you.



Many stores sell Indomie for just a few dirhams per pack.



It has become part of the shared student experience. Everyone has that one night they remember: stuck on a deadline, too tired to order food and grateful for the packet of Indomie sitting on their shelf.

Whether it's finals season or a rainy evening in the dorm, it's there when you need it.

It's the kind of product that quietly supports your routine without demanding your attention.



Indomie is ready in minutes and doesn't require much cleanup.

yum!

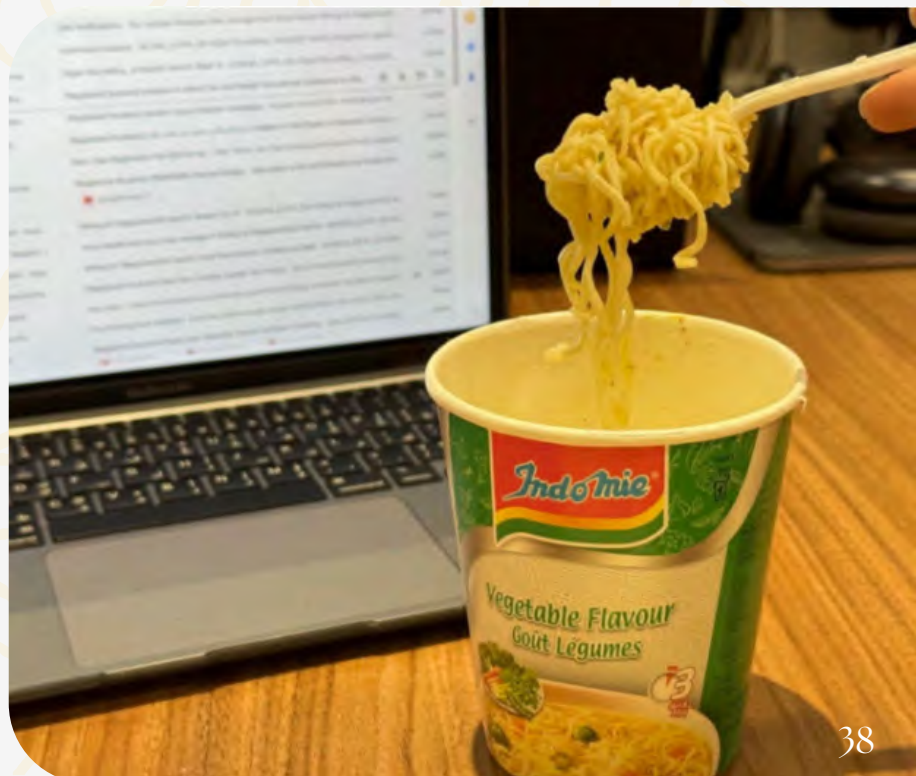
Students enjoy Indomie as a quick meal during study breaks.

Ways to Make Your Indomie Healthier

- Use only half the seasoning to reduce sodium.
- Add spinach, kale, mushrooms, or broccoli while boiling to increase vitamins and fiber.
- Top with grilled chicken, tuna, boiled egg whites, or tofu for lean protein.
- Add chili flakes or lemon juice for flavor without relying on oil, butter, or extra salt.
- Serve with a side of fruit for a balanced, filling meal.

Assignments pile up, plans change and schedules stretch thin, but Indomie brings that rare mix of speed, comfort and reliability. Whether you're grabbing a quick bite between lectures or fueling a long night of revisions, it fits right into your life without making things more complicated.

University life is often unpredictable; your next meal doesn't have to be.



Health Above Anything: Tips to Survive Finals Season

By Janna Aly



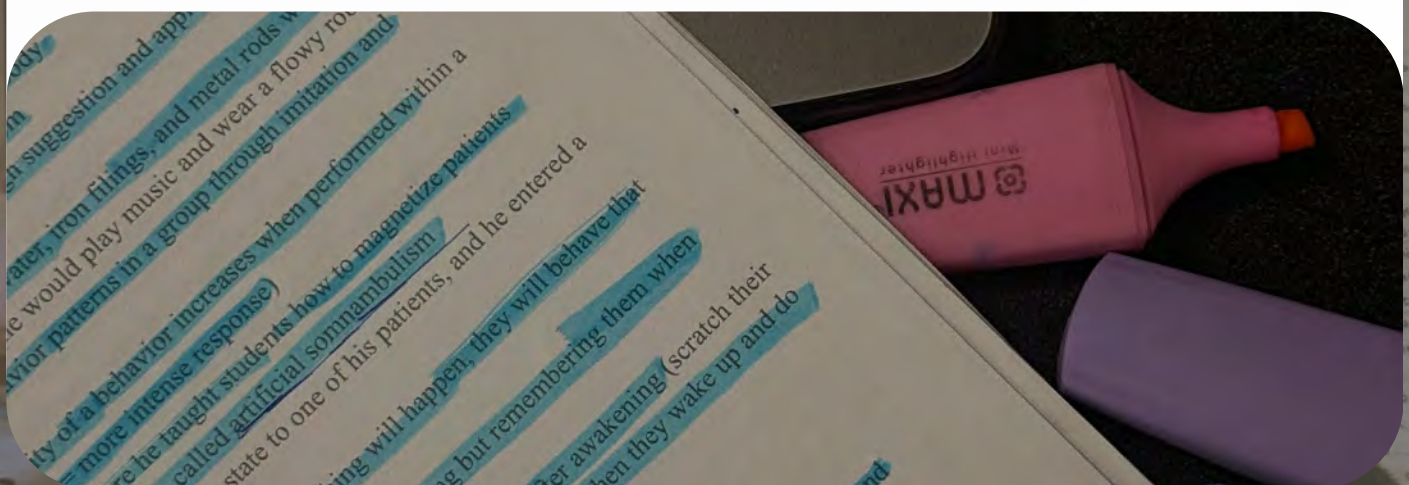
Finals season is upon many university students, which means coffee consumption is at an all-time high. Some students go as far as to pull multiple, consecutive "all-nighters," which is proven to have detrimental effects on mental well-being. Surviving finals is about working smarter, not harder.

Start by setting realistic goals daily. Pull out your notepad and break down everything you must study for each subject. Make sure to include breaks in your schedule so you do not overwhelm your brain with the information. This could be a quick five-minute break of simply resting your eyes, a ten-minute break to walk around campus, or a 30-minute break for a meal that will give you the energy you need (better than any energy drink).

Sleep is non-negotiable. Nothing will replace the benefits that sleep provides. Not only does it provide rest, it also strengthens your memory and concentration, which is exactly what you need during this hectic time. Aim for at least six hours every night.

Finally, do not isolate yourself. Revise for your exams with your classmates, check in on your friends, or study in the library. Being around others like you will make you realize you are not alone during these tough times.

REMEMBER: GRADES ARE IMPORTANT, BUT YOUR HEALTH IS PRICELESS. GOOD LUCK, AND DON'T FORGET TO BE KIND TO YOURSELF.



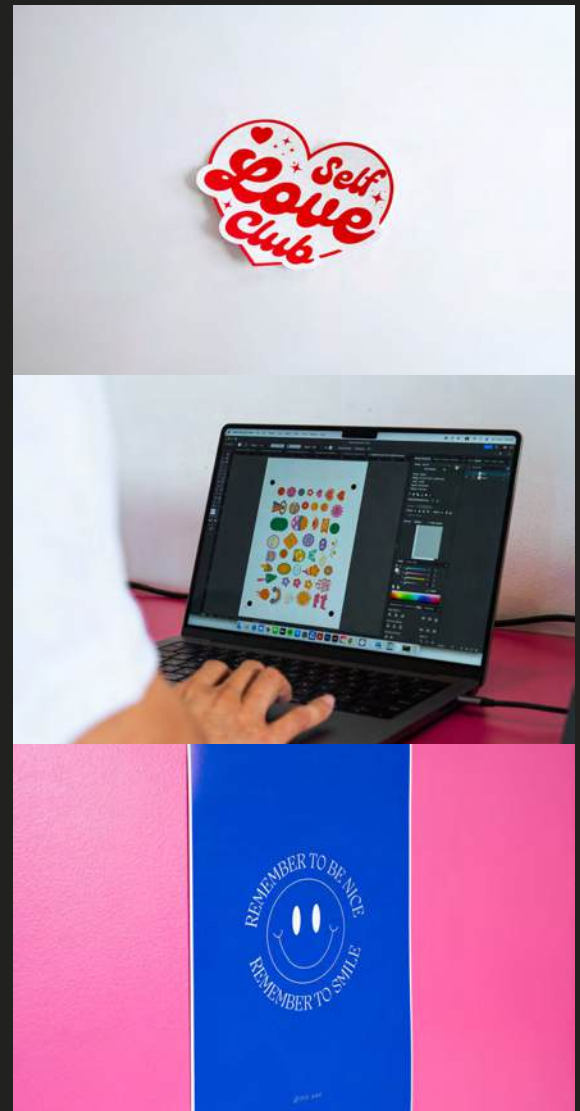
INK.

Print it your way

Over the last year, I have managed to make every birthday party special with creating special party favors, like stickers and posters. This was made possible with the discovery of a shop that is every creative's dream. In the heart of Aljada, Sharjah's most dynamic and youthful community, INK is about to become your favorite spot in Sharjah.

INK is not your ordinary print shop. From bold graphic T-shirts to delicate sticker designs, they do not shy away from accepting to do anything. No matter what you want to print, and whatever you want to print on, they'll make it happen.

If you are a student, an artist, a small business owner, or someone who loves to add their personal touch to the things they own, INK is the right spot for you.



The shop is not just about the high-quality prints or the ability to put your design on anything, it is about the vibes. The bright fuchsia colored walls and the vibrant displayed products will make it difficult to miss the store. Such colors instantly make customers, as well as their workers, feel happier. The team at INK is made up of young creatives who are quick and collaborative. They see your vision without any trouble, and aim to deliver whatever will make you happy. The speed of their work makes them a solid go-to of mine at the last minute. Their team has kept me coming back to them.

And the best part of it all? It is extremely affordable. INK is founded for the creatives, so they know what it means to be on a strict budget either as a student or a worker. Their prices are wallet-friendly without compromising on quality or style. Couple that with the ease of ordering, and you have a recipe for a very successful business. For AUS students, this is good news! INK is only ten minutes away from campus, and you can pick your order up in less than that distance. 40

THE QUIET POWERBROKER: HOW A 23-YEAR-OLD IS SHAPING DUBAI'S REAL ESTATE SCENE FROM THE SHADOWS

By Kenzy Amr

In the bustling heart of Dubai's luxury property market, where high-rises glitter and silence sells, a 23-year-old connector is quietly building an empire, without the suits, without the headlines, and without even a real estate license. His name is Rammah Al Hakim, and while many in his age group are still trying to decide what they want to do, he's already closing multi-million-dirham deals between royal family affiliates and international investors.

But don't expect to find him advertising properties on Instagram. His brand is discretion, and his power lies in who he knows.



"I'm not a broker," he says with a shrug. "I'm just someone who knows how to get people what they want - fast, quiet, and off-market."

Rammah, a Chemical Engineering student at the American University of Sharjah, spends his weekdays juggling lectures, networking calls, and property showings. What began as a favor for a family friend has turned into a full-fledged operation built on referrals, reputation, and results.

"I started out helping someone find a plot of land in Abu Dhabi," he recalls. "I had no clue what I was doing. But the minute I saw the numbers and realized the kind of money you could make by just connecting people, I was hooked."

Since then, Rammah has built a network most licensed agents would envy, one that includes royal family connections, developers, and international buyers looking to invest in Dubai's rapidly growing real estate market. His role? Finding the properties no one else knows are for sale, and connecting them with people who have the funds and vision to buy.

"I've helped sell resorts, towers, mansions, all of them off the record," he says. "No public listings, no showrooms. Just trust and introductions."

It's not always glamorous. The hours are long, and the pressure to deliver is real. And at 23, his biggest challenge has been convincing people to take him seriously.

"Some clients look at me and think I'm the intern," he laughs. "But once we talk numbers and I bring them a \$30 million beachfront deal they didn't even know was available? That changes everything."

In many ways, Rammah represents a new kind of entrepreneur, one who doesn't wait for permission or credentials to create value. What he lacks in age or traditional credentials, he makes up for in hustle and instinct.

"I don't need to be flashy," he says. "I just need to deliver."



His business partner, also a student, handles the strategic side, helping him navigate logistics and paperwork. The two operate with quiet precision, balancing school deadlines with client negotiations.

"There's something kind of poetic about closing a property deal between classes," he says. "It's chaotic, but it keeps me alive."

When asked what keeps him grounded, he doesn't hesitate: "The vision. I'm not trying to get rich quick. I'm trying to build a name, quietly."

As the conversation wraps, he looks down at his phone. Another WhatsApp message. Another inquiry. Another opportunity.

"I want to run my own firm eventually," he says. "Not a public-facing one. Just something small, exclusive, for the serious people only. I don't need to be seen. I just need to be known."

If there's one thing Rammah Al Hakim knows how to do, it's move in silence and close big. At just 23, he's already neck-deep in Dubai's high-stakes real estate scene, not as a broker with a name tag and clipboard, but as the quiet force behind some of the most exclusive property deals in the region.



From private islands to commercial towers, Rammah specializes in scouting high-value properties and connecting buyers and sellers through his network of VIPs, investors, and royal family affiliates. In this interview, he shares his input about the grind, the glamor and the grit it takes to win big in real estate, even before graduating university.

Q&A with Rammah:

Q1: What drew you to real estate in the first place?

Rammah: I've always been obsessed with the idea of ownership. Real estate just made sense, it's where the real money and power sit. I started off by helping a family friend close a land deal, and the commission I made changed everything. After that, I couldn't go back.

Q2: You're still in university, how do you juggle that with high-value deals?

Rammah: It's chaos I won't lie. My phone doesn't sleep. But honestly, I don't believe in waiting to start your life. I go to class, but I close deals between lectures. It's about time management, and knowing your priorities.

Q3: Tell me about your network - how did you even build those VIP contacts?

Rammah: Slowly. Strategically. I started by showing up to events I had no business being at. Then I started introducing people to each other, investors, developers, architects, and they remembered me. Now, if someone wants access, they come through me.

Q4: Where do you see yourself in five years?

Rammah: Running my own firm. Lowkey, off-market, luxury properties only. I want to be the guy people whisper about in business rooms - the one who gets it done without ever being in the spotlight.



The Art of Networking: How to Turn Strangers into Opportunities

By Kenzy Amr

Imagine walking into a room full of people, each one a potential opportunity. Sounds intimidating, right? But what if you could turn that fear into excitement? Building a network isn't about exchanging business cards, it's about creating connections that open doors to new opportunities, collaborations and experiences. The best part? You don't need to be an extrovert or a social butterfly to make it happen. Whether you're a student or just starting out in your career, networking can be a game-changer. In this article, I'll show you how to build your network from scratch, no awkward icebreakers required.



Socialize even as an introvert

Steps to Build Your Network Effectively

1. Start with What You Already Have

Think about the people around you - family, friends, classmates, and even acquaintances. You might be surprised how much potential lies within your current circle. Don't hesitate to ask for introductions or advice. Often, the best connections are just one step away, and you never know who might know someone that could open doors for you.

2. Make Your Social Media Work for You (Especially LinkedIn)

LinkedIn isn't just for job hunting; it's a goldmine for networking. Ensure your profile is up-to-date and reflects your skills, passions and aspirations. Start by connecting with professors, classmates, alumni and industry professionals. Personalize your connection request with a brief, friendly message, and you'll be surprised at how many people are open to a genuine conversation.



Make LinkedIn work for you

3. Attend Events (Yes, Virtual Too)

Whether it's a local networking event or a global webinar, events are fantastic places to meet like-minded people. Even virtual events offer opportunities to connect with others in a relaxed, no-pressure environment. Always be ready with a brief introduction about who you are and what you're passionate about—it's your chance to leave a memorable impression.

4. Volunteer and Get Involved

Volunteering is a powerful way to grow your network while showcasing your skills. Get involved in university committees, charity events, or industry-specific projects. You'll not only contribute to meaningful causes but also gain credibility and form connections with people who share your values and professional interests.

5. Focus on Relationships, Not Transactions

Networking isn't about collecting contacts—it's about building real relationships. When meeting new people, show genuine interest in what they do. Ask questions, listen attentively, and engage in meaningful conversations. Trust and mutual respect are the foundation of any strong relationship, so let that be your priority when connecting.



Build relationships and meet new people



Keep up with your connections

6. Follow Up (and Keep the Connection Alive)

After meeting someone, always follow up with a thank-you message or note to let them know you appreciated the conversation. Remember, a single conversation doesn't make a lasting connection. Stay in touch by occasionally sharing something interesting, asking for advice, or offering a bit of help. These small gestures go a long way in strengthening relationships.

7. Give Before You Ask

The key to creating lasting connections is reciprocity. Before asking for something, think about how you can add value to the relationship. Whether it's offering advice, sharing useful resources, or introducing someone to a potential collaborator, giving first establishes trust and goodwill, and people will remember your generosity.

Building a network doesn't happen overnight, but by starting small and focusing on creating genuine connections, you'll be well on your way to developing a valuable professional network. Keep in mind that networking is not just about what others can do for you—it's about forming lasting, mutually beneficial relationships.



Attend events

Networking Apps & Platforms

- LinkedIn – Update your profile and start connecting with alumni, professors, and professionals.
- Shapr – A networking app that connects you with people based on shared interests.
- Meetup – Find events in your area related to your interests or career goals.
- Tips for Introverts:
 - Start with small events or one-on-one conversations.
 - Use social media as a less intimidating way to reach out to people.
 - Set small networking goals, like connecting with one new person a week.

TRIPLE A: AMNA AL AWADHI'S ARROWS OF APEX



by Mariam J. Massarweh

It's funny to think that the current women's compound bow record in the UAE is the result of a domino line that started with the release of The Hunger Games trilogy.

Amna Al Awadhi, a Sharjah native, is a 4th-year architecture student at the American University of Sharjah who lives a double life. While she spends her days sketching and making models in the CAAD building, she spends her nights shooting arrows at the Sharjah Women's Olympic Centre, honing her archery skills.

Al Awadhi credits her introduction to the sport to her cousin, who became interested in archery due to the popular book and movie franchise The Hunger Games. After Amna joined the sport, her younger sister followed suit, and now all three train in the center together.

Amna started her archery journey shooting the traditional recurve bow - sometimes called the Olympic bow - which is what most people picture when they think of archery.

"I used to shoot the Olympic bow for seven years but I did not see much improvement, and the sport was still developing in the UAE at that time."

However, she took on the hefty 20 kilogram compound bow when an international coach joined to mentor the national team, which lacked compound competitors. Amna's compound bow is always on stand-by, stashed in her car's trunk at all times.

Just like all athletes, Al Awadhi experiences stress and nerves when she's on the field. Things can get tense when time is running out, which may hinder her performance.



Al Awadhi training at the Sharjah Women's Olympic Centre

"[Losses] only make me want to work harder and improve as much as I can."

The coaching team at the Sharjah Women's Olympic Centre take such potential eventuality into account, creating simulations for athletes to train in leading up to competitions.

"I have some mental training sessions and exercises that I have to do before and during competitions. It's mainly breathing exercises."

It is not an understatement to say that Amna Al Awadhi is a leader in the UAE archery scene. On December 29, 2024, she scored 692 points out of 720, setting the national record for women's compound archery. Al Awadhi's wins are not limited to the UAE, she shoots in international competitions as well, and makes sure to leave with a medal around her neck on the flight back.

Winning is a huge motivator for Amna, but not as big of a motivator as losing.

"[Losses] only make me want to work harder and improve as much as I can."

Something very admirable about Al Awadhi is that she refuses to see the glass half-empty. She sees the good, the bad and the ugly all as a step closer to success, a step closer to hitting the X on the target.

As the leader in the compound women's category, Amna's only competition is herself. With the recent record break, she is training hard to break her own record and score even higher. Her effort is constantly supported by her friends and family.

Aisha Ibraheem, Al Awadhi's close friend and fellow CAAD student, cannot help but admire and praise Amna's progress over the years.

"When you're on the field it's you against yourself, not another athlete."



Ibraheem gushes “Every time I hear back from [Amna] after a competition, I feel so immensely proud. I can’t put into words how proud I felt when she broke the record last December. I’m just glad I can get an autograph for free.”

Amna is accompanied by her younger sister to all her competitions, who competes in the same category as her. Neither sister allows scores or medals to drive a wedge between them, keeping up the optimistic spirit.

“When you’re on the field it’s you against yourself, not another athlete. That’s how we like to think about it. There are no hard feelings, we support each other. A win is a win no matter who’s taking it.”

Al Awadhi says she needs to train a minimum of three hours every day to keep bettering her skills, which can be hard considering her Architecture major at AUS is just as time demanding. A normal weekday for Amna starts at college, where she works on her projects and attends lectures, and then she trains at the Olympic Centre for a few hours, and then makes her way back to AUS to get more architecture work done. Needless to say, she excels at both.

Al Awadhi noticed that “Amna,” “archery,” and “architecture” all start with the letter A, and she finds the coincidental alliteration delightful, and sees it as a sign that these fields are where she belongs.

Seeing how hard Al Awadhi works and how her skills keep getting sharper and better, it will not be a surprise when a new record in archery is broken soon.

“A win is a win no matter who’s taking it.”



Al Awadhi scored 692 points out of 720 in compound archery.

Verses of Silence:

by Janna Aly

Ali Al B'looshi and Poetry

"Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words." -Robert Forest.

We all feel a wide range of emotions daily, yet not everyone knows how to express them. This is where words come into play—they offer a refuge for those who struggle to properly articulate their feelings. Poetry, in particular, is regarded as a powerful medium for such expression.

For Ali Al B'looshi, an English Language and Literature major at the American University of Sharjah and an aspiring poet, poetry is more than just words on a page—it is a means of understanding himself and connecting with the world around him.

"I view poetry and literature as essential to human survival," Ali shared.

Pursuing a degree in Literature has immersed him in the world of the written word, shaping his journey from an avid reader to a poet crafting his collection.

Ali's poetry emerged during a time of intense emotion when he found it difficult to express his thoughts in plain language. "I just spoke, and my words came out as poems," he recalls. Influenced by literary classics, his poetry delves into deeply personal themes.

His collection, *Songs of the Silent*, is divided into four categories: love, loss, hope, and despair. "I did not plan for them to be categorized as so," Ali explains, "I just wrote the poems and when I looked back at them, I realized the poems were almost responding to one another."

Love and the pain of loss seem to be the driving emotions behind Ali's creative expression. He believes that both of these emotions are intrinsically linked, explaining, "Love is what creates the kind of pain that can only be healed by love itself."

His journey has not been without challenges. Ali admitted to struggling with the fear that his poetry might not resonate with others.

"Poetry, to me, is about connection. If it does not reach someone, then what is the point?" he asks.

Despite this fear, the encouragement he got from his friends and family pushed him to publish his work. Over time, he has redefined success. "If even five people connect to my poems, then these five people matter and it is all worth it." Additionally, he remarks that his limited reading time and vocabulary also present a challenge in his journey of growing as a poet.





As an Emirati, Ali has witnessed a shift in how his community interacts with poetry.

“Poetry used to be essential to our culture, but it now feels like a luxury,” he comments, “and when something becomes a luxury, people do not value it as much. Literature and poetry have been commercialized, and that is a shame.”

He adds that modern society has been disconnected from the written arts, saying, “People have been zombified—humans have not been human for so long. These arts are what make us human; they elevate us.”

To counter these changes, Ali has dedicated himself to building a community that shares his appreciation and enthusiasm for the written word. He revived the Book Club at his university by starting a weekly reading circle.

“People have been zombified—humans have not been human for so long. These arts are what make us human; they elevate us.”

“Poetry used to be essential to our culture, but it now feels like a luxury,” he comments, “and when something becomes a luxury, people do not value it as much. Literature and poetry have been commercialized, and that is a shame.”

To counter these changes, Ali has dedicated himself to building a community that shares his appreciation and enthusiasm for the written word. He revived the Book Club at his university by starting a weekly reading circle.

“One of the most iconic books I have ever read is *I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream*; it is very powerful,” he remarks. In addition to his academic and literary pursuits, Ali tries to actively participate in multiple events and recite his poetry to the public.

With *Songs of the Silent*, Ali gives a voice to those who have yet to find their own in this world. His poetry speaks to those who can connect to his experiences, offering them a sense of recognition and belonging. “I write about the very niche experiences, like a Friday evening at your Yadooh’s (grandmother’s) house,” he explains. “These little moments deserve to be seen like the silent voices deserve to be heard.”

Ali’s journey in poetry is not just about self-expression and connecting with others, but also about creating a space where literature is valued and humans are not neglecting the written arts. Through his work, he continues to ensure that the silent are finally heard.



Q&A: Ali Al B'looshi and Poetry

by Janna Aly

Janna Aly: So, what got you into poetry?

Ali Al B'looshi: Writing has been a dream of mine since I was a kid, but poetry was unexpected to me. It came to me when I was overwhelmed with emotions, and I failed to express them. The words just poured out of me in the form of a poem. I spoke and the words just came out of me, and I realized that was the best way to vent, to speak out when I felt unheard. I can write poetry in a deep emotional state, expressing my emotions.

J.A.: That actually leads me to my next question: what emotions or experiences tend to shape your poetry the most?

A.A.: A lot of my poetry is romantic, but it also expresses pain. I believe love and pain are inseparable, one often exists because of the other. My poetry reflects that connection. I never sit down with a specific emotion in mind; I just write, and it naturally falls into those feelings.

J.A.: Beautiful. As an Arab, do you prefer writing in Arabic or English? How does language influence your expression?

A.A.: My first language is Arabic, and I started learning English later in life. Strangely, my first few poems came out in English; it felt more natural at the time, maybe because it was the language I used in my daily life. But recently, I started writing in Arabic, and that was a whole new experience. Words in Arabic convey and carry a different layer of meaning that the English language cannot possibly translate.

J.A.: Do you see poetry as a personal outlet? Do you keep an audience in mind?

A.A.: At first, it was just for me. But I was encouraged to share my writings with others as my poems could connect with others, thus the book. However, I still keep a balance, I write for myself and hope others find something in my words too.

J.A.: Can you tell me more about your book, *Songs of the Silent*?

A.A.: It is a collection of poems I wrote over two years. The poems fall into four categories: love, loss, hope, and despair. In a way, the poems almost feel like they're responding to each other, which was a coincidence. Beyond these categories, the real themes are solitude, unrequited love, and feeling unheard, hence the title.

J.A.: What do you hope people take away from your poetry?

A.A.: I want people to find a sense of home in my words. No matter where they are or what they're going through, I hope my words make them feel heard. I also want to remind people that it is okay to feel deeply.





J.A.: What has been your biggest challenge in this journey?

A.A.: Two things: I don't read as much as I should, and the fear of my work not connect with others. Poetry, to me, is about connection. If it does not reach someone, then what's the point?

J.A.: And how do you personally define success as a poet?

A.A.: If someone connects with my poems, that is success. At first, I feared sharing my poems because I thought, what if no one connects to them? But then I realized, even if only five people do, that is enough. They are worth it.

J.A.: As an Emirati, do you think poetry and literature are becoming more appreciated in your culture today?

A.A.: Poetry used to be essential to our culture, but now it feels like a luxury. And when something becomes a luxury, people don't value it as much. Literature has been commercialized, and that is a shame truly.

J.A.: And for my last question, what kind of legacy do you hope to leave with your poetry?

A.A.: I want people to see the importance of literature, to find a community in it. I hope to be a part of a community that spreads reading and literature to be fundamental to understanding ourselves and connecting with one another.

Many thanks for the
community and the



THREAD BY THREAD: UAE STUDENTS ARE TURNING DORM ROOMS INTO DREAM BRANDS

By Kenzy Amr

On the second floor of the library, under flickering fluorescent lights, Nour Al Marzooqi sketches hoodie concepts in the margins of her physics notebook. "It's the only time I have," she laughs. Between classes, exams, and group projects, she somehow finds space to run Nation Hoods, her handmade streetwear brand.

"It started with one design and a printer. Now I can't keep stock."

Across universities in the UAE, students like Nour are building businesses from scratch, not just for pocket money, but to chase a creative vision and prove to themselves (and the world) that they're capable of more.

From customized jewelry and curated thrift drops to sticker shops and sustainable tote bags, these small brands are becoming a quiet movement, a generation of students stitching dreams into reality.

This is Bigger Than Just Selling Stuff

Maya Al Bawab, a business major, launched her jewelry line *Polished Chaos* after realizing there were no affordable, edgy pieces that matched her style.

"I make stuff I want to wear," she says. "And it turns out, other girls want it too."

She learned how to build a website from YouTube, takes her own product photos with a cracked iPhone, and still turns in all her assignments on time.

That balance, business and academics, isn't easy. For many students, the hustle is thrilling, but also exhausting.

"I love what I do," says Karim Al Masri, who runs a thrift curation page and drops limited-edition pieces every two weeks. "But sometimes I'll be replying to customer DMs during lectures. There's no off switch."

**"I'M RUNNING A BUSINESS
DURING THE DAY AND
PULLING ALL-NIGHTERS
FOR UNI. NO ONE CLAPS
FOR THAT — BUT I'M
CLAPPING FOR MYSELF."**

We're told to wait. We're not waiting anymore

A common thread among these student entrepreneurs is the refusal to postpone their dreams until after graduation.

They're not waiting for permission. They're building it now.

"I didn't want to graduate and then start something," says Areej, a graphic design major who sells original prints and branded mugs on campus. "I wanted to see what I could do while still in this phase of my life."

She says sales are slower during midterms, and sometimes she has to refund orders when life gets chaotic, but her brand feels like her real resume. "Every order teaches me something. Every launch forces me to problem-solve."

Support matters — but it's not always there

Many of these student-run brands operate in isolation. Few universities offer creative business incubators or student entrepreneur showcases. Most success comes through self-promotion, late nights and trial-and-error.

"It's lonely sometimes," says Nour. "I wish there were more spaces to connect with others doing the same thing. But maybe we're building that now, just by showing up."

Still, they dream big. Pop-ups, stockists, even permanent shops someday. "Right now it's hoodies in my dorm closet," Maya says. "But one day? I want to see my brand in Concept in Dubai Mall."

One order, one deadline, one dream at a time

What makes these students different isn't just ambition — it's discipline. It's choosing to pack earrings at 1 a.m. after writing a term paper. It's designing a logo on the bus. It's showing up on campus exhausted, but proud.

They're not asking for recognition, but they deserve it.

"We've been taught to separate our passions from our 'real' work," says Areej Al Jasmi, an abaya business owner. "But for me, this is as real as it gets. I'm building something that reflects who I am. And I'm doing it with whatever time and energy I've got."

Maybe success isn't just about what you do after graduation. Maybe it's about what you dared to start while no one was watching.



Make Memories Last with KODAK: Reminisce Retro-Style

Advertorial

by Mariam J. Massarweh

In an age dominated by digital photography, there is something refreshing and charming about the grainy product of a disposable film camera. Perfect for capturing campus events and non-stop adventures in the socially rich cities of the United Arab Emirates, a KODAK Funsaver 35mm Single-Use Camera is the ideal companion everywhere. The camera has a simple, easy-to-navigate build with three main parts: the viewfinder, the thumbwheel and the shutter button. When combined with its small size, light weight and easy point-and-shoot manner, always having this camera with you is a no-brainer

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a KODAK Funsaver is worth 39,000. The 39 exposures included in the film roll are suitable for both day and night, as a built-in flash makes it the go-to tool for capturing early breakfast plans or a late night celebrations. Since this model is single-use, you do not need to worry about scratches or damaging expensive gear, just toss it in your bag and you're good to go.

The Funsaver is a good way to document an event while maintaining a cool and candid impression in your photos.



Tip: Advance the film by turning the thumbwheel towards the right until it won't turn anymore- that's when the camera is ready to snap another photograph.



Maryam Al Ansari, a senior student and member of the Student Council, says the outcome of the KODAK Funsaver photographs of the university's Global Day are the perfect balance between trendy, sentimental and cool.

You can look at the Funsaver as an engaging instrument. Taking pictures yourself is one thing, but passing the camera around in an event will get everyone involved and result in a collaborative time capsule of a grand day. Leave one on the table at a party, or organize a scavenger hunt with your friends, and let the KODAK Funsaver do the heavylifting and turn your memories into timeless snapshots.





The KODAK Funsaver is not just a product, but an exhilarating experience from start to finish. The process of having the film developed after using up all of the camera's exposures is its own thrilling experience.

The anticipation that follows dropping off your camera to be developed followed with the joyous feeling of receiving the processed photos is just another enjoyable aspect of the KODAK Funsaver experience.

So ditch the filters and fleeting stories and do it old school with the KODAK Funsaver. Whether you're chasing a nostalgic feel or prioritizing simplicity and convenience, this camera has it all. Have the chance to slow down and truly capture the college experience in its rawest, most genuine form.



"I look back at these pictures with so much love. It just feels so raw and human. And the grainy effect gives the pictures a cool retro character." - Maryam Al Ansari.



BLENDING BUSINESS AND DIPLOMACY:

THE JOURNEY OF AHMAD AL MARZOOQI

By Fatima Hassan

Balancing business leadership and international diplomacy isn't something most university students think about, but for Ahmad Al Marzooqi, it's a reality he's been shaping for years. As the Chief Operating Officer of Nitak Investments L.L.C. and an International Studies major at the American University of Sharjah, Ahmad is proving that success isn't about choosing between business and politics—it's about merging them.

Ahmad got his first glimpse into the business world by watching his mother, an entrepreneur, negotiate deals.

"I would sit in on her meetings and watch her work in trading and investment. **That's where it all started for me,**" he recalls.

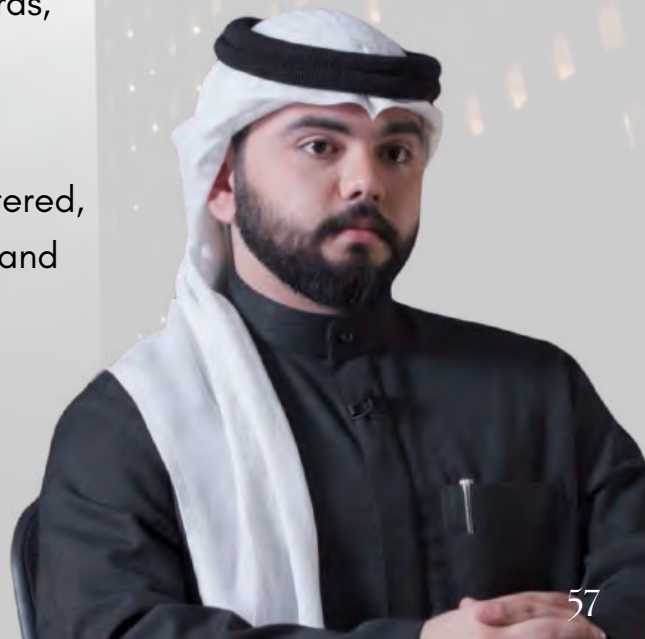
He's now running daily operations at Nitak Investments, a company that has expanded from oil and gas trading into agriculture, industrial ventures, and water management. With an upcoming tank farm and refinery project in Hamriyah Port, Ahmad is already making major business decisions—decisions that weren't always easy.

"Back in 2023, my mother had to travel to the U.S. for medical treatment, and I had to take full control of the company," he explains. At the time, Nitak Investments focused only on oil and gas, but Ahmad saw the need for diversification and made the call to branch out into new industries. **"It was a risk, but looking back, I know it was the right decision."**

When asked to describe his leadership style in three words, Ahmad doesn't hesitate: organization, teamwork and Marzooqi.

"I can't work in a messy environment. If my office is cluttered, my mind is cluttered," he says, explaining why structure and efficiency are at the core of how he operates.

But leadership isn't just about keeping things organized—it's about people. **"Without teamwork, you won't achieve much. If a team isn't motivated or in sync, progress slows down."**



And the third word? Marzooqi. "It's hard to explain, but I feel like my approach is unique to me. My leadership style isn't something I've copied—it's something I've built over time."

This philosophy carried into his time as Student Government President at AUS, where he introduced policies to reinforce structure and hierarchy in student leadership.

"I wanted students to see that leadership isn't just about having a title—it's about understanding how systems work and respecting the process."

While Ahmad has already made an impact in the corporate world, his long-term vision extends beyond business. His goal? To serve as a diplomat for the UAE.

His major in International Studies is more than just an academic pursuit—it's a foundation for what he sees as his future in global diplomacy. "Understanding international relations, global conflicts, and how organizations operate is essential for diplomacy," he explains.

But what makes him different from others aspiring for the same career? His business mindset. Ahmad believes that politics and business are deeply connected, and having expertise in both is an advantage. "If you understand how business and investments work, you can make smarter diplomatic decisions. Political instability affects economies, and knowing where the risks are helps you make better choices."

One of his biggest ambitions is getting into the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy, the UAE's premier training ground for future diplomats. It's competitive, but Ahmad is confident in what he brings to the table. **"They get hundreds of applicants, but I believe my experience—not just my grades—will set me apart."**

When asked which diplomat he'd love to shadow for a day, his answer is quick: Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs. "He embodies what I see as the ideal diplomat. I'd love to learn from him."

Between running a company, studying full-time, and preparing for a diplomatic career, Ahmad has a packed schedule. So how does he balance everything?

"It's all about knowing your priorities without letting one thing take over your life," he says. "Your education is important, your leadership roles are important, but at the end of the day, you can't let them take over your personal life either."

As a university student, Ahmad has already built an impressive career—and he's just getting started. Whether in the boardroom or on the global stage, his blend of business and diplomacy is shaping a future where he's ready to make a real impact.



By Fatima Hassan

Q&A WITH AHMAD AL MARZOOQI

You're currently the Chief Operating Officer at Nitak Investment L.L.C. Can you tell us more about your role and what the company focuses on?

Nitak Investments is a firm that initially started as an oil and gas company but later evolved into a general investment company. We focus mainly on agricultural business, oil and gas trading, industrial ventures, and water management. We are also in the process of building a large tank farm/refinery in Hamriyah Port. As the Chief Operating Officer, my role is to oversee all company operations.

What initially drew you to investment and business strategy, and how has your perspective evolved over time?

It all started with my mother, a designer and an entrepreneur. This investment firm, Nitak Investments, is owned by her. When I was around 10 or 11 years old, I used to attend meetings with my mother, witnessing her work in trading, negotiations, and discussions with people. That's where my passion for entrepreneurship and investments began.

If you had to describe your leadership style in three words, what would they be and why?

It's difficult to narrow it down to just three words, but I would say organization, because I personally don't like a messy office environment with bags on the floor and papers scattered around. A well-organized space helps with focus and efficiency. Then teamwork, because if you're working with a group of people and there's no chemistry or teamwork, then you won't achieve as much as you would with a cooperative and motivated team. Finally, Marzooqi, because I feel like my approach to both my professional and personal life is quite unique.

What's the most challenging decision you've had to make in a leadership role, and how did you navigate it?

It's funny because I recently discussed this with my mother. Back in 2023, my mother had health issues and had to travel to the U.S. for treatment, leaving me in charge of the company. At that time, we were solely focused on oil and gas trading, but I had to make the tough decision to expand into other areas. It was difficult, but I'm happy with how things turned out.

Studying International Studies equips me with the skills necessary to become a diplomat. It enhances my ability to think diplomatically, stay organized, understand global conflicts, and grasp how international organizations operate.

Having business knowledge alongside an understanding of politics—both domestic and international—helps in making strategic decisions. For example, knowing which sectors might face political challenges allows for smarter investments and minimizes risks to major assets.

The academy receives hundreds, if not thousands, of applications. I believe what sets me apart isn't just my GPA or scores but the experiences I've gained and the impact I've made since high school. I know that being myself, Ahmad Al Marzooqi, will help me stand out.

I would love to shadow Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs. He is my role model when it comes to diplomacy because he embodies what I see as the perfect diplomat.

My biggest advice would be to ensure that balancing both doesn't negatively impact other aspects of life. As a student, you need to focus on your studies. As someone in public service, you need to be dedicated to your role. However, neither should come in the way of the other and sacrifice your personal well-being and private life.

You're pursuing International Studies at the American University of Sharjah, how do you see this degree shaping your future career in diplomacy?

As a future diplomat for the UAE, how do you plan to merge your business knowledge with international relations?

You're aiming for the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy, what do you think will be the toughest part of the selection process, and how are you preparing for it?

If you could shadow any UAE diplomat for a day, who would it be and why?

And what advice would you give to university students who want to balance business leadership and public service?

THE MANY FACES OF HOME: HOW PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS DEFINE IT

By Dana Bouzo

How can one word carry so many different meanings? For some, "home" is a physical place filled with memories and familiarity. For others, it's an emotion, a feeling of safety and belonging that transcends geography. To understand the diverse definitions of home, I conducted an interview with three individuals: one who is living in his home country, one who is living away from her home country, and one who never had the chance to visit his home country. Their stories show that home does not have a fixed meaning and is far more than a location. For those who still reside in their home country, the sense of home is deeply tied to both place and memory.

Sarah Alali defines home as "a mélange of people and memories, a place that has seen versions of me that I may have forgotten." Although living in her homeland makes her more attached to it, it also comes with a sour realization.

"Living here has made me feel more connected to the sense of home, but in a painful way. Seeing the places without the people or the life they once witnessed makes me feel like I'm only sightseeing," Alali shares.

Home, to Sarah, isn't only a matter of place but people who used to make it alive. Without them, such familiar places turn into echoes of the past, reminders of what had been.

The Longing for a Place Left Behind

For those who have left their home country, the idea of home becomes a more complex and nostalgic longing.

Zeina Elsayed defines home as "where I'm with people who speak like me, understand my jokes, listen to the same music, eat the same food, and share the same experiences."

Yet, she admitted that even when surrounded by fellow nationals abroad, something still feels missing.

"Many don't have the same background or deep connection to the culture, so it doesn't fully feel like home," says Elsayed.

Zeina's sense of belonging has changed as a result of being apart.

The Nile River from Zamalek, Egypt





Between the Clouds, 30,000 feet above the ground

“Belonging isn’t just about a location; it’s about familiarity and connection. Even when I was younger in school, I never really felt like I belonged. I was the only Egyptian in my class, and they used to make fun of my accent, so I stopped speaking Arabic to them altogether and just stuck to English.”



Despite these difficulties, Zeina finds comfort in small, everyday things, a common language overheard in a crowd, the taste of food that reminds her of her childhood, or a simple conversation with someone who understands where she comes from.

“People always say you can make a home anywhere, but honestly, I never could. No matter where I am, I’m always waiting for the time I get to go back,” says Elsayed.



Dubai International Airport, UAE

Searching for Home Without a Map

But what happens when home is a place you have never been to? For those who have never visited their homeland, defining home becomes an even more personal and abstract experience.

“People always say you can make a home anywhere, but honestly, I never could. No matter where I am, I’m always waiting for the time I get to go back.”



One interviewee described his definition of home as both simple and complicated, “Home for me is my actual home, like the apartment I live in with my family,” says Sami Nahas.

Yet, his connection to his homeland exists in a space between belonging and distance.

I feel a connection to my home country, but at the same time, it's not actually my home. I imagine going there, and I feel like I would be a stranger because I know nothing about the streets, the coffee shops, or the nature beyond what I imagine when my parents share their experience."



"This disconnect becomes even more apparent during cultural and religious celebrations.

"Most of my friends regularly visit their home country, especially during Eid or special occasions. Sometimes it touches me when people say they're going back home, I can't relate to that conversation," says Nahas.

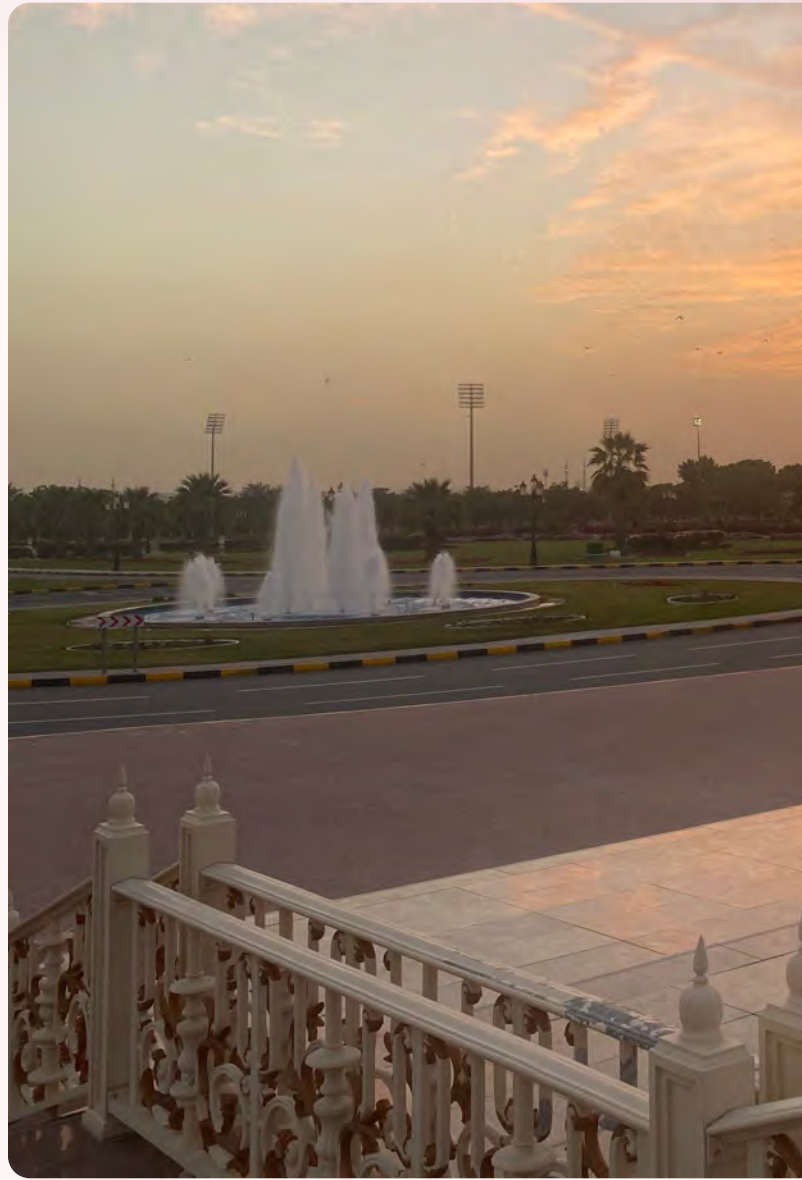
Being almost binational, he feels lost in translation.

"I've just been staying in a country that I don't have citizenship for since forever, but at the same time, it's not entirely my home," says Nahas.

But home, for him, is not something that can be confined to borders or documents.

"Sometimes, home for me is just a person who brings a warm feeling to my heart and makes my soul and body feel safe. It's not always four walls and a roof or just a location on a map," says Nahas.

Through these conversations, one thing that is made clear is that home is not a place that is fixed.



American University of Sharjah, UAE.

To some, it is a childhood community, to others a distant memory they hold in their heart. It may be found in people, in fleeting moments, or in something as simple as the scent of a comforting meal.

Home is not fixed, but rather forever changing by experience, emotion, and time. Perhaps the true definition of home is something that changes, like the people who seek it out, shaped by the life they live and the memories they hold on to.

From Doubt to Dedication: Professor Krystie Wills' Journey in Language Education

By Myia Hamed



Professor Wills earned her master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at Michigan State University. She then went on to teach at the University of Tunis and Indiana State University before joining the American University of Sharjah in 2001. At AUS, she teaches in the Achievement Academy Bridge Program, an initiative to help students improve their English language skills and prepare them for their majors. She has taught courses that develop language skills and strategies for passing exams like TOEFL and IELTS.

"Teaching wasn't just a job for me; it was a commitment to my students," Professor Wills says.

Initially drawn to French, Wills pursued it as her major, captivated by the language's elegance and complexity. She never saw herself as an instructor but rather envisioned earning a PhD and working in academia. As her master's studies progressed, she realized that the fluency in French she desired was not within reach.

"I wasn't sure which direction to take when I started university," says Professor Krystie Wills, a veteran language educator. "I saw everyone around me confidently following their paths, and I was uncertain about mine."

"I started learning too late," she reflects. "The language felt just beyond my grasp."

This realization led to a redirection in her career. She found herself teaching introductory French courses, which was unexpected, yet rewarding. "Teaching felt so natural," she recalls, "especially when a student grasped a concept, which sparked a thrill within me." It was at this moment that she knew she had found her passion. Although this passion for teaching hits closer to home than expected, her father, a history and physical education teacher, and her mother, a nurse, are the ones who truly showed her the importance of education.

Throughout her career, Professor Wills has developed two core teaching principles: learning should be engaging, and variety is essential. "If you do the same thing every day, students become disengaged," she says. To keep her students actively involved, she uses creative methods like spelling competitions and movement-based exercises. "These activities get students excited, and that makes all the difference," she explains.

However, in today's digital age, Wills has noticed a challenge in keeping students engaged. "It's easy for students to rely on technology like autocorrect to fix their spelling errors," she says. "That's why I focus on methods that help them internalize what they're learning."

The most rewarding aspect of teaching for Professor Wills is witnessing her students' transformations. "Some students come in shy and unsure, while others think they already know everything. But over time, they all experience growth," she says. "It's incredible to see the shift when they stop doubting themselves and start confidently using what they've learned."

She recalls a student who had recently completed military training. "He always struggled with arriving on time," she shares. "I made the rules clear, and by the end of the semester, he turned things around." For Wills, teaching goes beyond language skills: "It's about helping students develop responsibility as well."

"It's incredible to see the shift when they stop doubting themselves and start confidently using what they've learned."

In addition, her international teaching experiences in Tunisia have broadened her perspective on language learning.

"Personality plays an important role," she says. "The students who aren't afraid to make mistakes are the ones who learn the fastest."

"The students who aren't afraid to make mistakes are the ones who learn the fastest."

Still, the profession is not without its challenges. Wills explains that bridging cultural gaps remains a challenge. "No matter how hard you try, there are always some gaps," she says. One student from Ethiopia, in particular, stands out in her memory. She explains how he always had trouble integrating into the classroom culture. "I still think about that student and wonder if I could have done more to help."

When asked for advice on learning English, Professor Wills offers a powerful message: "It's not magic. It's about persistence." She encourages students to find study partners, practice consistently, and understand that language fluency takes dedication.

Despite the challenges that come with teaching, Wills' passion for her work remains steady. "When students say disappointingly, 'Class is over already?' I know I've done my job."

Currently, Wills is working toward a UK-based teaching credential. While her future plans remain flexible, one thing is certain: her passion for teaching will continue to shape her career.

"Teaching isn't just about sharing knowledge; it's about giving students the confidence to use what they've learned."

BREAKING BARRIERS:

WOMEN IN MALE-DOMINATED FIELDS

BY FATIMA HASSAN

Lubna Ahmad, a technical manager in engineering, remembers the moment someone pointed out what she hadn't noticed herself.

"I worked as a contractor for 14 years, and one day in 2013, during a business meeting, I briefly stepped outside. The security guard asked me how it felt to be the only woman in the meeting. I didn't understand what she meant, so I went back inside to count, and she was right... I hadn't even noticed I was in a room with ten men."

That moment stayed with her, not because she felt out of place, but because it reminded her how often women in male-dominated fields are quietly outnumbered.

In sectors like engineering, architecture and computer science, being the "only woman in the room" is still far too common. And while these women have learned to push through, the pressure to constantly prove themselves never fully goes away.



Across industries, the numbers paint a clear picture. According to a 2023 UNESCO report, women make up just 28% of engineering graduates and only 22% of AI professionals worldwide. In the tech sector, women hold just 26% of computing-related jobs and 5% of executive positions globally.

Even in fields like architecture, where the gender balance seems more even on the surface, only 17% of licensed architects are women, and far fewer are in leadership.

Maya Bsaibes is one of them. She leads the Interior Design department, a space where women may be the majority, but at the top? She's the only woman in a team of eight principals.

She doesn't lead by blending in; she leads by setting the tone.



"In some cultures or nationalities, accepting instructions from a woman isn't always easy. But if you confidently stand your ground, they'll learn to respect your authority."

Her experiences are echoed by Rasha Hammad, a Senior Project Architect who has led teams and projects but still finds her authority questioned at times. "In my current position, men have responded well to my instructions, but there have definitely been cases where they have resisted orders under my leadership."

Rasha's advice to younger women entering the field reflects both resilience and caution.

"I was hesitant about choosing this major because I worried that I might be the only woman among a handful of men. But then I realized—if pursuing this meant I could encourage more women to follow this path, it would be worth it."



"If I could offer one piece of advice to young women entering male-dominated fields, it would be this: never lose touch with your feminine energy in the pursuit of leadership."

"Entering such fields, be prepared to teach men not to overstep their boundaries, because they will certainly try to."

The pressure to prove oneself starts early—and for Dana Sherif, a computer science engineering student, it's already a part of her academic life.

"I was hesitant about choosing this major because I worried that I might be the only woman among a handful of men. But then I realized—if pursuing this meant I could encourage more women to follow this path, it would be worth it."

She wasn't wrong to expect that imbalance. According to the World Economic Forum's 2022 Global Gender Gap Report, women make up less than 20% of engineering and computer science students worldwide. In some regions, the percentage is even lower.

"It can be a bit demotivating when I'm placed in a group project and it's all men," Sherif says. "But you get used to it, and once you demonstrate that you're knowledgeable and not just some silly girl, they'll start treating you as an equal."

Her experience in labs has mirrored that pattern—starting with skepticism, then slowly earning respect.

"I've definitely faced situations in the lab where men assumed I'd rather sit back, relax, and depend on them to do the work, when in reality, I was actually eager and fully capable of contributing."



An engineering class that was once filled with men only

Still, Sherif's vision isn't limited to just fitting in—she's aiming to lead.

"My career goal is to pursue a master's degree and a PhD in computer and electrical engineering. I want to produce impactful research and encourage more women to join the field through my publications."

For women already deep in their careers, like Lubna, years of experience have taught her to tune out comparison and focus on her own path.

"I always remind myself that I am my only competition, that's how I stay motivated," she says. "Lean into your strengths rather than focusing on competing with anyone else, because no matter your gender, the result is the name of the game."

Their stories are a reminder that while the landscape is slowly shifting, much of the weight of change still falls on the shoulders of the women themselves. They are students, engineers, designers and architects, but more than anything, they are proof that leadership, talent and authority aren't defined by gender.

They're not asking for space—they're making it.

replenishing sustainability's impact: yousef hamed's journey



By Myia Hamed

Yousef Hamed is the founder of Tree-Plenish at his high school. He is a senior planning to attend Stanford in the fall of 2025. Currently, he is working on more projects to drive his plans for a more sustainable future.

You are involved in sustainability. What was your first inspiration when getting started?

When I was in middle school, I loved visiting the fire department. They had a park in the back, and I'd often wander there to learn about how wildfires impact forests. That sparked my interest in sustainability and planting trees. I also watched *The Lorax* a lot because it focused on the consequences of neglecting the environment. Even during the snowy winters in Chicago, I'd visit Christmas tree farms, fascinated by the lifespan of the trees. I understood that the process of harvesting for the next year wasn't easy, and learning about that cycle really started my passion for sustainability.

You started Tree-Plenish at your high school; how did you get started and what is it?

Actually, I am the Environmental Club president at my high school. One of the activities we do is community service. I take the club outside, and we pick up plastic and any litter in the area. We then either recycle or throw away the trash. At first, a lot of students did it just for community service hours, but then they started coming because they grew a passion for becoming kinder to our planet. This showed all of us that when we start engaging with nature, we start loving it. For example, when we go on hikes as a club, we begin to enjoy nature and our environment, becoming motivated to actually care for it. These activities led me to want to do even more. I felt like I could double my impact, so I started looking for sustainability activities to do in our community. I didn't find anything tangible, and then one day I saw an ad on TikTok, and that's what really got the whole Tree-Plenish initiative started.

What is Tree-plenish and what was your lifestyle like before Tree-Plenish?

Tree-Plenish is a non-profit organization whose mission is to create more sustainable schools by planting trees to offset the amount of paper schools' use. It also empowers students to create a sustainable future by planting trees in their own communities. This is a little funny—many times, my mom would say I'm wasting my time on TikTok, but that's actually how I found out about Tree-Plenish. I saw an ad about how you can plant trees in your community. I emailed the provided contact, joined a Zoom, secured the funding, and the rest is history. My lifestyle before was involved, but not as much as I wanted it to be. I'd participate in community cleanups or beach cleanups, but I was never really focused on planting trees. Overall, I'd say I was involved, but Tree-Plenish was the extra step that allowed me to be even more impactful and sustainable in my community.

Funding was necessary in making Tree-Plenish start. How did you convince people to donate?

First, I held a meeting after school for people who were interested. The turnout was about fifty students, which was a pretty good number. Once they were gathered, I explained what Tree-Plenish is. You know, when you don't know what something is about, you wouldn't care, so I had to hold a session to explain what I was doing. Once I found a group of people who cared and shared a common goal, I was able to convince them to donate. As a team, we raised \$300. It was a shocking number, especially because I was skeptical about whether anyone would care about the initiative at all.

How many saplings did you get with the donation money?

We got 10 saplings with the donation money. I don't even think they all survived, and that wasn't the entire point. I just wanted to leave a mark on my school—that's the most important part to me. I don't think I was expecting the club to grow or develop into something much bigger than me and a couple of friends, so I was really happy with the outcome we achieved. I'm sure the growth will increase significantly in the coming years. My generation is open-minded and willing to try new things, so we definitely have the potential to expand the club and reach even more success in the future.



Yousef is the founder of "Tree-Plenish" (Courtesy of Yousef Hamed)

How long did it take to plant the saplings? What were the type of people who participated in the planting?

It took about four hours to plant, and I think the planting itself wasn't hard—it was figuring out how to do it effectively that was the challenge. We really had to dig deep holes to give the saplings enough room to grow. At first, as I mentioned before, the group planting was mostly my friends, but word got out, and it became a much more diverse group. I don't think we would have been as successful without that diversity. Not only did we enjoy it, but I felt like everyone came together, regardless of who they were, for one goal: to help the community.

You planted the saplings; how many grew and how did it impact the community?

About six saplings grew into trees. We have something at the back of the school called the Environmental Cabin. A lot of trees were being cut down because of construction, but when we planted, new growth started happening, and the Environmental Cabin didn't look as bare anymore. The progress is slow, but it's still progress. When I was in APES (AP Environmental Science), I overheard students talking about the new growth. This warmed my heart, knowing that I wasn't the only one who cared—not just the people in the club, but everyone who wanted to see improvement. They were proud of it, right along with me and our members.

Do you know if Tree-Plenish will become a yearly event, and why do you think it would be important to carry on with the initiative?

It will definitely become a yearly event. Firstly, I already know underclassmen who will carry it on. Secondly, it's important to look at the impact it's already had. The Environmental Cabin has new growth, and the whole school has been talking about it. I wouldn't say it's been perfect, as that takes time, but it still improved the environment and had a positive impact.

What would you say to people who don't care about our environment because they believe it isn't personally disturbing their own lifestyle?

That's a great question; one I've been asked before. Often, humans are materialistic, thinking that what's in front of us right now will last forever. Unfortunately, that's untrue—if we don't take care of something, it won't last. Everyone is part of the issue when they refuse to believe they have a role in sustainability and protecting our environment. At the end of the day, we'll all pay the consequences together, even if some of us don't care about how it impacts the rest.

You mentioned how you started Tree-Plenish in the United States; my final question would be what advice would you give to someone who wants to get involved here in the UAE?

I don't believe Tree-Plenish is available in the UAE, but I can say this: start somewhere. You don't need a title or a club to be sustainable. Follow your truth, and that is going to lead to you making an impact. I know that if you really want to make an improvement, you can. My basic advice that is a little cliché but very valuable, is to just start somewhere. You never know what positive impact you may have if you never try.



THE FIRST STEP IS *Never Glamorous*

By Kenzy Amr

Starting a business as a university student rarely looks glamorous. It's usually a borrowed laptop, a messy notebook, and a stubborn belief that you can do something different.

The early days are filled with late nights, failed pitches, small wins that no one notices, and plenty of self-doubt. But here's the truth: you don't wait to feel ready. You start before you're ready. You build the plane while flying it. Every mistake, every awkward conversation, every risk that doesn't work out becomes a building block for what's coming next.



The first step isn't glamorous. It's typing the first word and daring to keep going.

YOUR FUTURE ISN'T
WAITING TO BE HANDED
TO YOU. IT'S WAITING
FOR YOU TO BUILD IT.

Student entrepreneurs live between two worlds, balancing deadlines with dreams, exams with experiments. It's raw; it's exhausting, and it's full of unknowns. But it's also where real resilience is born. It's where future CEOs are forged, not in boardrooms, but in quiet moments when no one is watching, and you choose to keep going.

If you have an idea that keeps pulling at you, trust it. Your first step won't be perfect. It won't be comfortable. But it will be powerful. Success isn't about having all the answers; it's about daring to begin, daring to fail, and daring to believe that something bigger is possible.



By Kassem Al Assadi

THE UNFAZED ROAD BEAST:

Ford Raptor

It's almost one year since the devastating floods in Dubai. After a record high rainfall, most of the city was flooded, leaving motorists stranded as they awaited help. This was also the day I got to experience the true power of the Ford Raptor while navigating the flooded Dubai roads.

On the evening of 15th April 2024, everyone in Dubai was worried about the heavy pounding rain. I had seen meteorological warnings on my phone earlier in the day, but never paid much attention. Perhaps if the notification specified that the rain would go on for 24 hours, I would have taken it more seriously. Regardless, the heavy downpour caught me at one of my new favorite spots in the city.

While I had contemplated the probability of a heavy downpour, it was never in my wildest dreams that there would be floods in a city as organized as Dubai. Besides, all roads are tarmacked and well-structured, hence most city residents felt assured that any weather would not affect transportation.

Earlier, some of my friends had a good time joking about the necessity of me having a Ford Raptor in Dubai. They had, however, begun changing the tune after we were stuck for more than an hour after reports came in that the city roads were flooded. Even as I decided to leave where I was and attempt to drive home, I had doubts about this monstrous beauty and whether we would make it home.

The Ford Raptor is an aggressive and powerful truck that is primarily designed for off-road use. Nevertheless, it is adaptable to any terrain as it features different drive modes. The Raptor is also designed with a wide and high body that complements its distinctive specs for any type of terrain. The exterior body is sturdy and bold, equipped with 2.5-inch FOX Live Valve shocks for suspension, with a ground clearance of over 10 inches. The 35-inch tires of this truck support movement on different surfaces and drive modes, complementing the complex suspension system.

The sight of my Ford Raptor in the parking lot compared to other vehicles was outstanding amongst them. The parking lot was already covered in water, and most vehicles' wheels were partially submerged. My Ford Raptor, however, was still clear above water. I actually had an easy time getting onto it compared to wading through the flooded parking space.





As I turned the ignition, I caught sight of my friend eager to see if the engine would turn on. The engine hummed to life with no difficulty at all; I topped that with a prolonged rev to pass the message that we were okay. There would be no better opportunity to test the much-hailed 4X4 feature than when I sat in my Raptor in the parking lot. Particularly, this F-150 Raptor is equipped with a full-time 4x4 system and a 3.0L V6 engine that generates a significant amount of horsepower and torque.

According to Ford Motors, the engine is also eco-friendly despite the strength it possesses. With the full-time 4x4 mode engaged, I drove out of the area without any complications. That evening, the region was heavily flooded as many vehicles were half-submerged.

While it was in my best interest to get home safe, I wanted to help someone before the situation got worse. For a while, nobody flagged me for help as I waded through the flooded streets, until I got to one of the colleges in Dubai. The first man who flagged me was excited to see my Raptor. Seemingly, he was prepared to get towed as he had already set his tow rope and safety chains on top of his car.

The strength of the Ford Raptor is indeed unmatched by regular off-road vehicles. It has a towing capacity of up to 8700 pounds and a maximum payload of 1400 pounds. I proved this because I towed two other 4x4 vehicles apart from the first driver's car space.

At some point, I was just flexing the capabilities of my sturdy truck as I offered help to stranded pedestrians who could not weather the waters. I carried some in my cab while two were desperate enough to climb onto the bed of my F-150 Raptor. In addition to power, the F-150 Raptor is fitted with impressive technology for safety and comfort. For instance, I could barely feel any rainfall while in the truck's cabin. The interior cabin design features ample leg room, coupled with plenty of storage I had second thoughts about getting out of the cab's comfort to help tow the last vehicle I encountered. The bold fog lights and headlights functioned seamlessly, lighting up some of the uncertain sections of the streets.

After several hours of unwavering high performance from my F-150 Raptor truck, I had no regrets over my choice of wheels. At around 8 pm that evening, I had parked my truck at my apartment, unfazed that no amount of flood would stop the Ford Raptor.



Matcha Got Goin' On?: A Ranking of all Iced Matcha Lattes On or Close to the AUS Campus

by Mariam J. Massarweh

Matcha has become the latest buzzword in caffeine talk. This trendy beverage comes all the way from Japan, and its caffeine content helps many students focus in the morning and keep awake during all-nighters. It also acts as a special sweet treat to reward yourself for that 90% on your accounting midterm.

Here is a **worst-to-best ranking** of where to get the best iced matcha lattes on or near the American University of Sharjah campus:

10. CHLOE, MAIN PLAZA, AUS

9. BAREED, CHEMISTRY BUILDING, AND ENGINEERING SCIENCES BUILDING, AUS

8. BACKYARD, ENGINEERING SCIENCES BUILDING, AUS

7. POINT 7, MUWAILEH COMMERCIAL

6. ONEMORE, HUMANITIES & SCIENCES BUILDING, AUS

5. RACKS, LIBRARY, AUS

4. HOOF, ALJADA

3. SESAME, ALJADA

2. CLARO, MUWAILEH COMMERCIAL

1. CULT/MATCHA BY TRIO, ALJADA



Hoof's Iced Matcha Latte

Whether you are a matcha purist or just choosing to try out something new, you will find an iced matcha latte waiting for you in every corner of this campus. Though university life can be hectic and busy, never forget to get yourself a green-colored goodie every now and then; and now you know exactly where to find your next favorite cup.



Backyard's Matcha Cloud (left) and Iced Matcha Latte (right)



Chef Eyad: Redefining Middle Eastern Dining in Al Jada, Sharjah

By Kassem Al Assadi

The main dining section is designed to give you comfort, with plush seating and spacious tables arranged perfectly for family gatherings. Also, there is a Bakery Corner that serves Ropi Roti's fresh buns and pastries in a glass display, which fills the air with irresistible aroma.



In the heart of Sharjah's dynamic Al Jada district lies Chef Eyad Restaurant, a gastronomic haven that has quickly become a favorite among food enthusiasts. Managed by the visionary Chef Eyad, this establishment is more than just a restaurant; it's a celebration of Middle Eastern heritage, innovation and hospitality.

Chef Eyad's unique three-in-one concept sets it apart, combining a full-service restaurant with Ropi Roti, a beloved bakery, and Oregal Cafe, a specialty coffeehouse. This power trio is offering the guests an unparalleled dining journey, whether they're craving a lavish traditional meal, a quick artisanal bun, or a premium coffee experience.

Step inside, and you're greeted by an atmosphere that blends contemporary elegance with Arabesque charm. The interior features are warm with earthy tones, intricate wooden accents and soft lighting, creating an inviting and intimate setting.

The restaurant's menu is a masterpiece of Levantine and Gulf cuisine, crafted with meticulous attention to detail. It has signature dishes such as brisket; it is smoked for a few hours using wood to make it, and it is served with secret spices, a drizzle of honey, and barbecue sauce, and it also comes with unlimited rice on the side.

The Mixed Grill Platter features succulent skewers of kofta, chicken tikka and lamb chops, grilled to perfection and served with garlic sauce and grilled vegetables. Every dish that you order is served with complimentary dishes of fattoush and hummus.

Born from Chef Eyad's passion for baking, Ropi Roti offers a selection of artisanal buns and pastries that have garnered a cult following.

Then there is Oregal Café: Where Coffee Meets Craftsmanship. No meal is complete without a cup from Oregal Café, which serves specialty Arabic coffee and premium espresso blends.

Coffee Highlights:

- **Traditional Arabic Coffee - Brewed with cardamom and served with dates.**
- **Karak Chai Latte - A creamy, spiced tea latte with a modern twist.**
- **Iced Kunafa Latte - A unique fusion of coffee and kunafa flavors.**

Must-Try Buns:

- **Za'atar & Cheese Bun** - A savory delight with a perfect balance of herbs and melted cheese
- **Nutella-Stuffed Bun** - A sweet treat that's crispy outside and gooey inside.
- **Sesame Seed Bun** - A classic, best enjoyed warm with a dab of butter.

Chef Eyad's journey from a local baker to a celebrated restaurateur is a story of passion and perseverance. His commitment to quality and authenticity is reflected in every dish.

The restaurant prioritizes local farmers and suppliers, ensuring fresh, seasonal ingredients while supporting the community.

Whether you're a foodie, coffee lover, or just looking for a great meal, Chef Eyad Restaurant, Ropi Roti, and Oregal Café deliver an unforgettable experience. From the first bite of their signature mandi to the last sip of Oregal's karak chai.

Every moment here is crafted with care.



Balancing Business, Academics, and a Passion for Competitive Swimming

By Kassem Alassadi

"The most important lesson in the restaurant industry is making sure that the customer leaves the restaurant happy. No matter what, make sure the customers are given the best and most respected treatment to ensure their happiness after leaving the restaurant," said Wassef Zaid, a dedicated and ambitious individual with a passion for business and sports.

Wassef Zaid is a master in balancing business, academics, and a passion for Competitive Swimming. At the age of 22 years, he is currently pursuing a degree in International Business at a college in Sharjah, while also playing a key role in his family's restaurant business, where he has gained hands-on experience over the past three years.

His inspiration to pursue a degree in International Business stemmed from his parents, who both held master's degrees in business; therefore, he took it as a motivating factor as he was growing up. His father inspired him more after working with him for the last three years in their family's restaurant, and he loved it so much. He was sure that international business was what he wanted to pursue

Zaid's family's restaurant shaped his understanding of business. Being close to the owner of the business, which is his father, opened Zaid's eyes to lots of things in business, especially how to run it professionally, how to make fair deals, and how to speak in the business language.

It helped him in ways that working somewhere else might've not helped him. He hopes to continue with the restaurant business in the future because he enjoys it for what it's worth.

"Building a good name for a restaurant is not easy, it will have many competitors, but I enjoy it for what it's worth. I see myself always continuing in this business field."

Wassef Zaid. A master in balancing business, academics, and a passion for Competitive Swimming.



Studying at a university college contributed to Zaid's career aspirations of being an international businessman as it showed him how great his major is and how useful it is in our daily activities. The college is making sure that they always reach their goals, whether by seeking others who have made it in life, or the respected professors who are helping their students become the best.

Beyond his academic and professional commitments, Wassef has a strong background in swimming, in which he has competed for eight years, including at the prestigious Hamdan Complex. Through his specialization in freestyle and water polo, he has demonstrated discipline, teamwork, and perseverance—qualities that continue to shape his journey.

"Swimming is a beautiful sport that may require so much teamwork in competitions. So, building this trust between myself and my teammates will win us our matches, which will reflect heavily on our business world. Relying and trusting on good teammates/members will help so much in our lives." Zaid said. "Many swimming skills have helped me tremendously in my daily life—stronger arms, stronger grip, healthier breathing, and always feeling refreshed." He added.

"So, building this trust between myself and my teammates will win us our matches, which will reflect heavily on our business world. "

Balancing between his studies, work and personal life did not come easy for Zaid. It took him some time to learn the balance between work, studies, and his personal life, which he eventually managed. For instance, he goes to university in the morning hours, and later he heads straight to work at around 9 or 10 p.m. He doesn't have off days, since he can take off whenever he feels.

Zaid has also faced challenges in both sports and business, which have made him stronger and more experienced. In sports, it took him time to perfect his timing in freestyle. He was also always letting himself down when he saw others performing better. But with enough practice and a stable mentality, he easily achieved it over time and became better. In business, working with people older than him by many years was challenging at the beginning. He felt lost and nervous initially but over time, he learned how to blend in with the employees and work together.

In the next five years, Wassef Zaid sees himself with a great family and a great business that he directs.



Q&A With Wassef Zaid

By Kassem Alassadi

1. What inspired you to pursue a degree in International Business?

My inspiration to pursue a degree in International Business was originally from the fact that both of my parents masters in business, so this was my motive as I was growing, but three years ago when I started working with my father, I was sure that international business is what I love doing and what I want to pursue in.

3. What is the most important lesson you've learned from working in the restaurant industry?

Making sure that the customer leaves the restaurant happy is the main goal of ours. No matter what, we need to make sure our respected customer is given the best and most respected treatment to ensure their happiness after leaving the restaurant.

5. Have you ever had a particular experience at work or in your studies that convinced you that this is what's best for you as well?

Yes, without a doubt. Everything fell into place about three years ago when I began working closely with my father in our family business. I learned how to deal with clients, lead employees, and close agreements by being actively involved in actual business operations. I became aware of how much I enjoy this field after participating in those everyday struggles and witnessing how things operated behind the scenes. I was convinced that international business was the proper career route for me after that practical experience.

7. Do you see yourself continuing in the restaurant industry in the future?

Yes, building a good name for a restaurant is not easy, it will have many competitors, but I enjoy it for what it's worth. I see myself always continuing in this business field.

1.9. How has studying at Skyline University College contributed to your career aspirations?

SUC is such a great university that showed me how great my major is and how useful it is in our daily life. SUC is making sure we always reach our goals, whether by seeking others who have made it in life, or the respected professors that are helping their students become the best.

2. How has working in your family's restaurant shaped your understanding of business?

Being close to the owner of the business, which is my father, has opened my eyes into lots of things in business, how to run it professionally, how to make deals fairly, how to speak in the business language. It helped me in ways that working somewhere else might've not helped me.

4. How do you balance your studies, work, and personal life?

It took me some time to learn the balance between work, studies, and my personal life. But over time I learnt how to manage it properly, for instance, I go to university from 9-2, from there I head straight to work until around 9 or 10 pm. I don't have off days, since I can take off whenever I feel. But I don't use that to my advantage since I am working to earn, but most importantly, *LEARN*.

6. What challenges have you faced in both sports and business, and how did you overcome them?

In sports, it took me time to perfect my timing in freestyle, was always letting myself down when seeing others performing better, since I knew I could do better. But with enough practice and stable mentality I easily achieved it over time.

In business, working with people older than me by many years was challenging at the beginning, I felt lost and nervous when I started, but over time I learnt how to blend in with the employees and work together.

8. What skills from swimming have helped you in your daily life?

Many skills have helped me tremendously in my daily life—stronger arms, stronger grip, healthier breathing, and always feeling refreshed.

10. Where do you see yourself in the next five years?

I see myself leading my father's business and helping him grow it more, and opening more branches worldwide, in addition to being married with a wonderful family.

BACKS

Exclusive for AUS Students



**Scan to explore
the fun**



