

**Service Quality Task Team**  
**Reports on the President's Excellence Award Finalists**  
**2008**

**Helmi El Khatib, Manager of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE), Faculty of Engineering**

Mr. Helmi El-Khatib is currently the manager of the Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) laboratories which consist of five branches (Materials, Soil Mechanics, Transportation, Environmental, and Hydraulics). He joined the CEE labs in 1988, became the supervisor in 1991, and his title was changed to manager in 2007. Helmi is in charge of a multitude of tasks such as: preparing/directing educational lab sessions; coordinating lab functions and maintaining equipments and tools; supervising service testing for outside clients; controlling inventory, planning budgets, and ordering equipments and supplies; supporting department faculty education and research; supervising lab technicians and staff.

Helmi has been originally nominated by the CEE Department chairman, Dr. Isam Kaysi, who is his direct supervisor. His nomination has been supported by a large number of different constituents, namely: undergraduate students; graduate/research students; faculty members who are specific faculty lab supervisors, lab researchers, ex-chairmen, outside customers, professional and academic alumni ... His letters of support which are present in his portfolio invariably praise his courtesy and the satisfaction from his services, his ability to handle work under difficult circumstances, his help and innovation in making their experimental work achievable, his dedication and going beyond the call of duty, etc... The evidences of his service excellence and customer satisfaction span over many years, and some of the "supporters" mentioned their experience with him as undergraduate students at the time when now they are faculty members at various institutions at AUB and elsewhere.

The nomination letter by Dr. Kaysi and the support letters give a clear overview of the extents of Helmi's responsibilities in the labs, and extend to describe many aspects of his dedication to make things happen, and delivers products that are always above the standard expected. Helmi is entrusted to teach full lab courses since he likes to do it (but does not have to) and learns from it, and assists students in their projects and research sometimes at the expense of staying after closing hours or coming during week-ends. He continues to learn and updates himself in workshops which he attends by invitation, and represents AUB in various forums.

The interview of Helmi only reinforced the various positive aspects that were revealed in the nomination and support letters. When asked, he gave examples of few initiatives which contributed to the research and lab developments, such as the automation of the labs experiments which was linked to an accounting system, the manufacturing in the CEE labs of a machine that cost AUB \$2,000 instead of the \$12,000 that AUB would have paid for importing it. He also cited a challenging and sensitive outside service task that was entrusted to CEE labs as well as European labs, and where, as attested by the customer, the results delivered by the CEE labs were more reliable mainly because Helmi and another faculty member, were willing to work in shifts to monitor the experiments days and night for several months. These examples are clear demonstration of work beyond the call of duty that Helmi is reputed for.