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THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT OUTLOOK



Robert Mood talks on peace

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2011 International Year of Chemistry AUB's first organic chemistry clicker competition

Outlook Staff

AUB's very first organic undergraduate chemistry competition kicked off last Monday February 7 at the newly renovated Zaabri Science Lecture Hall (SLH) in light of UNESCO's declaration of year 2011 as the International Year of Chemistry.

Chemistry Professor and chief organizer Bilal Kaafarani opened up the event remarking that the year 2011 has been designated by the United Nations General Assembly as the International Year of Chemistry (IYC 2011) and is a worldwide celebration of the achievements of chemistry and its contributions to the well-being of humankind." Kaafarani then also highlighted year 2011 as the "one hundredth anniversary

of Marie Curie's Nobel Prize in Chemistry, who was the first person to receive two Nobel Prizes."

Kaafarani also acknowledged the competition scorekeepers (AUB Physics Chairperson Samih Isber, AUB Professor Jad Melki, LAU Professor Brigitte Wex and Chemistry graduate student Bushra Ajeeb and event sponsors (Acros/Medlife, Aldrich/Ibrahaddad, Alfamed, Baalabaki Group and Labotech) as well as AUB cosponsors (USFC and Faculty of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office) followed by a moment of silence in honor of Emeritus Professor Costas Issidorides, who passed away on Nov 13, 2010 and had according to Kaafarani "served AUB and the department for some 35 years of distinction in teaching,

research and community service."

Soon after, UNESCO Secretary General Salwa Baassiri was called to the podium where she highlighted the event's contribution to "safeguarding human dignity and ensuring sustained development" in finding solutions to several pressing matters such as "renewable energy, global warming, nutrition, health, clean and recycled water and irrigation, as well as offering a platform for commemorating contributors to chemistry such as Madame Curie," as mentioned earlier by Kaafarani. In closing, Baassiri praised AUB's celebration of IYC 2011 and of its engaging the Lebanese



(Photo by AUB Office of Communications)

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ACS hosts 8th annual LEBMUN conferences at AUB

Rami Panayoti Staff Writer

The American Community School (ACS) hosted its 8th Annual Lebanese Model United Nations (LEBMUN) forums in four independent conference rooms at West Hall, AUB over a period of two days starting Friday, February 11 and ending Saturday, February 12. Participants attended from local schools such as ACS based in Beirut, Jesus and Mary School based in Rabieh, Sagesse High School based in Ain Saadeh and Hariri High School based in Saida as well as Al-Ahliyya international school for girls based in Jor-

dan.

The Opening Ceremony was held at Bathish Auditorium in the West Hall on Friday, February 11 at 8:00 am where the keynote speaker was Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst, head delegate of the European Union to Lebanon. Mrs. Eichhorst answered many questions mainly related to the political problems taking place in the Middle East providing students with a model for how fair and reasonable diplomats handle complex issues. Shortly after, at 9:30 ACS MUN Secretary General Yasmine Hallab announced the opening of the LEBMUN'11 Conference.

Students from the five schools were appointed as delegates and representatives of different countries. The delegates were assigned into the four forums of the LEBMUN conference, these forums being The General Assembly, The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), The Security Council and The International Court of Justice (ICJ). Between the hours of 8 am and 5 pm, numerous debate sessions took place followed by a "lobbying and merging" session and a one-hour lunch break.

Each of the above forums assumed one President in



(Photo by Rami Diab)

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2011 International Year of Chemistry

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National Commission in the process.

The organic chemistry competition comprised a total of 18 multiple-choice questions of 4-6 possible answers posed over 41 competing teams constituting two students each. The teams had registered from several local Lebanese universities apart from AUB including Lebanese University (LU), the Lebanese American University (LAU), University of Balamand, Beirut Arab University (BAU), and Hariri Canadian University (HCU).

As the competition began tension sparked amongst contestants who instantly took to registering their answers at dumbfounding speeds ranging from anywhere between half a second and 20 seconds. Team 7 contestant and current Biology Student Society (BSS) President, Ali Haidar was quoted in this regard saying "I thought the scoring system needed improvement. Hasty answers were extremely fruitful for some groups and helped them rank highly on individual questions. However, I do

think that the eventual winners proved themselves worthy beyond random guesses as they ranked in the top five [responders] in almost all the questions." Competition contestant and major student volunteer Khalil Chahine also commented on this point saying, "the response times were sometimes super-sonic, but that gave the event some sort of humorous twist. Recall how by the time Dr. Kaafarani had finished reading one question, most teams had already answered and eventually we all starred and started laughing... despite this speed of light phenomenon, as you are well aware the winners were not random teams; they were distinguished students in their respective universities."

For each question a slide of the five fastest responders were generated on the overhead projector awarding 50, 40, 30, 20 and 10 points to the first, second, third, fourth and fifth fastest responders respectively. The contest's suspense climaxed near its end when two pairs of teams Team 24 and Team 42, and Team 13 and Team 32 were tied with a total of 160 and

180 points respectively. The ties were resolved by two separate final "sudden death" questions where Wassim Itani (Hariri Canadian University) and Salma Yassine (AUB) of Team 42 were declared third place \$300 prize winners and all three of Tarek Barbar (AUB) and Ziad Al-Adas (AUB) of Team 32 and Jad Abdul Samad of Team 13 were collectively declared first place \$900 prize winners (as both teams answered the final question incorrectly). All monetary prizes were equally divided amongst the winners and Kaafarani announced that Jad Abdul Samad was exceptionally allowed to carry on alone with the competition by Kaafarani's order due to an emergency forbidding his partner from joining.

Shortly after the competition reached its end, an animated laser light show swept the crowd accompanied by loud, pulsating music that revitalized the arena only minutes away from what was to become the biggest highlight of the night. Kaafarani had arranged for a short video briefly touching on Chemistry Professor Makhoul

Haddadin's history at AUB in light of his 75th birthday followed by a broadcast of a short interview conducted with Haddadin by Outlook, AUB's official Newspaper, only weeks before. After the screening, Haddadin, dumbstruck by the unexpected honorary devotion planned for him, was called to the podium to receive his lifetime achievement award. President Dorman then shared a few praiseworthy words regarding Haddadin's esteemed history at AUB praising his firm and secure grasp of the university as often, Acting Deputy President at AUB during the Lebanese Civil War. Haddadin also held the posts of Chair of the Chemistry Department, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) and Vice President for Academic Affairs. President Dorman went on to commemorate Haddadin on his research achievements especially on what is now known in the chemical literature as the "Beirut Reaction" (45 patents in 25 countries) which, according to Dorman, has been marketed by Pfizer as an anti-bacterial agent and is currently under study

for use as an anti-cancer medication. Then stepped up Chemistry Chairperson Mazen Ghoul who, in reflecting on Haddadin's vast and rich history at AUB, also humorously touched base on his own university years as Haddadin's former student bringing the audience to laughter. Thanking President Dorman and Professor Ghoul for their kind words, and Kaafarani for his "marvellous service to Lebanon and AUB on the international level," Haddadin ended his speech with a strong declaration, "long live Lebanon and long live AUB" and the hall was ushered outside where a generously furnished reception and an accompanying DJ sat waiting. Two cakes were then cut, one honoring Haddadin's 75th birthday and the other honoring of the IYC 2011.

In reflection, Kaafarani projected his sincerest appreciation to his student volunteers namely Khalil Chahine, Rami Diab, Khaled Ghattass, Alaa Hajj Hassan, Nourhan Houjeij, Rebecca Andraos, Nada Sadek, Ryan El-Sibai and Michel Skaf without whom he claims, the event would not have been possible.

LEBMUN conferences at AUB

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addition to at least one deputy president. Having been appointed by LEBMUN Director Mrs. Rima Zein, these representatives headed the forums and were the people in charge of successively conducting and imitating each section of the United Nations.

As stated by the LEBMUN handbook:

The General Assembly "is a deliberative organ of the United Nations. It is the largest...and its resolutions represent the recommendations of the majority of the world's nations." The topics hosted by the LEBMUN'11 General Assembly were the nuclear situation in the Middle East and the status of child soldiers in the Geneva Convention.

The ECOSOC "serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues...It is responsible for promoting higher standards of living, full employment..." Its main topics were America's Embargo of Cuba and Incorporating Indigenous People into Society and the Global Mainstream while allowing them to preserve their cultures. The Security Council, in short, "is one of the principal organs of the United Nations charged with the maintenance of international peace and security." Topics discussed included reformation of UN policy towards the Burmese military Junta, addressing the situation in Afghanistan (the presence of NATO and/or Al Qaeda and the importance of UN peacekeeping in the region) and the Issue of re-

sponding to threats caused by non-state actors.

The fourth and last forum, the ICJ, "is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations...The Court's role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies." Its main topic, in short, was Armenia vs. Turkey. The two day conferences ended with a modest reception at Bathish Auditorium, West Hall, where Daily Star keynote speaker Nadim Ladki commemorated this year's LEBMUN'11 convention on all their dedication and commitment and, in conjunction with Zein, the presidents and Deputy Chairs of each council – Zeyd Tabbara, Ta-

lal Itani, and Shezza Dallal (General Assembly); Thomas Hewitt and Reem Chamseddine (The Security Council); Daniel Naim and Tanisha Singh (International Court of Justice), Lara Shabb and Sebastian Shehadeh (Economic and Social Council) - as well as the ACS MUN Secretary General Yasmine Hallab and the Deputy Secretary General Themis Elian, awarded Best Delegate and Most Diplomatic certificates to two deserving participants of The General Assembly – Best Delegate: Alice Hewitt (ACS) and Most Diplomatic Delegate: Tatiana Saba (Jesus and Mary School), ECOSOC - Best Delegate: Anna Eid (Sagesse High School) and Most Diplomatic Delegate: Fatimah Hijjawi (ACS) and The Security Council – Best Delegate: Hisham Hijjawi

(ACS) and Most Diplomatic Delegate: Rana Asmar (Sagesse High School). Regarding participants of the ICJ on the other hand, two deserving students were awarded certificates as Best Advocate: Jameel Showail (ACS) and Best Judge: Benson May (ACS). All participants including advisors were also awarded personalized certificates of participation. In reflecting on the success of the forums, Zein voiced her hopes of expanding LEBMUN on an international scale in the future instead of remaining local and regional. The main obstacle as to achieving this transition she said was the political situation in Lebanon that prompted major problems when dealing with international schools. Zein ended saying that "AUB is always ready and here for us."