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A Visionary Leader's Journey: Professor Muthanna Abdul Razzaq on Growth, Accreditation, and the Future

By: Shahd Fahad

As the founding president of the university, Prof. Muthanna has been a driving force behind its growth and success since its inception. With a clear vision and unwavering determination, he has guided the institution through challenges to establish it as a leader in higher education. In an exclusive interview with the College of Media and Mass Communication Newsletter, Prof. Muthanna shared his reflections on the university's journey, its pursuit of excellence, and the exciting initiatives shaping its future.

Reflecting on the university's growth over nearly two decades, Prof. Muthanna described the journey as "challenging but rewarding." He emphasized the institution's foundational goal: to produce graduates who are not only academically competent but also capable leaders. "Since the beginning, our mission has been to graduate leaders," he shared. "Have we achieved it? We're working very hard, and we have accomplished a lot, but there's always more to do."

Prof. Muthanna highlighted the importance of resilience in overcoming obstacles, stating, "We believe that 'Nothing is Impossible', so we don't give up." He noted that the university is on track to fulfill its vision of becoming a local and international top institution. "When we founded the university, we set out to achieve this in 20 years. With 18 years behind us, we are revising our goals to ensure we reach the top!"

A key aspect of this vision is the university's commitment to achieving international accreditation. Prof. Muthanna revealed that a comprehensive report has already been submitted as part of the ACEJMC accreditation process. "An international



committee will visit us in January to evaluate our teaching, research, and overall practices," he explained. Confident in the university's preparations, he expressed optimism about the outcome. "This is a significant step forward in aligning with global standards and showcasing the quality of our institution."

The conversation also touched on a pivotal milestone for the College of Media and Mass Communication—the launch of its first-ever newsletter. Prof. Muthanna praised this initiative, highlighting its value in providing students with hands-on experience in journalism and content creation. "This project is not just about gathering information or conducting interviews; it's about branding yourselves as professionals while still studying," he said.

He emphasized the importance of such initiatives in preparing students for future success, adding, “One of my goals has always been to market our students during their studies, not after.

This newsletter is a fantastic way to showcase your skills and talents, giving you a head start in the professional world.”

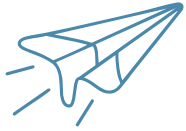
Prof. Muthanna’s pride in the university’s achievements was clear throughout the interview, but so was his vision for fostering a close-knit and supportive community. “We are a family,” he said warmly. “We might disagree in the morning, but by evening, we’re sitting at the same table, sharing a meal.”

The president’s unwavering support for student-led initiatives was evident as he concluded with words of encouragement. “I will support this newsletter and its team in any way possible,” he assured. “This is your platform to shine, and I am confident it will inspire others.”

“ Since the beginning, our mission has been to graduate leaders ”

As the university approaches its 20th anniversary, Prof. Muthanna’s leadership continues to inspire students, faculty, and staff alike. His vision of excellence, resilience, and community ensures that the institution remains on a path toward even greater achievements. The launch of the newsletter marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter, one that promises to amplify student voices and celebrate the dynamic spirit of the College of Media and Mass Communication.





Dean's Message

Dear CMMC Students,

We are excited to launch this newsletter as a platform to help you develop essential skills such as writing, critical thinking, and analytical reasoning. This initiative is designed to support your journey toward becoming professional journalists, communicators, and public relations practitioners here at the American University in the Emirates (AUE). Use this opportunity to tell your stories, discover your potential, share your thoughts, and explore your talents.

I encourage each of you to actively contribute to this newsletter. Writing is the backbone of the media and strategic communication professions. Through innovative and creative writing, you can position yourself as a leader in the media industry, contributing meaningfully to a rapidly evolving and dynamic field. At CMMC, we are committed to providing you with a comprehensive and transformative education in media and strategic communication. We nurture critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, and innovators, while fostering global tolerance, responsible citizenship, and lifelong career success.

This newsletter is your space to engage in producing news, stories, reports, analyses, critiques, and in-depth reportages. It is an opportunity to connect with the challenges of media and strategic communication, engage with the community, and prepare yourselves for a competitive profession.

I wish you and this newsletter every success.



Prof. Mohammed Kirat
Dean, College of Media and Mass Communication

Scan the QR code
to watch the Dean's
message



ACEJMC International Accreditation: A New Chapter for College of Media and Mass Communication in Creativity and Excellence

Dr. Hussein Khalifa

Chair of Public Relations Department
College of Media and Mass Communication

Excellence knows no boundaries, and what could be more inspiring than evolving from local recognition to global distinction? Guided by the empowering AUE motto “Nothing is Impossible,” the College of Media and Mass Communication at the American University in the Emirates has embarked on a remarkable journey of innovation, excellence, and achievement in media education. Championing the essence of excellence, the college attained local accreditation from the UAE’s Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA). Building on this milestone, it has now set its sights on a bold new horizon: attaining the prestigious international accreditation (ACEJMC), a testament to its unwavering commitment to global standards of creativity and academic excellence.

This prestigious accreditation stands as one of the most respected global benchmarks in journalism and mass communication, a recognition not easily earned. Achieving it demands unparalleled excellence and innovative approaches in education, ensuring graduates are fully prepared to thrive in the dynamic media industry. It serves as a testament to the college’s unwavering dedication to excellence across a wide spectrum. Gaining ACEJMC accreditation ensures that students receive an education aligned with global standards, enhancing both academic quality and career prospects. Accredited programs focus on



hands-on learning, ethics, and diversity, equipping students with practical skills and values essential for success in journalism, public relations, and media industries.

The journey toward achieving international accreditation (ACEJMC) at the American University in the Emirates was a testament to teamwork, dedication, and visionary leadership. At the forefront of this ambitious endeavor stood Prof. Muthanna Abdul Razzaq, President and CEO of the AUE, whose enlightened vision propelled the institution from local aspirations to the expansive horizons of global excellence. With steadfast support, our Provost, Professor William Cornwell, closely monitored the progress, offering invaluable guidance, direction, and encouragement at every step. Complementing this leadership, Prof. Sameh Ghwanmeh, Vice President for Academic Affairs, masterfully steered the team, ensuring the timely completion of this project.



acejmc

Accrediting Council on Education in
Journalism and Mass Communications

Celebrating Excellence: Faculty Awards at AUE



By: Baha Yousef Taha



Dr. Elizabeth Matar

The American University in the Emirates recently held a ceremony in which they awarded two of their faculty members for their great work and dedication. Both faculty members received the awards for their efforts throughout the fall semester 2024-2025.

Dr. Elizabeth Matar received the Faculty Research award, showing great commitment to scholarly work and dedication within her field. Also, Dr. Khaled Al-Kassimi was awarded the Collegiality Award for being a great example of a colleague who is always fostering a positive environment within the university community and is always keen on collaborating.

When asked for a statement on what it means to have won the Faculty Collegiality award, Dr. Khaled said: "Being awarded the Collegiality Award at the American University in the Emirates in the AY 2023-2024 was an achievement of equal importance to receiving my Philosophical Doctorate (Ph.D.) at McMaster University in the year 2020. The reason, quite simply, is that I have lived in multiple capitals whether in the East and West (Beirut, Paris, and Toronto) but never did I teach in the East. In addition, the criterion of receiving a Ph.D. is not simply based on knowledge accumulation, but more importantly, a person's behaviour or ethical code in society (or



Dr. Khaled Al-Kassimi

societies) constellating virtue. My nomination resulting in an award has reminded me that I have thrived in navigating the bridge linking the East and West with an ethos seeking a polyvocal relationship. Plato reminds us in his *Academe* that collegiality (or the college) requires the art of dialogue founded on persuasion, rather than compulsion for a vibrant and collegial community to develop and prosper. This award would not have been possible without my mentors at the University of Toronto, McMaster University, and my current academic home, the American University in the Emirates reminding me of Plato's ethos, and his student, Aristotle whose axiom is relevant for all ages: Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all."

Dr. Elizabeth mentioned in her statement how much of an honor it is to have received the award, and what it means to her as she said "I was very honored to receive this award because it celebrates the patience and support that AUE offered me during the long process of getting my Ph.D. and the dissertation being adapted into a book with Routledge. The book is about a German filmmaker who was kind of overlooked by the scholarly record" she at last mentioned that it was an honor to present the book to the filmmaker himself.



Fall Alumni Meeting: A Great Opportunity for AUE Student Learning and Networking

By: Fadia Jihad ElKassem

The American University in the Emirates organized meetings between current students and alumni of the College of Media and Mass Communication (CMMC) and the College of Business Administration (COBA). This meeting was attended by Dr. Fatima Barakji, Dr. Mario Rodriguez, Dr. Khaled Al-Kassimi and Dr. Elizabeth Matar from CMMC, and Dr. Nikolina Ljepava from (COBA).

The goal of this meeting was to allow the students to benefit from the experience of alumni, from advice for studies to life after graduation. This was particularly handy, for those just beginning to build their careers.

The alumni shared their success stories and discussed the challenges they faced and how they overcame them. They elaborated on how the

students can best prepare for the job market, interviews, and how they can write resumes that can attract the attention of companies. The current students had many inquiries about how to choose their majors, how to manage time and best practices to engage the challenges of entering the career life.

The interaction among students and their evident interest highlights the importance of organizing such meetings, as they allow current students to learn from the experiences of graduates. Overall, the gathering was a valuable experience for students, alumni, and faculty members, providing an excellent opportunity to facilitate a smooth transition from university life to professional careers.





UAE Flag Day: A Symbol of Unity and Aspiration

By: Haatem Al-Kindy

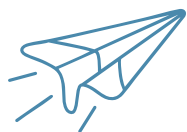
UAE Flag Day is more than just a celebration, it is a moment to reflect on the unity, ambition, and resilience that define our country. As I stood to

deliver the speech on this special occasion, I felt immense pride and responsibility. The UAE flag is a powerful symbol of our shared history and the values that guide us into the future with hope, strength, and perseverance.



Flag Day reminds me of the incredible journey our country has undertaken, from its foundation by His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and His Highness Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, may Allah bless their souls, to becoming a global inspiration of innovation and progress. It is a day to celebrate our achievements and the diversity and harmony that makes the UAE unique.

When I see the UAE flag, I am inspired to contribute meaningfully to our country's growth, uphold our leaders' vision, and cherish the unity that binds us all. UAE Flag Day is not just about honoring a symbol; it is about honoring the spirit of the people who breathe life into it. It is a call to action to ensure that the UAE continues to thrive for generations to come.



A Message from the PR Club President

Hello,

I'm Ali, the enthusiastic President of the Public Relations (PR) Club in the College of Media and Mass Communication, American University in the Emirates (AUE). With the encouragement of our dedicated supervisor, Dr. Fatima Barakji, and 44 active members, our club is a lively space for students to put their PR skills into action and engage with the professional world.

Our vision for the PR Club is to cultivate ethical, skilled PR practitioners who will positively impact AUE and beyond. Aligned with this vision, our mission emphasizes delivering hands-on experiences, acting as a bridge to the PR industry, and championing AUE's values through strategic communication. This club focuses on hands-on learning, from organizing hands-on experiences and events, to creating meaningful digital campaigns.

This year, we're excited to expand our influence and visibility both on and off campus. We are excited to host major campus events like National Day and Global Day and launch impactful digital campaigns



Ali Mohammed Ghuloom
President, PR Club

to enhance AUE's online reputation. We're excited to strengthen our industry connections, aiming to offer members internships, mentorship, and networking opportunities with professionals. We're excited to support our members in their growth and success.

We truly appreciate your continued support of the PR Club! I am excited about a successful year ahead and can't wait to share our journey through the upcoming newsletters.



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN THE EMIRATES
PUBLIC RELATIONS CLUB



Watch the PR Club's
participation in
National Day

A Message from the Editor-in-Chief



Dr. Fatima Barakji

Editor-in-Chief, College Newsletter

It gives me great pleasure to present the inaugural issue of the College of Media and Mass Communication Newsletter, a testament to the creativity and dedication of our talented students. This publication is not merely a communication tool; it serves as a platform for our students to express their voices and perspectives while gaining hands-on experience in the field of journalism. At our college, we believe that journalism is more than just a profession—it is a powerful medium for expression and positive societal impact. Through this newsletter, we aim to create life-long learners, and future leaders in the workplace.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my deepest gratitude to the university leadership, under the guidance of Professor Muthanna Abdul Razzaq, for his unwavering support of this initiative. My thanks also go to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Professor Sameh Ghwanmeh, for introducing this initiative, which empowers students to refine their journalistic and media skills in an enriching academic environment. Special appreciation is due to our Dean, Professor Mohamed Kirat, whose encouragement and support have been instrumental in bringing this ambitious vision to life. This collective effort reflects our university's commitment to fostering a creative and inspiring atmosphere that nurtures student growth and innovation.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the editorial committee of my fellow faculty members and the dedicated team of student writers, editors, and photographers whose hard work and creativity have made this newsletter possible. As we embark on this exciting journey, I am thrilled to see how this initiative blends practical training with innovation. I warmly invite all students interested in writing, photography, or design to join our team and become part of this remarkable project.

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