

# Tomorrow's Leaders Newsletter

## LAU-MEPI TL Program

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### The Domino Effect: \$1 Campaign

"Making a change" and "creating a better tomorrow" are lofty, albeit worn-out phrases. Yet the LAU-Middle East Partnership Initiative Tomorrow's Leaders program (TL) is devoting considerable resources and investments toward developing the leaders of the future.

Designed to amplify the leadership skills of students, the program places a heavy emphasis on entrepreneurship, women's participation and civic activism.

In fact, the program boasts a strong tradition of philanthropy and it was in this spirit of generosity that in early December a group of 25 TL students raised a booth on the sprawling grounds of LAU's Byblos campus and requested a \$1 dollar donation from each member of the LAU community.

The week-long fundraising activity aimed to support access to education and was part of a larger "Donate to Educate Campaign" which began last year when TL students who pledged to donate \$5 per month from their stipends for the purpose of educating one fiscally disadvantaged student from the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) region at LAU.

Dr. Walid Touma, director of the University Enterprise Office and charged with overseeing the LAU-MEPI TL program suggests that perhaps the greatest threat facing the region in the future will be a crisis of leadership.

"Universities play a pivotal and fundamental role in remedying this," says Touma. "The LAU-MEPI TL program is one of the most important investments we can make for the future—today, more than ever, we need solid leaders to deal with the massive tectonic changes that are occurring around us,"



Touma continues with palpable gravitas. "We have accomplished our mission if even one of these students graduates from this program and becomes an effective leader in his or her community," he adds. "These students recognize their own position of privilege and want to give back—this is exactly the sort of leadership attributes we want to cultivate and enhance," says Dr. Marwan G. Rowayheb, associate professor of political science/international affairs at LAU Byblos and Student Life Coordinator of the LAU-MEPI TL program.

As a mentor to the students, Rowayheb was duly impressed by the students' show of initiative and was quick to modestly wave off his own role in the event: "They did everything on their own—they saw this fundraising activity through from start to finish."

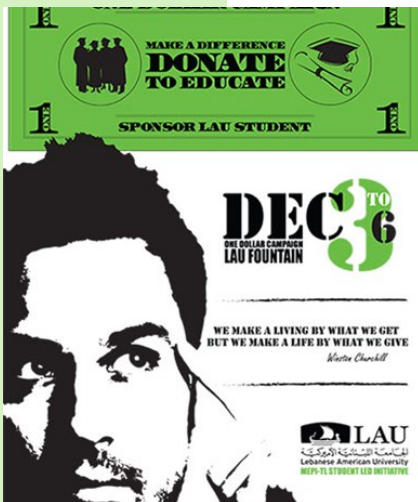


Nassib Nasr, assistant vice president for development, gave the group a workshop on the nuts-and-bolts of effective fundraising to aid them in their endeavor. "The students expressed an eager desire to give back to their community and share the gift of education that has served them so well."

Second-year business students Zeina Albitar and Barik Mahadin, led the committee that spearheaded the \$1 campaign.

"Though the amount we are asking for is relatively small it has a powerful cumulative effect—like a falling row of dominos, a creation of a powerful chain reaction that reaffirms the LAU community's commitment to access to education," explained Mahadin.

Albitar wholeheartedly agrees: "We have noticed that other students on campus want to join us. Giving back is contagious, we have seen much support from the students, staff and faculty in our endeavor," she enthuses.



*\$1 campaign poster*

*"The week-long fundraising activity aimed to support access to education and was part of a larger campaign, Donate to Educate Campaign"*

## Word from the Editor-in-Chief

*“I feel it’s very important for all the MEPI students to have a newsletter dedicated to their thoughts and activities because we are a very diversified and active group of students.”*

Writing my word for the first LAU-MEPI TL Newsletter gives me a great sense of pride and happiness.

The idea of the newsletter was just a dream in September, and now the dream has finally become a reality thanks to everyone on the Newsletter team. The team’s enthusiasm and encouragement were the driving force behind this great accomplishment. In addition to having a great and supportive team, Dr. Marwan Rowayheb,

was always available to provide me with the guidance necessary to complete the LAU-MEPI TL Newsletter.

I feel it’s very important for all the MEPI students to have a newsletter dedicated to their thoughts and activities because we are a very diversified and active group of students.

Creating the first LAU- MEPI TL Newsletter was at times challenging but I can say with confidence that working on something this special is defi-

nitely worth the trouble and I’m looking forward to start work on the Fall Edition of the newsletter.

This is just the beginning and hopefully the LAU-MEPI TL Newsletter is here to stay.

**Written by: Lana Jamokha**

## A Note From Student Representative

Martin Luther King Jr. once said “The ultimate measure of a person is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy.” That was the answer I gave during the interview phase of applying to the MEPI scholarship, when asked about the most inspirational quote I have read. I can vividly recall that interview; it was videotaped with three people as the jury committee. I was extremely nervous and excited at the same time, as it was the last phase after which we would be notified of the results. I remember what I was wearing and even the interviewers’ names, but there was one question they asked me which I will never forget “What would you do, if you do not win the MEPI scholarship?” My answer was as confident as I was nervous “When God closes a door, he opens a window” I was granted the scholarship, the scholarship which not only opened the door to the new phase of my life, but also opened a dozen windows of opportunity.

Taking this opportunity in my hand, I was welcomed into Lebanon and a second family here in the LAU and MEPI gave me a warm embrace. With the help of a group of diligent, friendly advisors, a lovely campus and eventful weeks of activities and services, LAU became my second home in no time.

My time in LAU as a MEPI student was not just about education and learning, but a journey of discovery, discovery of myself. Living in a country where culture is different than my own pushed me to the limits in many aspects. Looking back at the person I was last year and the person I am now, I can see how much I changed, how I grew more mature, accepting, flexible and tolerant and most importantly how I grew to love LAU. Now I want time to pass slowly so as not to graduate so soon, as there are still many more things to learn and do here.

Aside from teaching me independence and responsibility, the experience contributed to shaping my character by teaching me when to draw the line between right or wrong, making the correct choices and dealing with different people every day. Whether in classes or the restaurants I have lunch in, I am bonding with different people every day, yet I am learning how to treat them as human; something which we all share deep inside despite how different we are.

In the end, I can say that things don’t always go the way you want them to, but they definitely go in the direction you need, you just need some time to realize that. My experience here has been a spectacular one, and definitely worth sharing and talking about!

**Written by: Leen Aghabi**

*“My time in LAU as a MEPI student was not just about education and learning, but a journey of discovery; discovery of myself”*

# A Leadership Plane Takes Off but Never Lands

The first time I got on a Boeing was on my 13th birthday. Surprisingly enough it was flying to Mexico. No, I wasn't on a vacation with the family. I was attending a world conference that I received a scholarship to participate in. Two years later, I got on an Airbus heading to the Netherlands to attend the annual international conference of an international organization called iEARN (International Education and Resource Network). Then in 2009 I received a call from the Turkish ministry of forest and water management to offer me a scholarship and grant me the honor of attending the 5th Youth World Water Forum in Istanbul.

My mom fainted when the results of the simple majority vote of our family members turned out in favor of my travel plan to Mexico at a very young age. The same thing happened to her when she found out that my dad voted in favor of my travelling to Netherlands and Turkey again. However, after I came back and after she thought I wouldn't be leaving home anymore, she confessed her acting prowess and confessed that she never really blacked out and that she acted so only to change my dad's mind.

If only my mom knew that three months later I would receive a full scholarship to do two years of high school at ALA (African Leadership Academy) in South Africa, she would have never let the cat out of the box and told us about her professionally choreographed scenes.

To cut a long story short, I am now enrolled under a leadership based scholarship,

MEPI-TL, at LAU (Lebanese American University) in Lebanon and I am left with only one and a half years to graduate with a B.A. in Political Science and International Affairs. Last October I was elected to serve as the LAU MEPI-TL students' representative for the year 2012-13.

I shouldn't forget to mention that this was the first time that mom liked the results of a voting process that I was involved in.

One might think that serving as the representative of those outstanding students has not been a unique learning experience for me because I have experienced in a number of leadership-based programs, but this I call ultimate naïveté. In fact, my learning experience with the 54 LAU MEPI-TL students throughout the past 2 months beats all my other experiences in that field.

Throughout the past 2 months, I witnessed my 54 colleagues work shoulder to shoulder and hand in hand on our newly student led \$I Campaign with the noble purpose of giving back to the society by collecting donations to educate an underprivileged student at LAU. I observed their diligent work on the soon-to-be-published MEPI-TL newsletter; they wrote passionately about their stories of success and failure, their experience at LAU, and even about the challenges that are now face to face with their communities.

I believe that in the near future the LAU MEPI-TL students will not only contribute to turning many of the Arab world's challenges into opportunities but also to changing the face of the Middle East for the better with their leadership and entrepreneurship capabilities.

*“I believe that in the near future the LAU MEPI-TL students will not only contribute to turning many of the Arab world's challenges into opportunities but also to changing the face of the Middle East “*

**Written by: Ahmad Moussa**

## Word from Walid Touma: LAU MEPI-TL Program Director

The LAU-MEPI Tomorrow's Leaders program has been for me both a cause and a channel for giving back. More than ever, I feel and understand the meaning of this cause in our Arab World. Whether we call them springs or infernos, the program is a key human developer for the tectonic changes taking place in our Arab World. I am honored and proud that we, at LAU, can participate on a minuscule level in developing leaders that can tackle the challenges facing their countries. The biggest redemption for me will be when the program graduates, "my leaders", become solid and effective leaders in their own environment, and lead me, us, and our Arab Nation to the shores of democracy, freedom, honoring human rights, gender equality, respect for the whole person, and eternal change for the betterment of our society and, our world.

## Word from Ramzi Haraty: LAU MEPI-TL Internship Coordinator

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams". (Eleanor Roosevelt). Being part of LAU-MEPI Tomorrow's Leaders Program, I came to understand the value of this quotation. LAU in partnership with MEPI both believe that this program is what is going to help make the future better. The young leaders I have been working with are motivated, energetic and eager to fulfill their dreams. They believe that they can make a difference in their respective environments. The different encounters I had with them whether on a social or academic level attest to that. I see the program as a cyclic interaction, we give to the leaders who in turn give to their community

and then the community gives us more leaders and we in turn provide them with the tools that enable them to face the challenges of the future. Working on placing these young leaders in different non-governmental organizations for their internships where they practice what they were taught and putting this knowledge into action has been very rewarding to me as a facilitator in the program. The feedback I have received from the hosting organizations has made me proud of being able to make a difference in contributing to the dream of a better future, a future that thrives on freedom, tolerance, understanding, and, most important of all, believing in the young.

## Word from Sarah Hachem: Administrative Assistant at LAU MEPI-TL Program

I see my experience with the MEPI –TL program as an enriching one. It made me get introduced, just like everyone, to students from different nationalities. The program is a great example of cross-cultural exchange. In addition, TL students make me re-live university days; their enthusiasm and passion for life and for serving the community are really contagious!

***"Any views or opinions presented in this platform are solely those of the MEPI students and do not represent those of the Lebanese American University in any form or manner. The Lebanese American University disclaims any liability regarding any of these views or opinions."***

## The Editorial Board

**Lana Jamokha**

**Leen Aghabi**

**Ahmed Moussa**

*“This year’s student elections were considered as one of the smoothest in LAU’s history.”*

## The “Smooth” LAU Elections

The 2011-2012 Academic year elections were postponed because the candidates and their parties failed to guarantee the necessary maturity and responsibility. The University preferred delay and restrictions to violence.

The atmosphere during the election season of the 2011—2012 academic year was one of poor democratic attitudes from all sides, a drawback of having external political representation on campus, and poor achievements from the nominated ‘representatives’, demonstrated by the poster of ‘achievements’ of the CSC 2011-2012, that were posted all over the campus. The posters became a forum for students to express their views on the achievements, as one can read the writings, scribbles and comments all over the posters.



The main highlights on the achievements of the year, as the posters indicated, were, providing staplers to architecture department and library and gloves to the Chemistry labs, in addition to a few events. The pending issues list, however, contained: providing MCAT training, renewing election law, allocating a budget for the council, increasing financial aid when increasing the tuition fees, and solving the increasing tuition fess issue, among other more pressing issues.

This year however, the two main politically-backed student parties were the Lebanese Student Front (LSF) with the slogan “Always Ready to Help” to all its

candidates and the SOCIAL with “You Matter...I Target...” as a unified slogan. Both were able to run and, unlike on the Beirut campus no free independent runners nominated themselves. The Office of the Dean of Students ensured that boards with the candidacy programs, pictures of candidates and their slogans were put within students’ reach. Most, if not all, programs shared to a degree the same pressing issues that have been of concern to the students for years, those that have had “pending” or “in process” status for generations.

This year’s student elections were considered some of the smoothest in LAU’s history. A new condition was added to candidacy; attendance of a workshop on democracy and leadership. Other restrictive measures were enforced; the parties, unlike previous years, were not allowed to use political or sectarian chanting, symbolism or slogans, nor distribute freebies, flyers, or things of that sort during the day of elections. It is important to note than none of the candidates stepped up to speak, for they relied on other less diplomatic means of delivering their message. On the day of the elections the usual Army brigades took their positions before the gates of the university, groupings were forbidden on campus, parking within the perimeters of the university was banned and other extra security measures were enforced.

**Written by: Mehdi Mezouar**

## Annual MEPI Retreat



LAU'S MEPI TL has finally witnessed the first of its graduates: cohort one students have departed TL's ship, leaving a sense of awe and pride to those following in their footsteps. Twelve students have unraveled their cocoons and departed from the shelter that had protected them for the past three or four years, they are now soaring high and creating a sanctuary by themselves.

As cohort one celebrated the successful completion of its years at LAU, another cohort of ten students, was granted the same opportunity.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of October, the MEPI-TL annual retreat took place at LAU-Byblos campus to welcome the new cohort and remind all the TL family of the values, disciplines and principles of the program. The event began with Dr. Touma's opening speech which included the guidelines and expectations of the program.

During the speech quiet giggling was heard from one end of the room, a response to Touma's well-known saying: "If you have a problem we don't know about, you don't have a problem." This aphorism has become TL's unofficial motto as Dr. Touma reminds the students at almost every encounter that it is their duty to inform the staff of whatever problems they may have. The saying has become a kind of "Golden Rule."

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## An Opportunity

Awakened by the sound of thunder, slightly before dawn, I peeked beyond the window of shades into the world of upbeat, angry snowflakes. Many were the things triggered by this scene. As the temperature slumped, chilling memories of the past years arose. I remember vividly the shattered desks, the crooked yard, and the broken windows of my old school, in a city where opportunities are far beyond reach. I can still feel the cold that would fill in our classes in times of winter, and I can still hear the sound of trembling lips of young boys craving to go home. To be honest, not all families did have the necessary heating tools; nevertheless, they provided their young boys with a cordial smile, or a cup of tea perhaps, that has escaped them a raw weather awaiting outside. Each year, I grew up more determined to seize the first opportunity that came my way. The flashlight of my academic journey has been lit as I looked deeper into the cold sky. From a one year opportunity as a Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study (YES) Program participant, followed by two invaluable years at King's Academy,

to my unforgettable experience now at the Lebanese American University; I cannot be more blessed. But, as the snow smashes more into the wary streets of my memory, I remember my people. I remember those young, inspired boys and girls that might not have the opportunity to dust off their talents or to unleash their intellect. Those who share the same sky we live under, share the same earth we walk by, and share the same air we breathe. They deserve an opportunity just as much. Opportunities are life changing, but one has to remember that lack of opportunities can be damaging and destructive to the construction of our society.

Not to be crumbled by fear of selfishness, I have dedicated my success to providing my compatriots with equal and even better opportunities. Glimpsing the other end of the peak is always needed, crossing the other edge of reality is always ameliorating, and as ever, re-touching the old pain is always inspiring.

To those who will not read my lines, I give those words...

Written by: Bariq Mahadin

## What I enjoyed during the MEPI program

As a Political Science student what I have enjoyed the most and I am still enjoying is the diversity in the student body of the program. Students from different Arab countries, with different religions, political backgrounds, and ways of thinking, all gathered under the same roof, that of the MEPI TL family.

One would expect that people of the Arab world, who share the

same history and identity would also share a common view of the future and a common destiny. However, after talking to these young men and women, they helped me understand the different outcomes of the Arab uprisings as each country is building its own future.

Each one of these students has his or her own vision of the future as he or she is working to see it come to life, and this makes me hold on to my own principles and not lose faith in a brighter future. I believe that diversity and the sharing of knowledge are key elements of building proficient leaders, and the MEPI TL program has surely helped me put things into perspective.

Written by: Mehdi Mezouar

*“Students from different Arab countries, with different religions, political backgrounds, and ways of thinking, all gathered under the same roof, that of the MEPI TL family.”*

## The Arab Revolution

Dr. Mustapha Mahmoud once said, “If you see people dreading customs more than religion, and respect traditions more than logic, and sanctify men of religion more than religion itself, then welcome to the Arab world”

Last year, I was on the streets of Cairo demanding change. However, just like most of the other millions on the streets, I was demanding political change. I thought if we had political change, life would get better and everything would be fine. Sitting now in my cozy room in LAU's dorms one year later, I have discovered how naïve I was. Back then, I thought most of my country's issues, and those of the wider Arab world as well, were due to socio-political reasons. However, I believe I am now able to give a more mature, independent analysis of the question: what is the cause of Egypt's, and the Arab world's, problems?

The answer to that question is an extremely complicated one. You would be naïve to think, as I previously did, that most of our problems stem from our political regimes. First, you must understand that it is you and I who created these regimes and allowed them to exist for the past few decades. Second, you also need to understand that a political revolution not followed by an intellectual, and social one is useless. Changing political regimes without changing the societies that created them will only lead to the resurrection of these regimes. Arabs should start true change by redefining the relation between the individual and the state. We need to understand that the state is not supposed to be a leviathan that everyone fears but rather the savior of the weak and the poor in the face of the wealthy and powerful. This will only happen when we stop treating political figures as “leaders” or

as we like to call them “Zoa'maa” and start treating them as “public servants” who are accountable to us and to the law.

The second more important step is social change. We should refine our customs and traditions, cut those that are old and rotten and preserve those that are prosperous and inspiring. This might be the hardest step on the way to change. There is nothing easier than changing one political regime for another, but changing the culture of the society can be a near-impossible task. However, if we, Arabs, invest in the education of the new generation and try to change the overall mentality of the society by changing that of its youth, there might be light at the end of the tunnel after all.

The third step on the way to change is economic development. This step is more complicated than it seems. It is true that economic development is not rocket science; it has been done many times before in places such as Europe after the World Wars, or Eastern Europe after communism. However, our Arab situation is a little bit different. For a start, our countries lack neither natural, economic, nor human resources. In fact, if you look at GDP (Gross Domestic Product) values for most Arab countries for the past ten years, you can easily find a pattern of growth. Where is the problem then? The problem is that most of this development has been exclusive to a very small minority of those close to political power. Thus, if we need to witness a real change in our countries, we must start thinking how to include the majority in the fruits of our development.

To conclude, all our issues are intertwined. There can be no economic development without political change, and there can be no political change without social change. However, social change is encouraged by the political system of the society, and the economic system influences the politics of the society as well. This all leads us to the core of what we really need to change, the Arab individual. We need to fundamentally change the way we think, the way we treat each other, and the way we treat the outside world. As difficult the way to change might be, it is the only way we have. Otherwise, we will no longer have a place in this ever-changing world. We have to either change or die.

Written by: Mohammad Gohary

## Annual MEPI retreat (Continued)

After Touma finished the opening speech the students were asked to present their weaknesses, strengths and their ideas of the program's value to them. A common weakness was stubbornness, while some students claimed to be pessimistic, procrastinators or poor time managers. On the other hand the strengths included optimism, determination, hard work, etc... While many students settled upon strengths and weaknesses, one of the students refused this categorization which seemed to him unnecessary. "Any characteristic could be a strength or a weakness depending on the context" he said, an insight worth considering. On the subject of the program's value many of the students answered that the program provides them with an opportunity that would pave the way for their future leadership roles. A few students were uncertain of a definite answer.

After this introductory ice-breaker, came a lunch break and then Ms. Loulwa Kaloyaros, the MEPI academic coordinator, and Dr. Ramzi Haraty, the internship coordinator, spoke about academic requirements, the internships, capstone project, and other technical aspects of the program. Dr. Marwan Rowayheb, the student life coordinator then talked about new activities he is willing to introduce throughout the coming year. Among the activities he talked about were the launching of a MEPI-TL newsletter and the reconstruction of the MEPI-TL website. Rowayheb also mentioned the TL student representative elections. From the 53 TL students one male and one female are elected each year to represent the MEPI-TL at LAU.

He told the assembled students that candidates must present their programs to the rest of the MEPI-TL team on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October, and the elections would be held on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

Moving on from the elections, he discussed the Donate to Educate campaign. Donate to Educate is a campaign initiated by MEPI-TL students that seeks to offer an academic scholarship at LAU. The primary method of this campaign is to give back, TL students pay 5\$ of their monthly stipend to the "donate to educate box" in the UE office. Apart from the students' donations, the campaign also relies on fundraising events. Since MEPI students are scholarship recipients, they believe it is their turn to give one back, as they are part of a cycle that should never cease to exist.

*"The key point of the activity was to listen and sense the others around and accordingly contribute to the harmony that was being created."*





While waiting for the following session the students uncovered two drums from the corner of the room, and the room underwent a mood shift. Some played the drums, others accompanied the beat with whistles, while others sang upbeat old Arabic songs. In just a few minutes the atmosphere was colored with joyous ululations, and Arabic dancing and singing and as people from different backgrounds come together through music and dance. The spontaneity and pure enjoyment created a peculiar sense of unity. Less than an hour later, two eccentric looking drum instructors appeared in the doorway carrying drum cases similar to the ones already in the room. The drums, which were called “Djembe” and “Dun Dum” turned out to be the unifying tool of the workshop. The drum sets were distributed amongst the students while the instructor taught them how to play different beats. At first the instructor played a beat and the students had to respond by playing the same beat as if the instructor’s “call” and the students’ “call back” was a coded kind of communication.

When the students memorized the two different beats, they started playing them together in two different groups in addition to the instructors’ accompaniment. The key point of the activity was to listen and sense the others and contribute to the harmony accordingly. It was also representative of leadership and teamwork with the instructor as the leader as she guided the students through the different beats, and the students’ beats picked up hers and added to the aesthetic of the whole piece. Another meaningful symbol was the drum itself. When the students were beating the drum softly as if frightened, the instructor told them: “The drum is your voice, when you get the chance to speak out; you give your maximum strength and highest volume.”

The drumming workshop was an interesting end to a new beginning. After all, MEPI TL is starting another year filled with hope.

**Written by: Tala El-Issa**



## MEPI Representative Elections

Three male and three female candidates. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2012, the 5<sup>th</sup> MEPI representative elections took place, in a healthy competitive environment.

Prior to the elections day, the candidates worked hard to prepare their electoral programs, and made sure to convey their vision and unique addition to the students’ life and to the MEPI administration. The date set for the delegates to explain their programs and market their campaigns was on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October. A conference room equipped with video-call capabilities allowed MEPI students from the Beirut campus to be part of the meeting and the Q&A Session. This year’s MEPI TL Representative elections had a strong touch of the democratic process

and the strict technicalities to ensure transparency and equal opportunities, introduced by the new addition to the MEPI Administration, the current Student Life Coordinator, Dr. Marwan Rouwayheb.

Each candidate had a different approach to convey their message to their fellow voters. Some distributed their programs on hard copies, while others were driven by their passion for public speaking and yet others relied on visual aids. The candidates were each allowed 10 minutes to introduce themselves and their electoral program to the voters.



**The new representatives, Leen Aghabi and Ahmad Moussa, with Dr. Rowayheb**

Hummam Wasfi, a fourth year business student, gave the first campaigning speech in which he stressed his abilities to lobby for the rights of the students, using the slogan “ what’s your problem is mine, and when I have a problem, so does the administration”, claiming that he would not give up until the issue is solved.

## MEPI Representative Elections (Continued)

Nour Laswi, a third year Banking and Finance student, member of the LAU student council, and president of the Pulse Club took the platform next. She mentioned her ability to multitask, commitment, and availability as well as her experience with the student council to make students' campus life as smooth as possible. She also spoke of various plans and activities for the LAU-MEPI students.

Mohammad Gohary, a second year business student, presented his speech with the use of a PowerPoint presentation as a visual aid. He allocated the majority of his speech to stressing specific issues he considered critical, such as the choice of dorms, allowance, and semester abroad.

Dana Al Shamlan, a fourth year International Affairs student, chose to distribute her program on hard copy. Her speech was centered on the skills she has accumulated from her previous experience and field of study. She also spoke about specific ideas and activities she wanted to implement including trips around Lebanon, for the International students who did not get the chance to see the beauty of the country.

Ahmad Wahid, a second year Political Science student, began his PowerPoint-aided speech in a creative way by focusing on each LAU MEPI student's strength. He finally revealed that his strength lie in bringing all those wonderful skills together to collaborate and work hand in hand, producing beauties. He had a clear approach to pull all students with their respective strengths in suitable positions, introducing the idea of MEPI student council.

Leen Aghabi, a second year International Affairs student, focused on the outreach that the program is missing, introducing some of her initiatives to widen the MEPI students' sphere of influence. Another idea she has introduced was dedicating each month for a particular cause themed and symbolized by a colored ribbon.

At 4:00 pm on the elections day, the votes-box was sealed, the candidates and MEPI administration entered a closed room, while the rest of the students were impatiently waiting for the votes-count. A few minutes later, Leen and Ahmad were announced the new representatives for the academic year of 2012-2013.

Best of luck to our new representaties!

Written by: Mehdi Mezouar & Margueritta Asmar

## MEPI Roundtable: Fundraising

At the beginning of the fall semester, the MEPI students were a buzz about one event: Donate to Educate. The initiative was launched by the students and seeks to raise enough funds to provide a deserving and under-privileged student a scholarship to study at LAU.

Since this initiative is so important to all the MEPI students Dr. Marwan Rowayheb, the MEPI student life coordinator, set up a fundraising round table for all the students to attend. The fundraising roundtable took place on November 14<sup>th</sup> and was facilitated by LAU's own Nassib Nasr, assistant vice president for Development. The development department in LAU is responsible for raising money for campaigns and pioneering new programs and projects. Mr. Nasr talked to the students about his personal work and how he has worked for many years to raise funds for the projects he feels passionately about.

He discussed the pillars, techniques, protocols, tools, and fundamentals of fundraising.

Mr. Nasr discussed all the things you must take into consideration during a fundraiser. First and foremost you must have passion, and he repeatedly stated, "Fundraising starts when you feel passionate about something". You must also possess ethics, a sense of belonging to the group you're working with, and a cause you care for deeply. The MEPI students were very excited to hear what Mr. Nasr had to say, since Donate to Educate was something all the students felt passionately about and they all understood how important it is to give back and help someone attain a distinguished education.

The roundtable included a presentation, in which Mr. Nasr went through all the steps of pulling of a successful fundraiser. The presentation included everything from handling costs to finding the right audience.



All the points were very important for the students, since they had planned to launch the first fundraising event in the Donate to Educate initiative the following month. The students got many ideas and received many pointers from Mr. Nasr regarding their campaign, such as coming up with slogans, advertisement material, and attention grabbing mottos and phrases that can be used in any fundraising campaign. Also discussed at the roundtable was how to approach donors and how to ask for donation intelligently and without pressuring them. Mr. Nasr delved into how to set goals and objectives, create plans for the fundraiser, set a mission and vision for the future, and explained the pillars of fundraising in detail.

The fundraising roundtable was a huge success, and the students enjoyed the discussion thoroughly.

Written by: Lana Jamokha

## MEPI Roundtable: NGOs



*Dr. Salamy giving a lecture on establishing and funding NGOs*

On Thursday Dec. 13, 2012 MEPI TL Program had the honor to host distinguished speaker, Dr. Imad Salamey, one of our own political science professors

here at LAU, to talk about an important aspect of our program.

The workshop was a detailed guide for us to get the important knowledge on how to **establish and fund NGOs**, a crucial topic for TL students.

Dr. Salamey clarified the definition of NGOs and Civil Society clearly distinguished it from that of Political Parties and the other different working levels of organizations like community associations. The importance of

NGOs and Political Parties was highlighted as they revolve on influencing the three sectors of government and its policies.

In specific and organized steps, Dr. Salamey explained the process of establishing an NGO and the possible issues to target such as political reformation, women empowerment, environmental awareness and road safety.

Moreover, Dr. Salamey introduced us to important facts and information about MEPI (Middle East Partner Initiative) and its work outside of our program. One particular example was that also in collaboration with LAU, it helps women from the Gulf establish their own NGOs.

Through this workshop, we had the chance to form our own hypothetical NGOs. At the end of the workshop, Dr. Salamey, asked the students to sit in groups of their choice, according to the different issues discussed and their own interests, and then come up with their own NGOs.

The creativity and the enthusiasm of our students exemplified the spirit of this program. Great things are expected from these extraordinary students.

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