



Issue # 1

The Balamandians

The University of Balamand Newsletter for Alumni & Friends

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President's Message

Dear Graduates,

Greetings to you wherever you are and best wishes in your careers!

The University of Balamand has become an institution with an international reputation. Our alumni are scattered throughout the region and the world. We are very proud of you and your achievements. You are our ambassadors to the world and the window through which it sees us. In our informal meetings, we have sensed your eagerness to hear news about the academic and physical developments at your alma mater.

As I promised you in my last letter in March, we are launching an alumni newsletter, "The Balamandians" whose main goal is to keep you informed of what is happening at the University and to provide a venue for you to let us and other alumni know about developments in your lives both personally and professionally.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our Office of Development for launching this newsletter. I know it will be a great success because of your interest and support.

*Sincerely,
Elie A. Salem*

The Balamandians

The Balamandians is a newsletter published by the Office of Development at the University of Balamand.

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Dear Balamandians,

I want to take this opportunity to introduce to you the first issue of a newsletter dedicated exclusively for you and about you. The Balamandians is a newsletter issued by the Office of Development at the University of Balamand. Why do we need this newsletter and what are its goals?

As the alumni community grows and spreads across the region and the globe, it is imperative that alumni maintain and strengthen the link they have established with the University and with other alumni. The Balamandians aims to achieve this by informing our alumni of news and developments at the University and in the professional and personal lives of alumni.

As part of future issues of the newsletter, we are creating the Alumni Corner, a section dedicated to publishing news about you, whether be it of personal or professional nature, whether it is a new position you took or a new baby to your family. Please help us make this corner a success by sending us your news to balamandians@alamand.edu.lb. The announcements should not be more than 50 words due to space limitations and must include an e-mail address.

This newsletter is a work in progress. It will only strive through your feedback and contributions. Please let us know what you think. Specifically, the type of news you would like to hear, and any additions to the newsletter. I encourage you to send us your feedback to the above e-mail. We are eager to hear from you. I hope this newsletter fulfills your and our high expectations and achieves the desired results.

*Sincerely,
Haissam Haidar*

Founder's Day 2006

The University celebrated its Founder's Day on Monday June 5, 2006. A huge crowd overfilled the Zakhem Building Auditorium. The ceremony was attended by Bishops Elias Kurban, George Khodr and Elias Audi, in addition to the President of the University Dr. Elie Salem, members of the Board of Trustees, and Deans and Directors. His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatius IV, the founder of the University, delivered a recorded message to the gathering crowd. He expressed his joy on this occasion. He said that Founder's Day is a holiday for every student, teacher and staff member. He thanked President Elie Salem for transforming the University from a beautiful idea to a most beautiful reality.

During the ceremony, The University honored Mr. Pierre Ne'meh a longtime faculty member of ALBA for his contributions to the University and to the field of architecture. The President Dr. Elie Salem awarded Mr. Ne'meh a certificate of appreciation for his achievements in the field and service to the University. The President concluded with his yearly Founder's Day speech. He talked about the history of the founding of the University by His beatitude Patriarch Ignatius IV. He then reflected on the situation in the region and called on the crowd not to surrender to frustration but to face it with a solid will. Dr. Salem also gave a snapshot of current and future university projects that will hold benefit to Lebanon. The ceremony was highlighted by musical interludes performed by the University Oriental Choir, lead by Mrs. Jena Matta Razzouk and a rock performance by a student band. It concluded with a cocktail party.



First Tourism Conference of the School of Tourism and Hotel Management

On June 1, the School of Tourism and Hotel Management at the University of Balamand organized its first Tourism conference “Our North: a Touristic view from North Lebanon”, under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of Tourism Mr. Joseph Sarkis. His Excellency the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Yacoub Sarraf, the President of the University of Balamand his Excellency Dr. Elie Salem, and a number of Parliament Deputies also participated in the conference. The objective of the conference was to discuss ways to make the North of Lebanon a major tourist attraction. Dr. Karim Nasr Dean of the Faculty of Business & Mngement, spoke of the historical and environmental richness of the North and the role that the School of Tourism & Hotel Management is playing in promoting its discovery.

Dr. Elie Salem, President of the University, stated that tourism is one of the University’s highest priorities, and that we should not distinguish between tourism and the environment. He

called for confronting the challenges facing Lebanon despite the political uncertainties.

The Minister of the Environment, Mr. Yacoub Sarraf stressed the need to take advantage of the wealth of our environment to invigorate the tourism industry and stated that the Ministry of the Environment is ready to use the energies and expertise at its disposal to achieve environmental development.

In conclusion, Mr. Nabil Ayoub representing the Minister of Tourism, reminded the attendees of the actions taken by the Ministry of Tourism to implement its goals on tourism development, through teamwork between governmental departments, municipalities and associations.



UOB Major Sponsor of TECHLEB’06

The University of Balamand was a major sponsor of the 1st International Conference on Lebanese Technology Development TECHLEB|06, which took place at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) over the weekend of May 20-21, 2006. The mission of the conference was to define development strategies essential to making Lebanon a vibrant and sustainable technology hub in the Middle East & North Africa region (MENA). It was held under the auspices of the Lebanese Prime Ministry. The conference boasted a diverse and first-class speaker roster of international business leaders, decision makers, and economic development experts from the Lebanese government, private sector, academia, and Diaspora.

The University was represented at the Conference by Dr. Haissam Haidar, Special Assistant to the President for Development. In addition, the University also held an informational booth in the exhibition area for major sponsors. Through the efforts of UOB alumni living in the Boston area, especially Joseph Halabi, Habib Dawalibi, Jack Nader, Ghassan Fayad and Camil Jreige, the booth was a very popular stop among the exhibitors who marveled at the progress that the University has made in a very short period.



Industry is the Main Engine for Growth

“Industry is the Main Engine for Growth” was the title of the meeting held at the University of Balamand, with the Lebanese Director of the Ministry of Industry Mr. George Khoury. Mr. Khoury described the industry in Lebanon as an economic necessity for its role in securing growth and employment opportunities. He stressed the importance of suggesting appropriate action within a specified period of time, to allow manufacturers to capture their breath and enter the next phase with full confidence, relying on their own effectiveness without resorting to state intervention. He also talked about the program at the Ministry of Industry for the 2010 Youth emphasizing the importance of the role of youth.

2006 Career Fair

On June 1, the University of Balamand organized the year 2006 Career Fair on the main campus in the North. This year, the Fair hosted 30 major Lebanese, Arab and international companies in a variety of fields such as hospitality, banking, construction, services and consulting, and manufacturing. Some of the Arab companies that attended came from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Kuwait. Most of the company representatives emphasized the high quality of the UOB graduates and their mastery of three languages (Arabic, English and French) as the main reasons for recruiting at the University. The Fair was well attended by students.



Baalbeck International Festivals Golden Jubilee Performed by ALBA Students

The Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA) at the University of Balamand celebrated in the golden jubilee of the Baalbeck International Festivals and the twentieth anniversary of the artistic presentation by its students at the Baalbeck Festivals through a theatre work titled "Fifty Years of Shining" on the steps of the Bakhus temple at the Baalbeck Citadel. The work was attended by the Minister of Culture Tarek Metri, general manager of Antiques Frederic Husseini, Chairperson of the Commission of the Baalbek International Festivals Mai Aridah, and the Vice President of



Baalbek Municipality, Dr. Khalid Al-Rifai. The program was prepared and presented by students of the Academy and was written by Mai Mnassa and the choice of music was for Joe Latif. The Presentation began

with the song "Baalbeck" for Fairuz, followed by ten scenes expressive symbolic from the creativity of students included work of art for "Al-Rahabina", "Om Kolthoum", Beethoven and others of musical giants.

Two Environmental Workshops at UOB

The University of Balamand hosted two environmental workshops on environmental issues in Lebanon on June 27, 2006. The first workshop centered on wastewater problems in Lebanon and the need to establish treatment plants designed to train municipalities, non-governmental organizations and other interested parties on how to use these plants. The second workshop focused on the state of the northern coastline of Lebanon and means to consolidate the principle of integrated management by adopting a mechanism for proper sustainable management through municipalities in the region, relevant ministries, public and private institutions, and the educational sector. The two workshops come under programs financed by the European Union.



Honoring of Graduates of the Faculty of Health Sciences

Under the patronage of Bishop Elias Audi, The Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Balamand honored its 40 graduates for the year 2006, in a celebration attended by the graduates, their parents, professors, deans and directors, in addition to the President, Dr. Elie Salem. The Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences Dr. Nadim Karam welcomed the attendees and wished the graduates success in their careers and the continuing relationship between them and the university. Student representatives from each program delivered a brief speech on behalf of their classmates. A music interval by the artist-in-residence and famous pianist Tatiana Primak-Khoury followed.



The President of the University urged the students to follow developments in the areas of modern thought, and science and technology. After the distribution of pins to the graduates, Metropolitan of Beirut and Suburbs Bishop Elias Audi who told the students that their major responsibility is to save humans from falling into pain, despair, isolation and alienation. A cocktail reception followed the main event.

"The Brainiest @ UOB"

This year the Library Committee organized the first Faculty/Staff Library Challenge where faculty and staff battled over the title of "The BRAINIEST @ UOB". For about one and a half hours, four teams battled to prove, to a large and very enthusiastic UOB audience that they have what it takes to be worthy of the title. The contestants competed in charades, guessing whose picture, guessing the tune and general knowledge. Students were amused to find out that even full-fledged professors haggle over grades. It was a very close contest won by the Grandizer Team over the Road Runner Team, on a tie-breaker question.

Campus Events

Music Oriental Music Night



The University of Balamand Oriental Choir performed on 7 June 2006, an oriental musical night, which included beautiful Lebanese songs by famous singers.

Theater "Al-Arkash"

The Theater Club presented the play "Al-Arkash", a drama inspired by the Memoirs of Al-Arkash by famous Lebanese author Mikhail Naimeh. The director of the play was Mr. Salim Halal and the actors were University of Balamand students. The performance contained dance interludes by the Theater Club and was held on June 1.



"War on the Balcony"

On the theater of the University of Balamand, the musical play "War on the Balcony" was presented on June 20, 2006. The musical, designed and directed by Omar Rajeh, deals sarcastically with the Lebanese war from the point of view of the generation after the war and its effects on their lives.

Social Spring Festival 2006

This year, the annual Spring Festival organized by the Office of Student Affairs was held June 2-3, 2006. Students and student clubs participated in the 2-day. The celebration contained recreational games, sports competitions and music.



Miss UOB 2006

In the presence of the President of the University of Balamand and a large group of supporters, the Miss UOB 2006 ceremony was held at the Castel Mare Resort in Amsheet on June 9, 2006. The beauty queen of Balamand was elected from twelve contestants. Rania Halki was elected as Miss UOB 2006.



The first runner up was Ms. Asir Samarut, the second Ms. Angie Yunnan.

Full Day with Red Cross

On June 12 2006, the Youth Red Cross Club organized a full-day drive to collect donations for the Red Cross. The day included distribution of flyers, selling of sweets and baked goods. All proceeds went to support the Lebanese Red Cross. In addition, a blood donation campaign was carried out at the University Health Center.

Sports UOB Rugby Champion

The University of Balamand rugby team won the championship of the Spring 2006 intercollegiate tournament (under the patronage of the Lebanese Rugby Association) by beating the Lebanese American University team in the final match by the score of 36-14. Teams from the University of Balamand, American University in Beirut, Lebanese American University, Notre Dame University, and Holy Spirit university of Kaslik participated in the

yearly tournament. The final match on Saturday June 3, was watched by approximately 400 people, most of whom cheering on the University of Balamand team.

First Lebanese to Climb Mount Everest Speaks at UOB

On 12 June 2006, The Physical Education Club held a gathering with the Lebanese mountain climber Maxim Sha'ya, attended by a large number of teachers and students. The meeting began with a word of



welcome from the Physical Education Club, then a speech by the Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Antoine Geroges. Finally, Mr. Sha'ya talked about his project "The Seven Summits", to climb the highest peaks in the world from America to the Antarctic, Africa, Europe and Asia. Then he spoke about the summits he has climbed since 2003 raising Lebanese flag on them with great pride. Then there was a 20-minute presentation of a film documenting his climb of Mount Everest of the Himalayas

Thessaloniki Sports Tournament 2006

The University of Balamand achieved good results in the international sports tournament organized by the American University in Thessaloniki, Greece and with the participation of many Greek and Lebanese universities. The University of Balamand took first and second place in table tennis in the female and male categories, second place in male basketball, third place in female basketball, and third place in male football. The event took place on June 1, 2006.



Dr. Salem's Messages to Faculty/Staff and Students/Graduates

During the war on Lebanon, President Salem addressed both the Faculty and staff, and students and graduates in separate messages posted on the University website. In those messages, he addressed the current situation in the country and the challenges facing both Lebanon and the University. The full text of Dr. Salem's messages can be obtained by following the links below:

[President's Message to Students and Graduates](#)

[President's Message to Faculty and Staff](#)

Dr. Salem Visits the Destroyed Southern Suburbs of Beirut



The President of the University of Balamand Dr. Elie Salem, accompanied by a delegation from the university, toured the southern suburbs of Beirut. He expressed his horror about the disaster that has befallen the proud Lebanese people, as a result of the Israeli aggression, and his admiration for the courage and strength of the Lebanese people, embodied in its resistance to the occupation. He stressed that we must use this ability to build Lebanon as a strong and prosperous country.

In his meeting with doctors and professors from the Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Health Sciences at St. George Hospital,

Dr. Salem announced the establishment of "the Balamand Bridge Support Group". The group, made up of bridge and civil engineering specialists from the Faculty of Engineering, will offer its technical expertise in the area of bridge design and construction to help in the rebuilding of the destroyed bridges in the country.

Resumption of the Summer Session at the University

On Monday August 28, The University of Balamand resumed its summer semester after a long suspension due to the war. The students came back in large numbers; less than 2 % of the students registered for the summer before the war did not attend. The summer school program will end in September 30, while the 2006-2007 academic year will start on October 4.

UOB Students Support Group

Students at the University of Balamand formed a group to support and assist displaced Lebanese from the South and the southern suburb of Beirut to the Al-Koura province. The group, the Balamand Students Support Group relied on the moral and material support offered by the Balamandian family.



The group visited schools and centers that received the displaced in the towns of Benahrhan, Bhabboush, Zagharta Almtawlah, Metrit, and Derballa, which received a significant

number of displaced. After assessing the needs of the people the group rallied for support among professors and students. They collected donations from the Balamand community, packed and subsequently delivered them to the centers and schools. The students also coordinated with the Medical Association in Tripoli to provide medical care for the displaced.

UOB Helps Clean Lebanese Beaches Contaminated by Oil



The Israeli assault on Lebanon has resulted in disasters on the humanitarian and environmental levels. The bombing of the Jieh power plant led to the release of 15,000 tons of heavy crude oil in the marine environment, contaminating the waters and approximately 100 km of shorelines. The Marine Resources and Coastal Zone Management Program at the Institute of the Environment at the University has been providing technical expertise to several Non-Governmental Organizations on the best techniques to clean the affected beaches as well as information on the impact of the spill on marine life and more specifically on fish available for consumption. In addition, students from the Department of Environmental Sciences at the Faculty of Sciences volunteered for the clean-up activities. Several students from the Department were among a group of more than 100 individuals who volunteered to help clean the sandy beach of the ancient city of Jbeil on Sunday August 20. Sixty m³ of contaminated sand was removed and stored in specialized containers awaiting treatment by the concerned public authorities.

The Landmines Resource Center at the Faculty of Health Sciences Educates Residents of the South on the Dangers of Mines

This unit of the Faculty of Health Sciences, in cooperation with the Lebanese army and the support of UNICEF, launched an ad campaign on television, radio and in local newspapers on the first day of the cessation of war. The purpose of the campaign was to educate the displaced resident returning to the South of Lebanon on the dangers of mines in their villages. It also cooperated with the National Committee for Awareness in the production and distribution of leaflets to the returnees at the crossing points to the affected areas. The leaflets contained information on the dangers of mines and unexploded bombs. The unit continues to provide technical support to the National Commission to assist mine victims and visit the injured to assess their needs, fill out the appropriate forms and forward them to the authorities for follow-up.

The Resource Center for Relief and Development

The University of Balamand established the Resource Center for Relief and Development in response to the needs of the country due to the war. The aim of the Center is to reduce the effects of the war on the Lebanese population and help in the relief efforts. Despite its young age, the newly established Center was and is still involved in the implementation of a large number of humanitarian activities in collaboration with concerned bodies of the United Nations such as UNICEF, WHO, and UNEPA.



The Center was involved in organizing the distribution of food rations and cleaning materials to the displaced; the receipt, collection and distribution of medical supplies to hospitals in collaboration with the St. Georges University Hospital; and assessment and communication of the needs of the displaced to the concerned municipalities.



The Center also prepared a mobile clinic in collaboration with the St. Georges University Hospital and the Faculty of Medicine at UOB.

