

## MEMORANDUM

To: AUC Faculty and Staff  
From: David D. Arnold  
Subject: End-of-Year Reflections  
Date: June 24, 2007

As I congratulated the energetic young graduates who marched across the stages of Ewart Hall and the Cairo International Conference Center two weeks ago, I could not help but to feel inspired by the effect AUC has had on this new generation of leaders. These are bright, confident young professionals, aware of their cultural heritage, broadly educated in the liberal arts, technologically sophisticated, and equipped with the problem-solving, communication and interpersonal skills the global job market demands. The faculty and staff of AUC can take justifiable pride in the quality of these graduates and the difference they will make in the world around us.

Over the past year, we have been engaged in a long-range planning process designed to ensure AUC's ability to produce successive generations of graduates with skills and abilities needed to meet the challenges of the future. This broad-based, participatory planning process has given us the opportunity to think together about the overall direction of the university and our strategies for growth and development over the next five years. These will be transformative years for AUC, as we adjust to life in the new campus, gradually increase our enrollments, introduce new academic programs, and work to strengthen our continuing education and community outreach efforts.

Many of these planned changes are already starting to take place, as evidenced by the new undergraduate majors and graduate degree offerings in Sciences and Engineering, the opening of a new "one-stop" Student Service Center, and the start-up of our new Graduate School of Business. Exploratory efforts in the education arena will start with several certificate courses for teachers and administrators this coming fall, eventually leading to a new postgraduate diploma and master's degree program for professional educators. Other recent initiatives -such as the Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement, the Citadel Capital Financial Services Center, the Gerhart Environmental Field Station in El Gouna, the Smart Village Liaison Office, and the Jameel Science and Technology Research Center- also reflect AUC's long-term commitment to address Egypt's changing social, economic, environmental and educational needs.

Consistent with that commitment, construction of our state-of-the-art new campus is progressing well and we are now on schedule for the planned relocation to New Cairo next summer. While a tremendous amount of planning has already been done for everything from classroom technology and IT systems to food services, housing and transportation, the 2007-08 academic year will still be a time of intensive preparation for the "big move." The administration will do our very best to ensure effective communication with all segments of the AUC community as we prepare for this major transition to our new facilities.

The continual need for open and transparent communication has been highlighted for me by three developments that have attracted press attention in recent weeks. These include **the university's policy with regard to academic cooperation with Israeli scholars and institutions**, the Higher Administrative Court's decision in the face-veiling (niqab) case, and the outbreak of violence among Sudanese youth attending the World Refugee Day event on the Greek Campus last weekend. Each of these issues or incidents has generated a flurry of press articles and internal debates regarding AUC's policies and practices. Let me briefly address the concerns that have been raised.

**With regard to Israeli students or scholars seeking to study or work at AUC, the university is bound by Egyptian law and policies related to the granting of visas. As a general rule, such visas have not been issued by the Egyptian authorities. In consideration of local sensibilities and campus security requirements, the university has also refrained from inviting Israeli scholars, public figures or**

government representatives to lecture or speak at AUC. Moreover, in deciding whether to sponsor or host international seminars, public lectures or conferences which could include Israeli participants or attendees, the university has exercised discretion on a case-by-case basis, taking local conditions and campus safety factors into account. While AUC does not have any academic cooperation agreements with Israeli institutions, individual AUC faculty are free to participate in international conferences or exchanges with other scholars, irrespective of nationality or institutional affiliations. Within both the U.S. and Egyptian contexts, the administration believes that the university's current policy strikes the appropriate balance between basic principles of academic freedom and legitimate campus security concerns. We also welcome the open discussion of this set of issues at a special session of the University Senate early in the Fall semester.

The recent decision issued by the Higher Administrative Court's "Circuit for Unification of Principles" essentially precludes AUC from enforcing a complete prohibition against face-veiling on campus. However, the court's judgment does permit identity checks to be made for security and other legitimate reasons, both at the entry to the campus and within the campus grounds. AUC's policy prohibiting the *niqab* was based on both security and pedagogical considerations, and we continue to believe that face-veiling is incompatible with AUC's interactive style of teaching and learning.

Nevertheless, we are legally bound to implement the judgment of the Higher Administrative Court, and have begun working with our attorneys to draft appropriate guidelines concerning face-veiling and legally permissible identity checks on campus. We expect to issue these new guidelines to faculty, students and staff prior to the start of the fall semester. We will also be reviewing our policy of granting library privileges and other access to AUC facilities to non-AUC students and faculty members, since the challenge of instituting procedures for personal identification within the campus is obviously greater for visitors from outside the AUC community.

A similar review is also being undertaken with regard to AUC's ability to host large public events such as the June 15th World Refugee Day festivities. One of AUC's great strengths has been its openness and outreach to the community around us. The STAR (Student Action for Refugees) group of volunteers has been particularly effective in serving and supporting Cairo's growing refugee population, and their on-campus events have been peaceful, well-managed and greatly appreciated by the participants. Regrettably, two rival youth gangs took advantage of this year's festivities to engage in violent. While AUC's security team did a commendable job of managing the conflict and clearing the campus, one young man died from head injuries sustained in fighting which took place on Mohamed Mahmoud Street. Sadly, several others were injured in the melée. In the wake of this tragic incident, the administration is reviewing the planning and approval procedures for public events on campus in order to ensure adequate security, medical and other arrangements. Needless to say, protecting the safety of all individuals on the AUC campus must be our paramount concern as we plan and organize similar events in the future.

As I have noted on many occasions, AUC is currently undergoing one of the most dynamic and exciting moments in its remarkable 88-year history. Our plans and vision for the future are beginning to take tangible shape in the heart of New Cairo and we are moving forward confidently with new academic programs, research initiatives, community outreach efforts and administrative reforms. As we do so, we need to make sure we maintain the unique spirit and character of the AUC community, which is characterized by shared values, a commitment to excellence, respect for diversity and openness to reasoned debate, discussion and dialogue. These are the essential qualities that have made AUC the great university it is today, and that should guide us as we work together to become an even greater university in the years ahead.

Let me close by expressing my deep appreciation for the hard work and outstanding efforts during this academic year on the part of AUC's dedicated faculty and staff. Sherry joins me in wishing each of you a peaceful, healthy and enjoyable summer.