

Collective

A More Abundant Life



The President's Club was founded by Myrna Bustani and Ali Ghandour (former student) in 1981 to raise funds to help improve the lives of students on campus by supporting projects that are not covered by the regular university budget. Over the years, the club has funded smart classrooms, sports programs, cultural activities, and innumerable other projects that enrich student life. More than 80 benches have been adopted as part of the club's very successful Bench Campaign, which it launched in 2001. (Contact Ms. Salma Oueida (salma.ouaida@aub.edu.lb) in the AUB Development Office to name your bench!)

Learn more about the club's activities and membership: aub.edu.lb/development/volunteers/president_club

Once upon a time ... before the days of Facebook, Instagram, email, and even typewriters, AUB students were inspired to write magazines. This was when writing magazines meant *handwriting* them, not once but twice over—a copy for the library and a copy for circulation. This far-sighted enterprise not only showed initiative and commitment, it also means that AUB's Jafet Library Archives houses a wonderfully preserved treasure trove of these meticulously produced publications, providing unique insight into the hearts and minds of AUB students between 1899 and 1933.

Mona Chemali Khalaf, chair of the President's Club, carefully reviewed some 46 magazines for this project, 38 of which were handwritten. Some were in English, some in Arabic, three purely in French, and several in a mixture of two or three languages. As well as a wealth of opinion, debate, poetry, and prose, they contain hand-drawn illustrations—some by pioneering artists like Omar Unsi, others by enthusiastic amateurs—and captivating adverts that indicate that the average AUB student back then looked a great deal more dapper than any sighted on campus today!

Working with Jafet archivists, Khalaf culled a fascinating cross section of pages from this prolific 34 years of production to mount an exhibition and publish a catalog entitled,



"A More Abundant Life—as Illustrated in AUB Student Handwritten Magazines 1899-1933."

This "abundance of life" immediately becomes apparent with topics as diverse as coeducation, physical exercise, theater, and concert reviews; odes to love—both romantic and as a "Love Letter to Applied Mathematics"; cartoons; sports commentaries, and, of course, wide-ranging political debate.

Eventually typewritten pages appeared but even they were customized with hand drawn illustrations, photographs, and emblems. In the era of cut/paste/photoshop, and print it is worth taking a moment to marvel at the painstaking effort that went into encapsulating AUB student life back in the "old days."

-M.A.



Flip through the pages of handwritten student magazines at "MainGate" online and on the President's Club's website.

