

Dorm Residents Protest Bus Cancellation



Dorm residents decided to carry out their own survey of bus utility
Abdel Kodos

BY: KARIM ABDEL KODOS

Dorm residents at the New Cairo campus are questioning statistics provided by the Office of Residential Life in support of its decision to cancel their weekday bus services.

The Office of Residential Life (ResLife) had announced in an email on October 31 that the dorms bus service will no longer be provided on weekdays due to low demand.

It added that transportation will only be offered to residents during weekends and official holidays, since the regular university bus service does not run during these periods.

The email stated that only two percent of the tenants use the bus, which accounts for only 2.75 percent of the expenses incurred, making it cost inefficient.

Dorm residents, however, say the ResLife's survey was carried out under conditions that would invariably skew the results.

During an emergency meeting last Sunday, dorm residents decided to carry out their own survey of 120 tenants.

There are currently 450 students residing in the dorms.

"They're basing their statistics on [October only], which included the Eid vacation and two weeks of exams, so the statistics are not reliable and do not reflect the actual demand," said dorm resident Engy Abdel Moneim, a Business

Administration senior.

However, Yasser Allam, the ResLife finance coordinator, said that they only based their statistics on October because that is when their system of operations changed.

"The dorms bus service was available for free since the beginning of the semester until October 8 when the new payment system [began]," Allam said.

"That's why we based our statistics on October, to get the actual use of the new paid system."

Farah El Sebakhi, an undeclared sophomore, said that residents should not even be paying for a service as basic as transportation.

"We pay a lot of money and barely get [anything]. It isn't our responsibility that there aren't a lot of people using [the buses] and it is a crucial service. We should neither pay for it nor have it canceled because they don't have enough money," Sebakhi added.

Residents say that ResLife cannot accurately determine the number of students using the buses because not all dorm tenants purchase tickets.

They say that the new monthly subscription and daily-use ticket system are inefficient and cannot accurately gauge how often the dorm residents use the weekday buses, thus rendering them incapable of providing the service accordingly.

Political Science senior Yasmin

Hashim told the *Caravan* that people living in the dorms need the buses because they are safer, more convenient and cheaper than other means of transportation.

"We pay more than EGP 17,000 to get such services, then they cut it off, and this is totally unfair," she added.

Some students also find it troubling that ResLife chooses to make important decisions in the middle of the semester, leaving residents unprepared for such accommodations.

"[ResLife] could've told us earlier before the semester began so that we could've registered for Zamalek residence," said Lamia Bakry, a business administration junior.

Tenants added that even if there is low demand, it is not an excuse to cancel the entire service during the weekdays.

"[ResLife] used to have other options like a small bus or a vehicle instead of canceling the whole trip," said Osamah Shoabi, an undeclared sophomore.

Allam added that ResLife has in fact provided safe alternatives to the residents during weekdays.

"There was an email sent to the residents that provides a link to the carpooling service online. This service was available for faculty only but now it's available for everyone," he said.

ResLife will meet with tenants on November 9 to discuss the two surveys and find a solution.

Security Raised After Maadi Threat

BY: SARAH EL SAFTY

The AUC Office of Security has assured the community that it is taking necessary measures to address security threats recently made against foreign residents in Egypt.

"We are aware of the threat. We are taking it very seriously, even if we think there is minimal risk. We have taken procedures to ensure the safety of our faculty," said Mokhtar Shalaby, senior director of the Security Office.

The heightened concern came shortly after the United States Embassy in Cairo warned American and other foreign residents on October 27 of a possible terrorist attack against American schools in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and Cairo - with an emphasis on the Maadi suburb.

These locations have a "high concentration of potential targeted" foreigners, especially teachers.

The embassy cited "a recent anonymous posting on a Jihadist website" that encouraged such attacks. The message on the US Embassy website said that foreign residents should "remain vigilant regarding their personal security and alert to local security developments".

It also added that the US Embassy is working with local schools that have "high concentrations of American teachers or students to review and enhance their security posture".

"[AUC security] works very closely with Egyptian and international security

agencies to ensure the safety and security of the community," said Brian MacDougall, executive vice president for administration and finance, in an email sent to the AUC community on October 30.

Although Shalaby did not elaborate on the safety measures taken due to security purposes, one of the precautions entailed changes in AUC's Maadi bus stops.

"We routinely assess the security of our bus routes and bus stops," added MacDougall in his email.

Sheila Peuchaud, assistant professor of Journalism and Mass Communication and a Maadi resident, said that she has always felt safe in her neighborhood.

"It's just part of the whole package of living in Egypt and knowing that we are in a delicate security situation," Peuchaud added.

However, she said that grouping foreigners in Maadi's Victoria Square is a security risk.

Scott Macleod, professor of Journalism and Mass Communication who also lives in Maadi, added that he too does not feel at risk.

"The recent alert...said the embassy did not feel there was 'any specific, credible threat'. Hence we need to be careful about being alarmist and causing unnecessary fears," added Macleod.

Shalaby said that there is a strong security system in place in Maadi, and that numerous schools have already taken precautions.

International Students Experience Authentic Egyptian Life ... But Not at AUC

BY: MARY ARAVANI

International students at AUC on an exchange or study abroad basis find that they get an authentic Egyptian experience during their time in the country - but mostly when they are not on campus.

Grace Stoute, an international student from the United States (US) who is pursuing her master's degree in Arabic Literature, said that she managed to befriend international students and Egyptians alike.

However, she said a cultural barrier becomes clear when Egyptians tend to approach her as a foreigner, which she thinks reduces the authenticity of her experience.

"People speak English [with] me because I'm foreign and I look foreign, but I'm just like, 'no I want to practice Arabic'," Stoute said.

Salma Shouman, a political science senior, said that there is an unspoken rule at AUC that anyone who is different is treated differently, which affects students like Stoute who are seeking to blend in more with the Egyptian community.

Shouman also said that international students at AUC are unlikely to get an authentic Egyptian experience because AUC "is not an authentic Egyptian community".

"We are Egyptian by nationality but not attitude-wise," she said.

Stoute said one most usually gets an authentic Egyptian experience "around the hustle and bustle of the city" and away from campus.

Phoebe Hall, a study abroad junior from the US studying History and Arabic, also said that she is exposed to the Egyptian way of life to a much greater extent off campus.

"I guess in my social life I don't hang out with a lot of Egyptian students at the university but I do in the [off-campus] dorms," Hall said.

Amal Salah, director of International Student Affairs, said that there has been a sharp drop in the number of international students at AUC, which has negatively affected their integration with AUC students.

She added that another barrier to full integration is international students' chosen fields of study.

"The problem with international non-degree students who come is that they always target [humanities and social sciences]; they don't go to engineering or business, so that's why the students who go to the Arabic program don't meet any Egyptians...because there are no Egyptians learning Arabic," Salah said.

Some students have noticed this gap in educational interests and think it is an important factor that prevents full

integration.

"We should have more [of a] mix in classes because in all my classes, I haven't seen one international student," said George El Nazir, an Accounting senior.

"In my four or five years in university, I've only met [something] like two international students in classes," El Nazir added.

Salah said that the International Peer Leaders Committee (IPLC), which consists of AUCians who deal with international students, facilitates this integration.

"What we try to do is that we hope they enroll in clubs because this will [ensure] those students are integrated, working together and spending more time together," Salah said.

President of IPLC Seif Deeb believes that the committee contributes significantly to international students getting an authentic experience by giving them a positive idea about the Egyptian culture.

However, Salah said that the international students must be willing to take advantage of all the services the university provides.

"We are trying to create the place[s] and event[s] that would [help] in integrating both [international and Egyptian students], but we cannot really force it," she said.

AUC School of Business Awarded its Third Accreditation

BY: SARAH EL SAFTY

AUC's School of Business achieved the Triple Crown Accreditation, making it the first in the Middle East and the third in Africa to reach this milestone.

The school was accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the Association of MBAs (AMBA) and the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS).

The triple accreditation is a global recognition of the quality and impact of the academic and executive education programs and research at the AUC School of Business.

"We are proud to be part of this distinguished group," said Dean of the School of Business Karim Seghir.

"Students who graduate from triple-accredited business schools have access to better opportunities in the global marketplace, graduate education and better global mobility," he added.

The School of Business received accreditation of the AACSB in 2006 and again in 2011.

It gained the AMBA in April and finally the EQUIS this year. This makes the School of Business among the one percent of academic programs worldwide to achieve this feat.

Aya Mowafy, the academic assessment specialist at the Office of Academic

Assessment and Accreditation, said that out of 13,670 schools in the world only 66 are considered triple-crowned business schools.

Mowafy explained that the EQUIS classification accredits the departments of Accounting, Management and Economics for both undergraduate and graduate programs.

She added that the AACSB is the oldest accreditation merit and is considered to be the benchmark for all business schools.

However, the AMBA is only for Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs.

The EQUIS classification standard introduced something new to the Business School - a European angle of accreditation, which is considered to be the toughest to receive.

"It means our degrees are comparable in terms of quality and entrance to European universities," Seghir told the *Caravan*.

"[The] London School of Economics, Cambridge and Oxford are EQUIS standard [institutions] and we are on par with them right now," Seghir added.

Mowafy stressed that 'internationalizing' AUC's programs is one of the most important gains of the accreditation standard.

Chair and Assistant Professor of Marketing Ahmed Tolba believes that

the School of Business is now more recognized as a bridge between the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region and the rest of the world, in tandem with its mission and vision statement.

The triple crown has earned raves from the student body.

Sarah Amin, president of the Business Association said, "I think it gives our bachelor's degree more prestige as it's known that the process of getting the accreditation is extremely hard and requires the school to meet certain standards regarding education...starting from the courses available to providing external resources for students to develop."

Business Administration senior Sherihan Megahed said she is proud of her school.

"I truly benefit from the courses and some of the professors are my mentors and role models," she said.

Tolba said the school must continue improving to maintain its accreditation.

"[Even though] we got the accreditation, it does not mean that we are 100 percent perfect. There are a few issues that could be improved and this is the case for all universities," he added.

Tolba said that the school is currently working on a proposal making it mandatory for students to take courses in all areas of business in addition to their area of concentration.

Egypt Creates Sinai Security Buffer, But Will it Work?

BY: LUCIANA MAGHARIOUS

The Egyptian government is hoping that a buffer zone along its border with the Gaza Strip will prevent the smuggling of 'militants' and weapons through underground tunnels.

Last week, Egyptian forces began relocating thousands of citizens in Rafah, as they demolished their houses and established a buffer zone.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and the Egyptian National Security Council, headed by President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, declared an emergency program that includes a three-month state of emergency, a nighttime curfew in parts of the Sinai Peninsula, the creation of a buffer zone and the closing of Rafah's border crossing.

This comes as part of a counterinsurgency and security response by the government to a militant attack on October 25 that killed at least 31 Egyptian soldiers.

Although the government has claimed to be ending the insurgency that developed last year after the military ouster of former President Mohammed Morsi, Aswat Masriya's news website noted a significant rise in the number and change in the nature of attacks in Sinai during the last two months.

Attacks on security forces in Sinai during the June-August period only constituted hit-and-run shootings.

However, of 22 military assaults in the past two months, five were bombing attacks. The death toll of the past five months is 99 people - 70 security personnel and 29 civilians.

Displacement
The creation of the buffer zone between Egypt and Palestine had been discussed for more than a year but was only implemented in late October.

The demolitions started with orders to evacuate within 48 hours, including the curfew. Trucks and animals transported the displaced residents and their luggage to their relatives in neighboring areas or to the Desert Thaheer Housing Project, a temporary alternative housing provided by the government.

Human Rights advocates and a number of opposing activists said the evacuation process is unconstitutional as it contradicts Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states, "Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property." Article 63 of the newly drafted 2014 Egyptian constitution also prohibits "arbitrary forced displacement".

On the other hand, Nesrine Badawi, assistant professor at the Department of Political Science, said that these laws do not apply to certain situations.

"It is more complicated. Every country has laws that enable governments, under specific circumstances, to appropriate private property for public interest," Badawi added.

She said that if the residents in Rafah were notified and compensated, then the displacement is constitutional because it is not "arbitrary" or "forced".

Compensation
North Sinai's Governor Abdel Fattah Harhour told the state-run Middle East News Agency that 37 families who evacuated their houses have already received financial compensation.

He announced that EGP 300 will

be given to every family as a monthly housing allowance for a period of three months. Even more, every square meter of concrete building demolished will be compensated with EGP 1,200, while every meter of other construction with load bearing walls will be compensated with EGP 700 and another EGP 100 for every square meter of land on which buildings stand.

Tribal elders in North Sinai's Rafah expressed their dissatisfaction and asked for more compensation in their meeting with a presidential council recently formed by Al-Sisi. The Social Development Council, an advisory committee for Egypt's presidency, agreed that the compensations must be revised.

"People in Sinai are our families... When they are moved out of their residences, we are required to provide them with the adequate compensation," said Al-Sisi in a speech on November 3.

Al-Sisi predicted that the cost of compensations paid to evacuate residents will accumulate to EGP 1 billion.

On the other hand, the government will forcefully demolish the houses of those who refuse to comply. Forced evacuation is especially critical in Sinai, a region that has historically been marginalized by Egyptian leaders. Even more, residents who sheltered tunnels under their houses will not be given any compensation.

The Islamic Trust, known as the Egyptian Waqf, announced it will dismiss any Muslim cleric if tunnels are found below the mosques in which they serve.

Tunnels
The 500-meter-deep buffer zone will extend along the 10 km border with Gaza and will have water-filled trenches to prevent the re-digging of tunnels, which the state recognizes as one of the biggest threats to Egypt's national security.

The smuggling tunnels have been used to provide Palestinians with access to goods normally restricted and to bypass the blockade imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip since 2007. Authorities said the illegal tunnels are used to pass people, weapons and drugs across the border.

Rafah Border
Meanwhile, Hamas, the de facto ruling power in Gaza, urged the Egyptian authorities to reopen the Rafah border crossing that has been closed for two weeks. This would help the approximately two million citizens of Gaza, since Israel has closed the two crossings under its control.

The continued blockade on the Gaza Strip violates the Egyptian-engineered cease-fire between Hamas and Israel. It is also reinforcing the ongoing siege on the Gaza strip.

Eyad Al-Bazam, spokesman for Hamas' Interior Ministry, warned that the closure of the Rafah border will "aggravate the suffering of thousands of patients and students", as well as prevent humanitarian cases from leaving the Gaza Strip.

The Gaza Strip currently has three border crossings after Israel closed the other four in 2007. Two of these crossings- Kerem Shalom crossing and Gaza-Israel Erez crossing- are controlled by Israel and were shut down last Sunday citing a rocket attack from the Palestinian enclave. The third- the Rafah crossing- is controlled by Egypt, and has been closed for a total of 189 days this year.

It remains questionable whether the buffer zone will end the militant activity or trigger counterattacks.

New Attendance Policy Not Widely Implemented



Students question the implementations of the newly introduced policy

Al Sheikh

BY: NORA SEWEIFY

A number of students have told the *Caravan* that their professors are not implementing the new attendance policy introduced at the start of this semester.

The policy states that students will be penalized and awarded an F grade only if they are absent the equivalent of three weeks of class.

The old system allowed instructors to penalize students for each absence.

At the instructor's discretion, grades were deducted for absences with varying percentages depending on each department.

These deductions have now been voided as long as students miss less than three weeks - or six classes.

George Marquis, interim associate dean for the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUSS) department, said that the university decided to change the policy when it recognized that some students have legitimate obligations off campus, and that they should not be penalized for missing a week or two of classes.

But some professors are not convinced

that the policy change is a good one.

"One of my professors actually deducts 0.5 percent for every absence, even before missing six classes," said Ibrahim Tolba, a construction engineering senior.

Computer Science junior Seif Shoeib said that his professor takes attendance five random times during the semester, with each accounting for one percent of the final grade.

"So, if we're absent that one time he decides to take attendance, he deducts grades," Shoeib said.

Nora Amer, an economics senior, said that one of her professors sends regular warnings to students even if they miss fewer than six classes.

However, Abdel Hamid Galal, assistant professor in the Physics department said that he does follow the new policy.

"If someone is absent for six consecutive classes, I have to report this to the chair and then the chair would take the legal action based on the constitution," Galal said.

"If they have a very solid excuse then it's okay, if not then I have to give him or

her an F [grade]," Galal added.

Hussein Assem, a business administration junior, also confirmed that the policy is implemented in his classes.

"I know a student who just received an F [grade] in a course for not attending six times," he said.

Farida Sherif, an undeclared freshman, added that her professors only start deducting grades after a student is absent for six classes.

On the other hand, some professors and students are indifferent to the change in the attendance policy.

"Some of my professors don't even take attendance. This new attendance policy doesn't really affect me; I can go to my classes any time," said Raouf Osama, a Computer Science senior.

Osama added that some of his professors did not adhere to the old policy anyway, making the new policy moot.

But some instructors don't take attendance to begin with.

Samer Attallah, an assistant professor at the Economics department said he is not aware of what the new policy entails.

"I don't take attendance because it's time consuming, [and] I think that [students] should be aware of the consequences of attending and not attending," he said.

Marquis added that the university changed the policy because they believe attendance should not be part of the students' assessment.

"If you're an A student or a B student, it shouldn't be because you had perfect attendance, because that's not telling us anything about your abilities," Marquis added.

Assistant Registrar Manar Zaki said that each professor independently determines their attendance policy.

"[The professors] already have an idea about each student; who's working, who's committed, who's dedicated and who's not," Zaki said.

"So, it all depends on the professor's discretion [to decide]."

AUC has a Legacy of Long Lost Student Clubs

BY: MARY ARAVANI

Just as fads come and go, such has been the fate of various AUC student clubs and organizations throughout the years.

Some of these clubs left barely any trace of what they once were, leaving their existence shrouded in mystery.

"There is no measure that could say whether a club will continue or not... but in some cases we have students who establish [one] but later graduate and leave it behind," said Sayed Omar, the student organizations senior specialist at the Office of Student Development (OSD).

The club then faces limbo when the founder doesn't "pass the baton" on to someone else or leave a legacy to be continued.

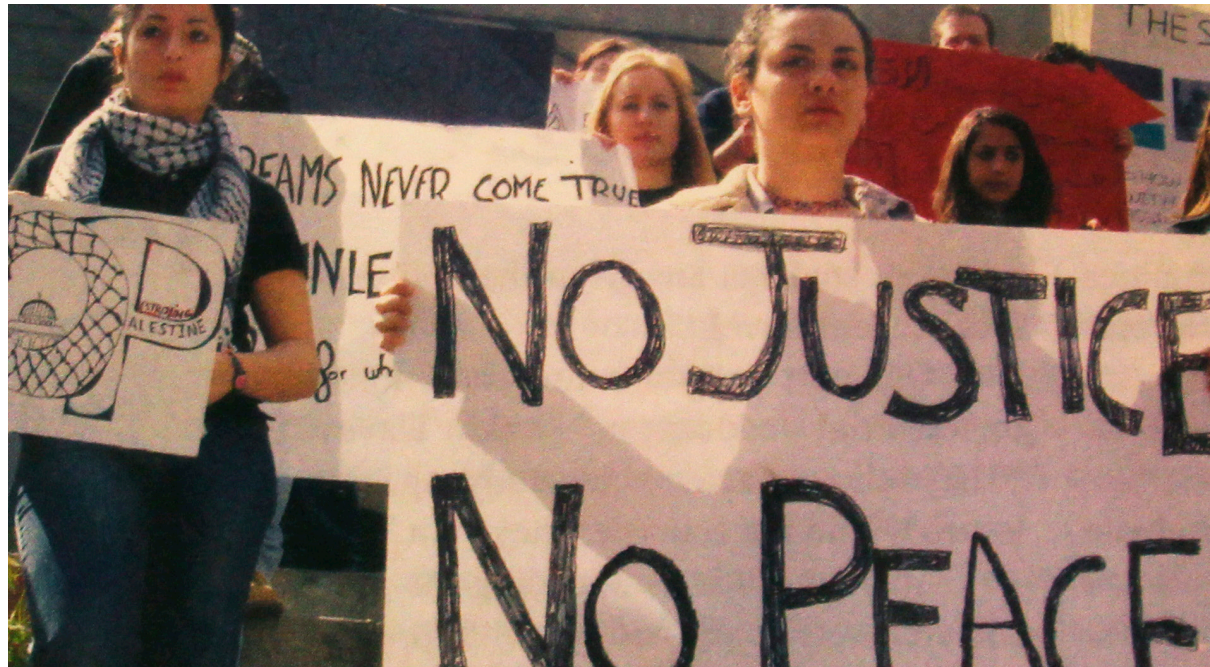
The Jerusalem Friends Club is one such student organization that is now defunct.

Established at the Tahrir Campus in the 1970s, it was a popular amalgamation of activists and supporters of the Palestinian cause.

Mahmoud El Lozy, currently professor and director of the AUC Theater Program was studying at the time and remembers the club well.

"It was probably the most popular club on campus," he told the *Caravan*.

"It was basically a Palestinian club and at that time, we were all politically conscious; we were aware that the Palestinian question was the question of all Arabs.



Al Quds club is another club that was present in 2007, it worked to raise awareness for the Palestinian conflict

Caravan Archives

The club dealt with political issues and with the question of the liberation of Palestine but in time of course this changed," he said.

Sarah Hassan, a business marketing senior, seemed keen about the idea of joining such a club if it were still available.

"I think I would have joined because I'm really interested in this issue...I

would like to see it reappear because the Palestinian issue is a never-ending topic that always has new updates," she said.

According to documents found in the *Caravan* archives, the Anti-Drug Team in 2003-2004 was a club formed to discourage students from using any type of drugs.

Mohamed Hassan, a current Theater and Film junior, told the *Caravan*, "I

probably wouldn't have joined the club because I'm a chain smoker."

Although a relatively new club, he believes the Anti-Drug Team likely fell by the wayside because it was unpopular.

"I probably wouldn't like to see it re-emerge because I believe it's approaching the issue [of drug abuse] in the wrong way."

A popular club around 2006-2007,

AUC Grapples with Congested Commute

BY: SAFAA MAGDY

A number of students and faculty have complained in recent days that getting to and from the New Cairo campus has become cumbersome as traffic appears to grind to a standstill.

Last week was particularly frustrating for many making the trip, whether commuting by bus or private car, as a widening of the highway near the Maadi entrance created a bottleneck for AUCians who live in Zamalek, Mohandessin or October 6 city.

Add to that the construction of exit ramps on the Ring Road halfway between Maadi and New Cairo and it becomes clear that at least for the foreseeable future, transportation obstacles are likely to increase.

The Research Institute for a Sustainable Environment (RISE) has been looking for alternative ways to overcome these obstacles.

Their suggestions included constructing a tram line, building a rapid bus transit and extending the metro line to New Cairo.

But even these appear troubled. "The financing for a new tram line is shaky right now and it doesn't seem cost effective," Andrew Petrovich, a research associate at RISE, said at a conference held last week.

Petrovich added that at the time when the New Cairo campus began operating, the government had announced a plan to extend the metro line to New Cairo.

However, this never materialized. He does believe, nonetheless, that Bus Rapid Transits (BRT) is the most suitable solution, given current conditions.

"It is the least costly, it has the least operational costs and [fewer] infrastructure modifications," Petrovich said.

BRTs operate much in the same

manner as regular buses except they have minimal stops during the commute, which saves time and reduces congestion.

But the issue of buses and commuting to AUC is a sensitive one and convincing an already frustrated community to take public transport may prove to be a hard sell.

Family Transport, which was the main carrier since the 2008 move to the New Campus, was the target of much criticism in recent years. Its contract was not renewed this past summer.

Instead, a fleet of different vendors were used for the bus service but these, too, have been criticized for a number of reasons, which led to heated exchanges between student representatives and administration.

Transportation to and from the new campus has always been a big issue since the campus' relocation from Downtown to New Cairo.

"It was initially intended to encourage the students to live on campus but now the dorms only hold 450 students and that is only one tenth of the students' population at AUC," said RISE Director Richard Tutwiler.

When the AUC campus was relocated, the administration encouraged staff and faculty to move to New Cairo.

Housing was established for more than 80 faculty families and staff members were encouraged to buy lands and build new homes.

However, not all faculty and students live within walking distance so the decision to provide a bus service was taken as a consequence.

The Sustainable Transportation to New Cairo research was carried out last spring for a conference at the American University in Beirut.

It is part of a bigger research initiative about sustainable transportation in the Middle East.

New RHET System Implemented to 'Bolster' Students' Learning Experience

BY: HANNAH ALTMANN

After two years of planning, the Rhetoric and Composition (RHET) department implemented a new system for freshman writing courses to enhance students' learning experience.

Whereas the previous system required students to complete three RHET courses – 101, 102, 201 – each of which is a prerequisite for the next, the new system features three linked courses.

"In the first semester freshman students will have to [take] two courses at the same time: the RHET 1010, which is a freshman writing course and this is partnered with another course called Core 1010, where they read content [and] practice presentation and teamwork, [as well as] critical reading and critical thinking," said Ghada El Shimi, chair of the RHET department.

During registration, students can choose different themes from the linked RHET and Core courses.

These include advertology, civic engagement, and heroes and demons – all of which share the same learning outcomes.

The third required course is RHET 1020, previously known as 201 Research Writing.

The Freshman Program Task Force, which consists of faculty and students, introduced the idea of changing the curriculum to "bolster" the students' learning experience.

The RHET department enforced the system in Fall 2013 to introduce incoming freshmen to the new policies, while second-semester students continued following the previous curriculum.

All first-year students are currently following the new system, which aims to ensure students finish their required

courses within a specific time-frame.

"We require the students to do a timely completion of their freshman courses. We would like them during their first three semesters to have completed all of their freshman courses in RHET, Libraries and Learning Technologies (LALT), Scientific Thinking and Philosophical Thinking," said El Shimi.

Sanaa Khabbar, a professor at the RHET department, said the linked courses give students the opportunity to think about fundamental ideas in both Core and RHET.

"I'm really enjoying the new system and [the students] are making more connections between the two courses," Khabbar said.

She added, "I keep referring to the readings and materials in both courses, [which is] saving time in class and it gives them the chance to examine texts at different levels."

Khabbar also said that the new system allows her to gauge their capabilities and progress.

"I get to know their weaknesses and strengths in terms of writing [and] critical thinking and the other reason why I like that, regardless of whether I teach them both courses or not, the students are together in two courses and this is helping us create learning communities," she said.

El Shimi added that most of the feedback she received thus far has been positive, with students saying that they like the new system.

However, some students said they are facing difficulties with it.

"The thing is, it's not standardized. It's supposed to be standardized and all the backgrounds are supposed to be the same so that it's fair," said Shahd Sherif, a Computer Engineering freshman.

was called the The Bussy Project.

The club dealt with women's issues and was inspired by Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*, a play composed of a series of soliloquies that dealt with female issues or situations ranging from rape to menstruation.

Mariam El Attar, Music and Theatre programs coordinator and AUC alumna who was a student at the time of the club, remembers the nature of the project.

"Every semester, they'd have scripts about women's issues and some [of these] were performed [on stage]," El Attar said.

"It was a popular club and it wasn't just about performances; they also had surveys about women's issues," said Attar.

The Bussy Project, although no longer an AUC club, lives on.

Sayed says it has now evolved into a non-governmental organization (NGO).

The official Bussy Project website says "... Bussy now aims to tackle the complexity of gender issues from the perspectives of both women and men."

There have been a number of other clubs and organizations that appeared and disappeared over the past decade.

These include clubs such as Fathers' and Sons' Reception, Egypt My Love, The Touring Club, Mission E, and Friends in Need.

There were even student dance organizations such as the Hip Hop and Latin Fever clubs.

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Fabrica Brings Puppetry to Life in El Leila El Kebira



One of the scenes in *El Leila El Kebira*, performed by the crew members of Fabrica

Ghoneim

BY: MARY ARAVANI

Musical theater group Fabrica brought the Egyptian puppet show *El Leila El Kebira* (The Grand Night) back to life – literally – with a show-stopping rendition at the Sawy Culture Wheel last Sunday.

El Leila El Kebira is a famous Egyptian puppet operetta that usually airs on television every year in celebration of the *moulid* – the Islamic observance of Prophet Muhammad's birthday.

The operetta, which was written by Salah Jahin and composed by Sayed Mekawy in the 1960s, deals with traditions of the *moulid* in a humorous manner along with song.

This unique approach made it the perfect choice for Fabrica's performance.

"I was looking for a musical theater piece that was typically Egyptian and that didn't need too much orchestra or dancing," said Neveen Allouba, Fabrica's founder and an adjunct faculty member of AUC's Department of Arts.

Mohamed Abou El Kheir, director of the performance and an adjunct faculty member of AUC's department of Arts, was initially reluctant about the idea of

recreating *El Leila El Kebira* because he wanted to approach the performance in an innovative way.

"I was against it at first because I couldn't find anything extra to add to it," Abou El Kheir said.

He added that restricting the performance to singing would be downgrading the group members' talent.

Despite Abou El Kheir's reservations, Fabrica's rendition of the famous show, which had them using human beings in place of the puppets and included extra scenes of humorous and relevant dialogue in between songs, grabbed the audience's attention right from the start.

Performers were on stage having conversations with each other half in character and half as themselves, with light remarks here and there to highlight each individual's personality, while at the same time preserving the colloquial atmosphere of Egyptian villagers.

A light change followed the conversations, and suddenly the performers' voices carried familiar tunes that filled the spaces between the crowd of more than 100 people.

"I loved the show very much. I wasn't even planning on coming but I'm very

happy that I did. It was very funny and they added a new, very good twist to it," said 32-year-old audience member Nourhane Refaie.

One scene, in which two of the performers – a man and a woman – partook in a Sayed Mekawi sing-off, was particularly memorable to Bassem Amin, another audience member.

"I especially liked the technicality of their voices and also the way they seemed to put the people's personalities into the character," said 28-year-old Amin.

The musical theater group rose to fame after their Arabic rendition of the popular musical *Les Misérables* was showcased on Bassem Youssef's *El Bernameg* (The Program) in June 2013.

At the time of the *Les Misérables* performance, Fabrica was mostly comprised of AUC students.

However, the group has since grown and has spread its roots all over the country, aiming to popularize musical theater in Egypt by translating popular western musicals into Arabic.

"I would love to target the public [outside of] Cairo. Cairo has a lot going on, but outside Cairo there are very few things going on," said Allouba.

Lions of Cairo: A Medieval Afternoon



Baboukis, right, during his performance with *Lions of Cairo* Aravani

BY: MARY ARAVANI

The Lions of Cairo concert transported the audience back to the Middle Ages as medieval English music, Byzantine chant, Greek folk-song and traditional Arab music filled the air on Monday.

The Department of Arts hosted this concert in the Performing and Visual Arts (PVA) courtyard, where John Baboukis, chair and associate professor at the Department of Arts and soprano singer Amira Reda started off singing slow and melodic 13th-15th century English songs.

"This is an ensemble which is dedicated to reconstructing medieval and renaissance repertory, mostly Mediterranean but...we also stretched out a bit and did English music this time because we feel there's a real sympathy between this repertory and the music of the Arab world," said Baboukis, who co-directed the performance with Director of the music program and Associate Professor at the Department of Arts Wael El Mahallawy.

"The music of a thousand years ago in the West had textures that are very similar to the ones that are used now in classical Arab music," he continued.

Baboukis and Reda managed to keep the audience attentive as their voices bounced through the crowd, initially

unaccompanied by musical instruments.

Reda's soprano complemented Baboukis with a seemingly effortless harmonization. Their give and take created all the more of a medieval setting.

As students and faculty enjoyed the soothing music set against the PVA courtyard backdrop, the performance gradually made its way to the traditional Arab music segment.

The performers began to incorporate the *oud* and *qanoon*, two traditional string instruments, as Baboukis joined three other musicians to play 19th and early 20th century Arabic music.

Heads swayed as Baboukis and Reda sang the traditional Syrian song *Lama Bada Yatathana* (When She Begins to Sway) accompanied by the *oud* and *qanoon* as the closing number.

"The last song was my favorite part; I liked the combination of singing along with the Arab music," said Economics sophomore Nora Elias, adding, "The fact that it's live music is great."

"It was beautiful... John Baboukis' voice was great. I may not have understood anything they were singing about but I loved it," said Ahmed Omar, theater freshman.

Overall, the concert seemed to portray a small portion of the great talents that can be found within the AUC community.

Egypt Woos Ethiopia over Nile Water

BY: CARAVAN STAFF

Egypt says it has ushered in a new era of cooperation and mutual trust with Ethiopia, as its ministers sign several trade, health and education pacts in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

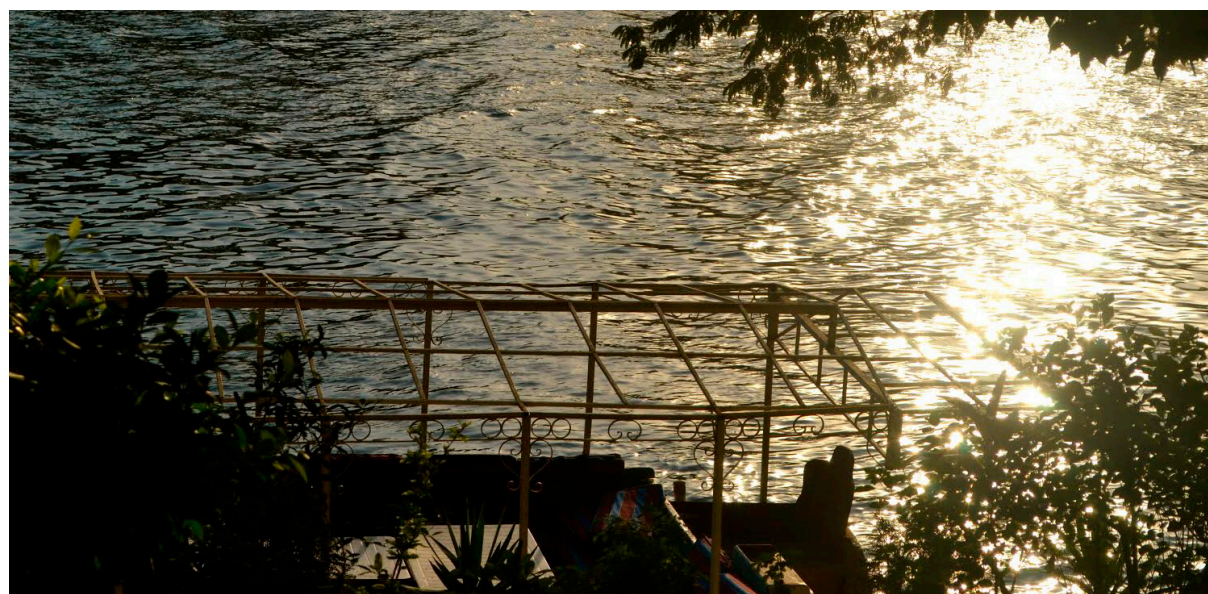
The meeting of senior officials in Addis Ababa last week appears on the surface to indicate that the two countries are potentially inching towards an agreement of sorts regarding Ethiopia's determination to build a massive hydroelectric dam that could divert Nile water away from Egypt.

Dubbed the 'Renaissance Dam (RD)', it is estimated to cost \$4.8 billion and generate 5,250 megawatts of electricity.

The dam – Egyptians fear – will threaten their country's only substantial water resource in the region.

In recent years, and particularly in the wake of the January 25 uprising, relations between the two countries have been strained over appropriation of Nile water.

Events heated up in 2010 after countries that share the Nile River



The River Nile is Egypt's greatest natural resource

basin moved to revise the colonial-era treaties that not only allocate the bulk of the river's water to Egypt but also allow Cairo to veto upstream dam projects.

Under the current 1929 (and later 1959) agreement, Egypt currently controls 55 billion of the 88 billion cubic meters of water derived from the Nile

every year.

But African nations, which have gained independence from colonialism in the past six decades and have undergone

population growth, say the agreement needs revising.

The two agreements formulated in 1929 and 1959 had provided Egypt and Sudan, better known as the downstream countries, with the largest share of the Nile throughout history.

The 1929 treaty signed by the colonizers provided Egypt with veto power over the upstream states' decisions concerning the river.

"The three major players are Ethiopia, which provides 86 percent of the Nile water, and Sudan and Egypt who consume 99 percent of the water provided," Ibrahim Elnur, chair of the political science department, previously told the Caravan.

"Nile Basin populations increased five-fold thus the common pool became better populated and the fragile non-riparian zones are increasingly integrating into the Nile region adding further pressures," said Elnur.

Today, the eight African neighbors better known as the upstream countries are demanding the redistribution of the Nile water.

Egypt's Police Force: Who Watches the Watchmen?



Nada Ismail, Caravan News Editor

A week ago, I found myself in a police station filing a report after having a car accident. It was the first time for me to step into a police station, and I was waiting to witness all the misconducts that are popularly known to happen in there.

Although I did not see anyone being slapped around or physically abused, I did notice that most police officers had this sense of authority, which gave them the idea that they could harass and humiliate anyone.

Sadly, it goes without saying that the police officer sexually harassed me. After instructing me to sign the report he filled out, I started reading it to make sure of what I'm signing to.

"Don't worry, I filed a *orfy* contract between you and me...I mean to sell the car," he said with a sly smile on his face.

Of course, he was cunningly implying that he wrote an unofficial marriage contract for the two of us.

I won't say that he didn't even respect the presence of my male cousin standing next to me, because he should respect me even without any male relative of mine around but he didn't even fear or consider the fact that someone would stand up to him.

He knew that his power would make anyone think twice before talking back or

questioning his actions.

After that incident, another simple-looking woman sitting on the bench said that she wants to file a complaint against a supermarket because she bought cabbage from them, but when it turned out to be rotten they wouldn't return it and threw it in her face.

"Get her cabbage back, and get her peppers too so we can cook some *mahshy* [stuffed vegetables]," the officer said to his colleague as they both laughed in front of the woman.

Although it may seem silly to file a report for a rotten cabbage, it is the job of the police officer to serve and protect the rights of any citizen, no matter how trivial their complaint may be.

I later found out that my brother had given the police some money so that he'd stamp the report.

Apparently, that is how things work in police stations: No money, no stamp. No stamp, no report. No report, no rights.

The power and authority given to police officers are supposed to be utilized in the favor of the population, rather than its humiliation and abuse.

If police officers spend as much time serving citizens as they do violating their rights and abusing them physically, emotionally and financially the relationship between the police and the people would not be in its current state.

Women would not be afraid to go to police stations alone because they'd know they wouldn't need protection in there. Simple people would resort to the police when their rights are abused, rather than fear more abuse from the police officer because they are poor and have no support.

When people know that the authorities will protect their rights, others won't dare violate them.

Homosexuality: Is it Really a Crime?



This scares me not only as a journalist, but also as a regular citizen in society.

Honestly, one of the reasons I was hesitant to write my opinion this week was because I knew for a fact I would be criticized. However, this in itself was the driving force that made me write it.

I'm aware that homosexuality is a sin in Islam and Christianity, and since those are the dominant religions in Egypt, I understand fully that it is culturally unaccepted.

This is to say that by writing this, I'm definitely not criticizing the society; I am just trying to find a way to convince the readers that homosexuality can be seen differently.

Here is a true story: I was sitting somewhere on campus at the beginning of the semester with my friends.

A guy walked in front of us carrying what looked like a purse. My guy friends started making fun of him and verbally harassing him, assuming, of course, he was gay.

Thank God, the guy did not hear them nevertheless I felt very uncomfortable.

My mantra in life is 'live and let live' Basically, people can do whatever they want and I can do whatever I want, as long as no one is bothering the other.

People should have the liberty to pursue whatever makes them happy.

That is the definition of freedom.

They should be free to pursue whatever job they want, live in any country they choose, and marry whom ever they please.

So, why can't we treat the gay community the same way? Think about it.

Given the fact that a discussion of these subjects is in and of itself challenging, it is no surprise that we face even greater obstacles in changing our misconceptions.

We as the educated in society need to

broaden our horizons and try to look at things in a different way.

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Egyptians' Opinions: Constructive Criticism or Incitement of Terrorism?



Huda Ramzy, Caravan Online Editor

"No voice rises above the voice of the battle," said Gamal Abdel Nasser, the late Egyptian president. The current Egyptian President, Abdel Fattah El Sisi,

called on Egyptians to rally behind him against terrorism by banning criticism of the police, army, and judiciary through media publications.

In response, hundreds of journalists rejected the editors' October 26 declaration where editors said they would take actions to stop what they called "infiltration by elements supporting terrorism".

Fighting terrorism is now a goal set by the president and is forced upon the people to work towards. It is now Egypt's most important priority, so basically nothing else can be mentioned.

I cannot deny the vitality of that goal,

especially after the devastating killing of over 30 soldiers in Sinai and the growing threat that is the Islamic State (IS) living next door. But it cannot and should not be the only mission of every Egyptian.

How can it be expected of the common Egyptian to take on the goal against terrorism when he/she are engulfed in their day-to-day problems that are, in one way or another, a result of decades of government inefficiencies.

There is an Egyptian taxi driver whose only goal is not to fight terrorism but to earn enough money and put food on the table for his children, one of which could be a college graduate who is employed by

a chair in the *ahwa* - or café - around the corner, on which he sits full-time.

There is an Egyptian woman dreading every step she takes to her door as she is consistently greeted by a beating from her abusive husband. Her goal is not to fight terrorism but to fight her husband's temper.

There is an Egyptian mother in Marsa Matrouh who is still mourning her 7-year-old son who died after the gate of his school fell on him. Her goal is not to fight terrorism.

There are young people living on the street who are unaware of anything that is taking place. Their goal is not to fight

terrorism but instead to sell the biggest number of tissue packets.

Who is going to give these Egyptians a chance to speak? How can those Egyptians be heard if criticizing the faults in our country is forbidden?

The problem lies in seeing criticism as a hindrance rather than a form of awareness.

Those who criticize are not seen as giving sufferers a voice but rather as raising riots and inviting anarchy.

If this approach remains and such policies persist, the voiceless will never be heard and problems will never be solved.

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CARRYING THE VOICE OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO COMMUNITY

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“Faces from Cairo” Tells the Tales of Everyday Life in Egypt

BY: HANA GAMAL

Everyone in this country has a story written on their face.

The words that are etched on their faces are often stronger than those that come out of their mouths, because they are not calculated and carefully articulated.

They're there whether or not the person wants them there; they tell a silent story when words fail to express the depth of the emotions they truly feel.

They go about their daily lives without a second thought to the problems and emotions they harbor, so it's often difficult for the naked eye to pick up on their backstories.

But, if we pay close enough attention, we can read their stories.

Lots of seemingly ordinary situations reflect extraordinarily significant stories and emotions.

We tend to dismiss those around us as dissimilar just because of their external appearances but the reality is that we can relate to each other a lot easier than we expect.

Perhaps this is why I love photographing people around me; in an attempt to relate to them and better comprehend their stories, I take a still image that captures the emotion behind a particular moment in time.

I like to be in touch with people and talk to them but nothing trumps having a timeless image that shows every facial feature, every wrinkle, every scar – the story is in the fine details.

The pictures in this photo essay are no exception to these rules.

Every photo tells a story, both through the words the subjects spoke and through the split-second expressions my lens caught.



Samir is an antique shop owner in Downtown, Cairo, holding his grand daughter in his arms.



Esraa, a mother of two, sits outside a residential building in Zamalek neighbourhood in Cairo.



Ali constantly helps his father cultivate land in Mansoura.



Zeinab and her daughter stand in front of their home in a neighbourhood in Sayeda Zeinab.



Abdo is a 40 year old, who guards the 'Wafaa W-Al Amal' cemetery in Nasr City.