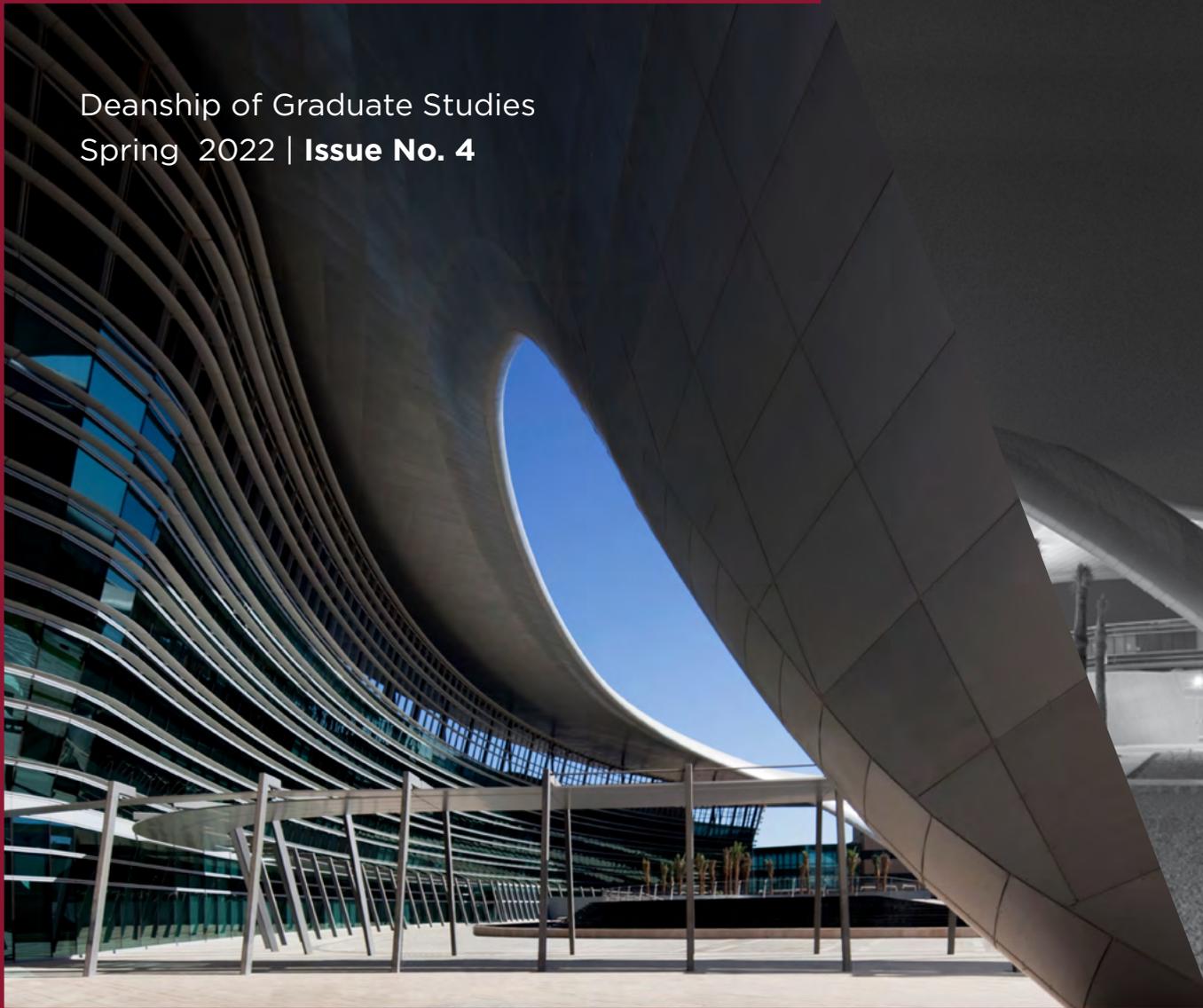


GRADUATE POST

Deanship of Graduate Studies
Spring 2022 | Issue No. 4



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Zayed University

Graduate Post

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IN THIS ISSUE

DEAN'S MESSAGE 03

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT 05

GRADUATE PROGRAM
SPOTLIGHT 07

GRADUATE ALUMNI
CORNER 11

STAFF SPOTLIGHT 13



Dean's Message

As we conclude Spring 2022, Zayed University will be awarding 29 degrees to students whose hard work and persistence have enabled them to successfully complete their master's degree program during challenging and stressful times. Congratulations to the class of 2022!

In addition, for the first time in three years, Zayed University held an on-site graduation ceremony at Dubai Expo 2020. On 16 March 2022, Her Excellency President Noura AlKaabi handed 131 graduates their master's degree diplomas, and 50 graduated with honors. Many family members and friends rejoiced and celebrated this major milestone in the life of these graduate students. It was truly a magical moment for all.

Thank You to Our Graduate Programs Stakeholders

Witnessing these joyous moments reminds me of why we are working in graduate studies at Zayed University and how many faculty and staff support graduate programs and graduate students.

As the semester draws to a close, I want to thank and recognize the dedication of our exceptional faculty and staff across the university. Bearing in mind the mission of Zayed University, and more particular the mission of the Deanship of Graduate Studies, the unit works collaboratively across various departments and offices on common projects, goals and responsibilities. As I reflect on this past semester, I am amazed by, and grateful for, all we have accomplished together.

Our graduate faculty are always ready to share their expertise with students. For example, on 8 March 2022, the Deanship of Graduate Studies hosted a webinar on planning a research thesis. Three master's degree programs offer a research thesis and several students are engaging in innovative research. During the webinar, Dr. Samer Wazan, Dr. Ahmed Seffah, Dr. Haleema Al Sabbah, and Dr. Kristine Stewart shared valuable information on how to plan a research thesis from topic development to managing the project, databases, library resources, etc.

I am also grateful to the Center for Education Innovation, especially Nicholas Yates, who organizes a Graduate Teaching Orientation on a semester basis to prepare faculty to teach graduate courses and obtain graduate faculty status. During the training sessions, faculty discuss differences between undergraduate and graduate education and innovative pedagogical approach. They also analyze an existing course and rework the syllabus by creating appropriate content and assessments. This is all done to ultimately enhance the student learning experience.

The Deanship of Graduate Studies also would like to sincerely thank staff members from the Provost Office, Library and Learning Commons, and the Departments of Contracts and Procurement, Finance, Campus Physical Development and Services, Facilities, Government Communications, Translations, Information Technology, Strategy and Future and Student Careers and Alumni for their tremendous efforts, enthusiasm and services. Without the continuous assistance and support of these departments, it would not have been possible to reach the goals that we set out to achieve.

Given the achievements of this semester, the future looks very bright. We now look forward to the Fall 2022 semester and all the opportunities it will give to us all.

Sincerely,

Gaëlle Picherit-Duthler, PhD
Acting Dean, Graduate Studies





Faculty Spotlight

Aristeidis Samitas, PhD.

Chair, Finance Department
College of Business

Dr. Aristeidis Samitas was a Professor of Finance in the Department of Business Administration at the University of the Aegean, Greece, for more than 20 years. He studied Economics at the University of Athens (BSc, 1995) and Banking and Finance at the University of Birmingham (MSc, 1996). He furthermore holds a Ph.D. (2001)

in Finance from the University of Athens and he has concluded Postdoctoral Research at City University, London (2009).

Dr. Samitas delivered lectures at both the undergraduate and graduate level at the University of the Aegean, University of Athens, University of Thessaly, Hellenic Open University, Open University of Cyprus, University of Sheffield, City University and the University of Wales. He has also delivered lectures as guest speaker at numerous Universities around the world (USA, Australia, Germany, etc.). He is the Associate Editor of the International Journal of Finance and Economics, a member of multiple scientific associations, and a reviewer for international journals.

Furthermore, Dr. Samitas was the Director of the MBA and Executive MBA programs at the University of the Aegean and a member of the University Council. Professionally, he has been employed as a consultant for various Ministries in Greece (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour) and he was the CEO of an educational organization.

His research has been published in top international finance journals and edited volumes, such as the Journal of Econometrics, European Journal of Finance, Journal of International Financial Markets Institutions and Money, Applied Financial Economics, International Journal of Finance and Economics, International Review of Financial Analysis, Small Business Economics, to name a few. Currently, he has 65 published papers in peer-reviewed journals internationally, which span across a variety of subjects that include financial markets, financial crises, contagion, the banking sector, corporate finance and, very recently, social network analysis. He collaborates with other colleagues on research projects as, in his opinion, structured teamwork vastly improves the quality of scientific work.

Dr. Samitas' main area of interest is financial markets. Most of his work is aimed at attempting to describe financial market phenomena, particularly during a financial crisis. More recently, he has been working on the banking sector and on the channels of financial crisis contagion, running simulations with different scenarios to draw conclusions on the behaviour of the banking sector and the real economy during distress.

He enjoys employing different econometric methods in his work and following closely the new trends in the financial literature. In published papers, he has employed, among other methodologies, several DCC models, copulas, Markov switching regimes and network analysis.

Recently, the paper titled “Forty Years Journal of Econometrics: Co-Authorship Patterns and Networks”, has been published in the Journal of Econometrics. In this paper, the research clusters formed between various researchers in different academic institutions were examined. His highest cited paper, though, is titled “Financial Crises and Stock Market Contagion in a Multi-Variate Time-Varying Asymmetric Framework”. This paper investigated financial contagion in a multivariate time-varying asymmetric framework, focusing on emerging and development equity markets, during five financial crises. This paper has been included by Elsevier in the ten most influential articles published in its leading journals in recent years.

In the future, Dr. Samitas plans to expand his work in exploring the effects of financial crises on other aspects of human activity, including welfare and unemployment. Additionally, he plans to employ the network methodology that was used in his Journal of Econometrics paper to discover network relationships in the financial markets. Assuming the stock market is a virtual network where each share is a node, someone can train the model to accept or reject relationships between nodes thus building a stock network with clearly defined clusters. These can then be used to forecast stock behaviour by observing a small subset of shares.

Dr. Samitas’ primary goal as Professor in Finance is to instil in his students the same enthusiasm that he has as a researcher. He is of the opinion that the main goal of Finance and Financial Economics is to make people better off. He believes that this objective overlaps with the goals of education. He asks his students to apply the merits they are taught in their decision-making processes. As a Professor, he is motivated by the belief that students must emerge from a finance course with a clear understanding of how the global economic environment works in principle. On the other hand, students are motivated by specific business needs, since knowledge is easier to acquire when it can be applied to real world situations.

At the same time, Dr. Samitas tries to explain to his students that finance discipline can and must be approached using scientific processes. Quantitative or qualitative methods can be applied to test and confirm theoretical concepts and hypotheses. His teaching methodology usually includes engaging students with examples from the business world. Carrying forward his experience from corporate consulting and from teaching undergraduate and graduate courses as well as from having attended professional seminars, he tries to help students make the connections between research methods and real-world problems.



Graduate Program Spotlight

Is a Master's Degree in Finance Worth It?

8 Questions for

Dr. Moo Sung Kim

Associate Professor,
Graduate Program Coordinator
Master of Science in Finance
College of Business



1. What is finance and, in your opinion, why is finance often perceived as difficult to study?

Finance is about managing money. It is about the creation of value, management of assets and investments. Most students feel finance is hard because there is a heavy emphasis on calculations, statistics and analysis.

As applicants to the Master of Science in Finance are not required to have a background or experience in finance, Zayed University faculty academically support graduate students throughout the master's degree program. Students will also have access to several resources such as the Library and Learning Commons and Bloomberg Terminals to assist them during their graduate studies.

2. List the top four benefits of receiving a Master of Science in Finance from Zayed University?

- Career Advancement
- Specialized Knowledge and Practical Skills
- Professional Opportunities in a Booming Market
- Research Skills

3. It is extremely important that graduate students enroll in the right finance program to accomplish their career goals. In this process of decision making, there are two options that will need to be considered. These are a Master of Science in Finance and certification as a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA). What is the difference between a Master of Science in Finance and a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA)? Why should students consider the Master of Science in Finance instead of a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA)?

A student's intended career aspirations are an important consideration when deciding what to study. Both a master's degree and a professional certification in finance will help students' gain core financial skills and knowledge to open doorways to a variety of financial careers.

A CFA certification will provide students with a solid foundation in the technical concepts of finance and is related to practicing the solution of problems. For those employed in analytical careers such as investment or securities analysis the CFA can provide students with the in-depth knowledge, financial expertise and technical skills needed to accelerate their careers into portfolio management or as a financial specialist.

The Master of Science in Finance curriculum equips students with deeper knowledge and tools to move immediately from financial theory to practicing real-world applications. Students should therefore consider a Master of Science in Finance if they aspire to work in a managerial or leadership position, in risk management or in a generalist role requiring a broader knowledge of the financial landscape. The program will provide them with the analytic skills, techniques and methodologies to interpret and understand the current financial climate and market trends, and the ability to effectively communicate ideas and information.

Some students pursue both a Master of Science in Finance and a CFA. Having both will be valuable if a management position is sought in portfolio and corporate management. Without a doubt, together, these qualifications make a student a strong candidate in the financial sector.





4. It is no secret that certifications in any industry distinguish professionals and provide them with a competitive edge over those who do not have them. How then does the Master of Science in Finance prepare graduate students for the breadth and depth of some of these financial certification exams such as the CFA Level 1 exam?

The Master of Science in Finance curriculum tracks very closely to some CFA topics. Besides access to learning materials at the campus library and other online resources, Zayed University's outstanding faculty, who are experts in their fields, also provide ample support to students who decide to prepare for the CFA exams. Zayed University also has a Bloomberg trading room. This enables future traders and fund managers to 'practice' investing.

5. A postgraduate qualification may help students to improve their chances of gaining jobs in a competitive industry. What career paths are open by obtaining a CFA designation and a Master of Science in Finance?

- Investment Manager
- Commercial Banker
- Officials in governmental organizations such as the Central Bank, Ministry of Finance, etc.
- Finance related positions in all organizations.

6. As the College of Business is quick to respond to new trends and developments, the revised Master of Science in Finance curriculum addresses the needs of learners in a changing world. What can graduate students expect to gain from the revised curriculum?

- CFA exam preparation.
- Research skills development.

7. Emerging financial technologies continue to impact how companies do business and how people handle digital transactions. Graduates with knowledge in and an understanding of FinTech (a swiftly growing field that focuses on a combination of finance, software, analytics and the user experience) are in high demand and highly valued. What skills will graduate students learn to build a career in the rapidly expanding financial technology field?

Graduate students will be able to distinguish current FinTech market opportunities and risks, analyse trading strategy, together with hedging mechanisms in the cryptocurrency market. They also will be able to analyse ethical issues in FinTech and criticize current regulation and its effectiveness.

8. Many graduate students question the career advancement opportunities that the Master of Science in Finance can provide. What is the career outlook for graduates in 2022/2023?

Most of the 2021/2022 Master of Science in Finance graduates found new job opportunities while still studying. Others were employed immediately after graduation and some were promoted to senior level positions upon graduation. Given the booming job market in the finance industry in both the United Arab Emirates and internationally, the same trend is expected for the 2022/2023 graduates.

For more information on the Master of Science in Finance program, application procedure for admission in Spring 2023 and financial support opportunities, please contact the College of Business at +971-2-599-3605 / dgs.recruitment@zu.ac.ae



Graduate Alumni Corner

Safiya Al Humaid

Master of Arts in
Communication Graduate 2013
College of Communication
and Media Sciences



Zayed University awarded **Safiya Al Humaid** a Bachelor of Science in Communication and Media Sciences Concentration in Integrated Strategic Communications in 2007 and a Master of Arts in Communication Concentration in Strategic Public Relations in 2013. She has more than thirteen years of work experience, specializing in strategic communications and event management.

What is your favourite memory of having attended your graduate program at Zayed University?

I realized that lifelong learning is a process that will help me succeed in my life and career. I was also able to share my knowledge and experience with other students who represented a mix of professional backgrounds, industries and areas of expertise. Working in teams created a stimulating and dynamic environment for learning and provided strong mutual support.

What skills or knowledge did you learn throughout the program that you found most useful in your career?

The concepts that I learned took my understanding and knowledge to another level. I also was able to immediately apply many of the concepts that I learned in my classes in my work situation.

What advice do you have for future graduate students interested in pursuing a master's degree in communication?

Although work experience is not mandatory for admission to the Master of Arts in Communication, it helps students to excel in their graduate studies. This is because with prior work experience graduate students can more easily grasp the concepts that are taught in class. However, if graduate students do not have work experience, they will have the opportunity to network, learn, and gain new perspectives and insights from other participants in the program that have this background.



What advice would you give to someone who is looking for leadership positions in the field of strategic communication?

Strategic communication professionals are in high demand in virtually every industry. It is therefore important that a person be strongly qualified both by study and by experience to be successful in one's job search and career.

What do you think are the current trends or industry challenges in your field?

Although the rapid change of technology and subsequent development of communication tools are great assets, they can be challenging as well. Today, numerous communication plans are executed by using a variety of communication tools on a wide range of media platforms to effectively engage with one's audience. However, each tool and media platform selected for use should be tailored for a successful reach which can be time consuming. It also requires more resources, especially if a new tool and media platform is being introduced.

Furthermore, the field of communication is a debatable field where anyone can impose their vision and opinion on it. As vision and opinion is often driven by common sense, it is sometimes argued that, to succeed in the field of strategic communication, a master's degree is not required to be an expert. However, what might not be visible to a person not trained at graduate level is that a graduate in communication is totally familiar with the know-how and the tools required to create a strategic communications plan that has a sustainable effect.

Nowadays, as the field of communication has more focus, new areas of specializations have emerged, i.e., Strategic Communication and Crisis Communication. Studying a master's degree with a specialization area that fits a student's experience and career goals will thus develop a student's specific skills and professional competencies to be experts in his or her chosen field.

Staff Spotlight



An Interview with **Abdulla AlJneibi** Graduate Student Recruitment Specialist

Tell me about yourself and what motivated you to apply for this position.

My career in the education industry started at Khalifa University, United Arab Emirates in 2014 when I recruited and admitted students from various education levels, backgrounds, ages and genders to undergraduate and graduate programs. I also have attended education exhibitions both locally and internationally and recruited and admitted many prospective students to Khalifa University from different corners of the world.

In 2021, I was approached by Zayed University to apply for the position of Graduate Student Recruitment Specialist. Given Zayed University's reputation, and as I wanted to challenge myself by working in a different educational environment, I decided to apply for the position. I was successful in my application, and today I work alongside dedicated team members who are committed to their efforts to enrol

the best students for Zayed University's graduate programs.

In the education industry, little is known in the field about graduate student recruitment. What are the differences and similarities between undergraduate and graduate student recruitment? Given these differences and similarities, what are three best tactics to approach graduate student recruitment for Zayed University's graduate programs?

Three similarities between undergraduate and graduate recruitment include the importance of an online presence, cost of tuition and fees concerns and the enrolment process. The differences between undergraduate and graduate recruitment include demographic variety, focus (graduate students are mature adults who know what they want), and an emphasis on career opportunities. (StudentBridge, 2016)

In my role, I am mainly responsible for developing strategies to help attract students, engage them and get them to enrol in graduate programs. Besides advising students on graduate program options that best match their specific areas of interest and future career choices, some of the main graduate student recruitment strategies include engagement, nurturing



and retargeting tactics. I am also planning the development of additional strategies with regards to meeting graduate student expectations such as speedy, customized responses to inquiries and tailoring email communication plans to be engaging, timely and relevant.

Although graduate student recruitment in an increasingly competitive and complex market is harder than ever, there are many expectations placed upon graduate student recruiters to maintain the excellence and the size of the graduate population. In your opinion, what are the four most challenging aspects graduate student recruiters are facing in today's changing landscape of higher education?

The higher education landscape in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) continues to evolve. Due to, i.e., technological advancements and increased competition, Zayed University must adapt to changing external circumstances to stay relevant in the future, especially as a federal university. I often find that graduate students resist changes or regard changes as obstacles rather than requirements to ensure a quality education.

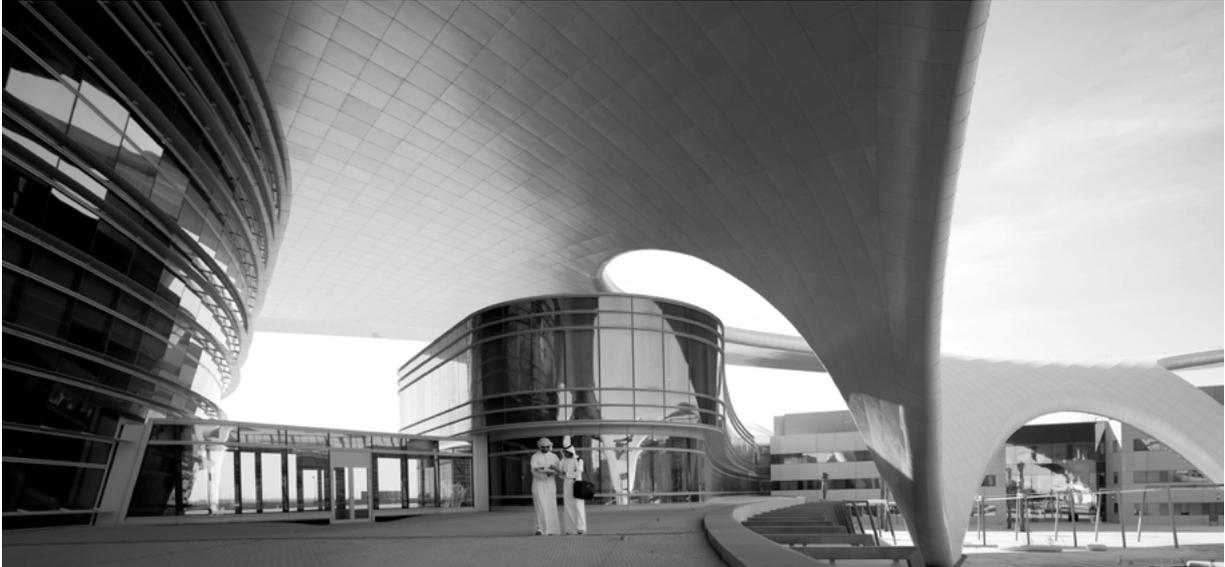
The UAE is also striving to be an education hub for the Middle East and the rest of the

world. Thus, graduate student recruitment is moving faster than ever, and achieving graduate enrolment targets has been challenging for most universities. The Graduate Student Recruitment Report by RNL & PLEXUSS sites: "With more educational institutions and programs vying for a still limited total market, the institutions that can ensure that graduate programs, marketing strategies, and enrolment tactics are the best aligned with student expectations and priorities will be in the best position to benefit from recent enrolment trends". (RNL.com/Graduate2021)

Financial support is also a major concern, especially after COVID-19. While many students want to pursue graduate studies, not everyone has the means to do so. Therefore, graduate students will often consider applying for admission to universities that offer full or partial scholarships to fund their graduate studies.

Finally, uncertainty plays a big role as well. With inflation on the rise and thus increasing the cost of living, to many students, now is not the time to consider graduate school.

People often categorize recruitment with sales. What do you think about this?



I do not view recruitment and sales in the same category. However, I understand the confusion as most universities will have tuition fees of some sort. For me, rather than selling a product, it is more about building a trusted relationship with prospective students because when someone is interested in graduate education, they look to better their future and further their career. Students will need to invest in terms of their time, priorities, and hard work. It is a give-and-take situation between the university and students.

How did the Deanship of Graduate Studies adapt its recruitment and admissions strategies after COVID-19 to strengthen graduate student recruitment on campus?

I commenced my employment at the Deanship of Graduate Studies almost a year ago when the enrolment management team has already developed and implemented several new enrolment strategies to meet graduate enrolment growth goals after COVID-19.

As today's graduate students are finding out about graduate programs online, the promotion of Zayed University's graduate

programs shifted from traditional (print) to digital marketing and more particular, search engine optimization (SEO). Recruitment events such as the Graduate Studies Open Day was also moved to be an online event.

With an increased focus on lead generation instead of brand awareness campaigns, the Graduate Studies website in English had been revamped and the Graduate Studies website in Arabic is under development. Information request forms had been optimized for the website and landing pages had been introduced.

Furthermore, the Deanship of Graduate Studies is currently reviewing its recruitment and admission business processes to better align with the expectations of prospective students who require a response to their inquiries within hours as well as quick admission decisions. The University will also implement Salesforce Education Cloud for Higher Ed (for graduate programs) in Spring 2023 to facilitate effective student data and customer relationship management, and to improve the customer experience.



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