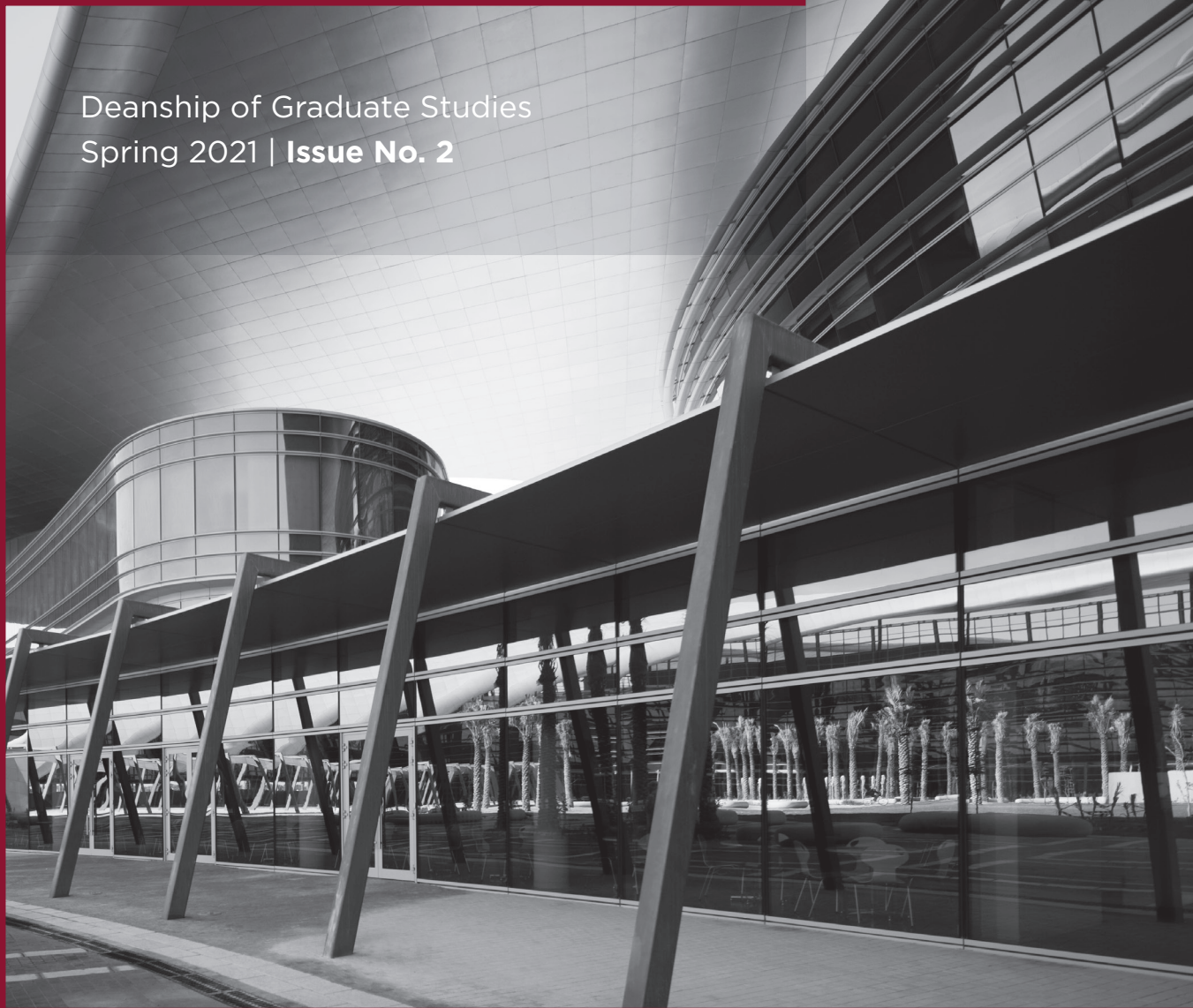


GRADUATE POST

Deanship of Graduate Studies
Spring 2021 | Issue No. 2



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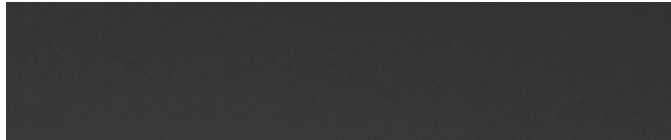
جامعة زايد
ZAYED UNIVERSITY

Zayed University

Graduate Post

Deanship of Graduate Studies

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IN THIS ISSUE

DEAN'S MESSAGE	3
GRADUATE PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT	5
FACULTY SPOTLIGHT	9
COLLEGE UPDATES	10
GRADUATE RESEARCH	13
GET INVOLVED	15
GRADUATE ALUMNI CORNER	17
ALUMNI LIAISON	19
STAFF SPOTLIGHT	20
DEANSHIP OF GRADUATE STUDIES UPDATES	22
CONNECT WITH US	24



Dean's Message

As we conclude the Spring 2021 semester, I would like to congratulate all our graduating students on the successful completion of their master's degree under extraordinary circumstances. This is an important academic achievement and they should reflect on their accomplishments and be proud of their success. A total of 101 master's degrees were awarded by Zayed University this academic year.

As the Deanship of Graduate Studies continues to develop a scholarly culture at Zayed University, so as to inspire and challenge graduate students, we seek to go beyond the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Through this newsletter I want to update you on a new development in graduate studies that involves the inclusion of a formal research component in all our master's degrees. This will enable our graduate students to formally contribute to the creation of new knowledge and enhance their skills for success in their chosen careers.

There are currently three master's degree programs that offer a thesis option. These are the Master of Science in Information Systems Management, Master of Science in Information Technology (Cyber Security) offered by the College of Technological Innovation and the Master of Legal and Judicial Studies offered by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Going forward, as our graduate programs seek re-accreditation with CAA, all master's degree programs will embrace a research thesis requirement. With this, graduate students will be expected to pursue research questions that will lead to new knowledge relevant to the development of the UAE.

The mission of the Deanship of Graduate Studies is to create a culture in which graduate studies and research are key contributors to the academic and intellectual climate of the university. To do this, policies were developed and, with the inclusion of a research requirement in master's degrees, standards have been defined for the preparation, review, evaluation and acceptance of research theses and dissertations.

With our graduate students engaging in research projects, both their analytical and research skills will be significantly strengthened. This outcome is very consistent with the wishes of the UAE government since it continues to emphasize the importance of research in graduate education. From successful research outcomes, it is expected that our graduate students will participate in both local and international conferences. Past graduate students have already done so and seven graduate students are currently undertaking research in preparation for this outcome. Students

from the Master of Science in Information Technology (Cyber Security) program (Fatema AlNaqbi, Fatema AlShehhi, Noura Salme, Maitha AlKhateri, April Maramara, Aisha AlShamsi, and Fatema AlMansoori) have each embarked on a year-long journey to write a master's thesis. They are taking this challenge with the mentoring and support of their research supervisors, Dr. Fatma Taher, Dr. Ahmad Wazan, Dr. Mathew Nicho, and Dr. Farkhund Iqbal. We are looking forward to inviting the public to witness the defense of their theses.

As we enter into the 2021-2022 academic year, I am excited about the possibilities ahead of us. The Deanship of Graduate Studies is committed to engage with and connect graduate students to more initiatives and opportunities than ever before. We also look forward to keeping you posted on the remarkable accomplishments of our graduate students, faculty, and alumni. In the meantime, I encourage you to stay connected with the Zayed University community to remain current with graduate studies news and continue to keep abreast of continuing educational and professional networking opportunities.

Sincerely,

Gaëlle Picherit-Duthler, PhD

Acting Dean, Graduate Studies



Graduate Program Spotlight

The Value of an Executive Master of Business Administration in 2021

The dynamic and complex even turbulent business world has never been more exciting and challenging, and even more so now in the pandemic. During this once-in-a-generation occurrence, companies globally are scrambling to adapt in real-time. The need for professionally prepared and highly skilled individuals to create, develop, lead and sustain organisations, large and small, has never been greater. Companies increasingly are upskilling or reskilling their employees for business success. Executives also may find that their qualifications are not on par with the new demands of 2021. The Executive MBA Council noted that in the middle of the worldwide pandemic, working professionals are looking for educational opportunities to prepare them for the ever-changing workplace.

Enrolling in an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) is a once-in-a-lifetime move and 2021 is the perfect year to make it. EMBA candidates are making much better use of these challenging times by preparing themselves for a career change or using their degree for career advancement. For those mid-career professionals with suitable professional proficiency equivalent to at least three years of mid- to upper-level supervisory experience, Zayed University's EMBA is considered by many to be an advisable step to take.

Choosing to undertake the world's most highly regarded management qualification is one of the most important decisions one can make given it plays a major role in determining the shape of a person's future.

Executive Master of Business Administration – The Next Step in Your Senior-Level Career

EMBA students acquire a general management perspective on the functions of business and concurrently develop the expertise to adapt to the challenges of technological advances, globalization and a changing economy. Launched in 2001 with 15 enrolled students on the Zayed University Abu Dhabi campus, the EMBA prepares managers

for senior leadership roles in their organisations by steering them to become ‘hybrid’ leaders. For example, for technologists and engineers to be equipped for senior leadership roles, they need to hone their soft skills as well as develop their business and financial knowledge and skills. In a similar vein, ‘non-technical’ general managers benefit from expanding their conceptual and business skills whilst learning how to dynamically manage technology in contemporary organizations. As a result, participants develop leadership skills necessary to successfully manage organizational change regardless of their background.

Successful completion of this program is expected to improve employment and growth prospects in a vast number of industries, enhance current job performance, expedite a promotion towards a senior management role, and improve graduates’ readiness to meet new opportunities in a global business environment.

The Executive Master of Business Administration Advantage

The EMBA is a great option for accomplished professionals who seek to enhance their managerial effectiveness and leadership abilities without interrupting their careers. Students can immediately share their competencies, knowledge and experience with their managers and colleagues. Furthermore, as graduate students apply their newly acquired analytical and strategic skills on the job, they can efficiently and effectively contribute to the future development of their organizations.

In addition to significant career advancement and opportunities, EMBA students often see a healthy return on their investment after graduating. The 2020 Executive MBA Council Student Exit Survey revealed that EMBA graduates received a 14.1 percent increase in compensation – combined, both salary and bonuses – after program completion. In addition, 39 percent of students who completed the survey received a promotion during the program and 53 percent reported increased responsibilities during the program.

Zayed University’s small class sizes and team-based approach foster greater communication and team building skills as well as supportive and collaborative relationships within the class. EMBA students are talented and highly motivated participants who represent a wider range of education and career backgrounds than the traditional business professionals and entrepreneurs. While many EMBA candidates have such backgrounds, students with an engineering, science, liberal arts or health-related background and a wealth of experience are turning to an EMBA education to expand their core skill set. This brings a level of diversity to the learning and networking environment that enriches a student’s experience and enhances career prospects.



H.E. Saeed Sultan Rashed Al Dhaheri

Chairman, Sultaco, Zayed University Council Member, and Zayed University EMBA Graduate commented, “Embarking on an EMBA was one of the most important decisions I have made in my professional career. With a background in civil engineering, the greatest asset of the EMBA program was the business acumen I have gained to broaden my professional horizon. Furthermore, I have gained real-world business experience by collaborating with successful executives who are recognized leaders in their respective fields. I also have used the program

to develop my network of business contacts with fellow students and alumni with the aim to benefit my career growth and contribute to my career success.”

An EMBA requires a high degree of prioritizing skills, determination and a strong personal commitment. Program expectations are high and require participants to balance the demands of a career, family and an academic program.

Funding an Executive Master of Business Administration

A master’s degree is an important investment in one’s career and future. As one will need to plan ahead for tuition fees, financing an EMBA is a major consideration for any candidate. Traditionally, the majority or entirety of EMBA students’ tuition costs was covered by employers who not only gained more effective leaders but also profited from their employee’s ability to make better, more insightful decisions. Although company sponsorship may have declined as organizations look to curb spending, many still have money available for the upskilling and training of their employees. Universities are also offering a number of generous awards in the form of scholarships, bursaries and discounts to EMBA students. For example, Zayed University is committed to helping graduate students to afford their education by providing financial aid including academic merit and alumni scholarships as well as corporate discounts.



Apply for Admission in Spring 2022

Admission to Zayed University's graduate programs is open to males and females of all nationalities. EMBA applicants must have earned a four-year baccalaureate degree with a CGPA of 3.0 or higher from an accredited university and demonstrate sufficient English proficiency to manage a challenging, fast-paced graduate program. Work experience is an admission requirement. Basic knowledge of accounting, finance, economics and statistics before entering the EMBA program is also required.

The application deadline for Spring 2022 is 21 November 2021. Please contact the College of Business, Zayed University at +971-2-599-3605 / dgs.recruitment@zu.ac.ae for more information or assistance as you start to plan the next important stage of your career.

References

AccessMBA, www.accessmba.com
Association of MBAs, www.mbaworld.com
Executive MBA Council, <https://executivemba.org>
TopMBA, <https://www.topmba.com>

Faculty Spotlight



Ornanong Husna Benbourenane, PhD

Professor of Practice
College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Dr. Ornanong Husna Benbourenane was awarded a PhD in Political Science by Northern Illinois University, US and a Master of International Affairs by the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, US. She is a former diplomat at the Thailand Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She worked over two decades

specializing in economic and political relations at various departments including the International Economic Cooperation, South Asia and Middle East Affairs, and North America and Asia Pacific Affairs. She had been posted in Abu Dhabi and, later, in Muscat, where she served as Minister-Counselor and Deputy Head of Mission. Having received the American Political Science Association Congressional Fellowship, Dr. Benbourenane worked in the US House of Representatives in the 112th Congress in 2011. Before joining Zayed University, she was a faculty member at Abu Dhabi University.

In the Master of Diplomacy and International Affairs program offered by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Zayed University, Dr. Benbourenane teaches courses in Public Diplomacy, International Political Economy, and Diplomatic History: The Shaping of Contemporary International Affairs. These courses provide practitioners of diplomacy and international affairs with the theoretical knowledge and hands-on skills to be effective global communicators in the field of international relations. With her career experience in diplomacy, Dr. Benbourenane brings the real world of diplomacy and international affairs into the classroom.

One of her favorite aspects of teaching in the master's degree program is having her graduate students engage in real-world projects in international affairs. For example, in the course on Public Diplomacy, graduate students develop cultural diplomacy plans to further the UAE's public diplomacy around the world. Graduate students work collaboratively to initiate mock diplomacy campaigns and communication strategies for the UAE. Previously, some of these initiatives were developed into diplomacy campaigns by the government departments who employed these students. Furthermore, Dr. Benbourenane enjoys assisting and encouraging her graduate students to convert their course papers into conference papers.

Dr. Benbourenane's research interests include foreign policy, public diplomacy and ethnoreligious conflict. Her book publications include "Political Integration Policies of the Thai Government towards Malay-Muslims of Southernmost Thailand and Cambodia: Thai Foreign Policy under the Prem Tinsulanond's Government" which received an award from the Thailand Research Fund. Her most recent publication is "The Failure of Agricultural-based Economic Development in Thailand's Far South and the Impact on the Insurgency", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* Vol. 43, No. 1, 2021, pp. 90-124. Her ongoing research focuses on public diplomacy, ethnoreligious conflict in Southeast Asia, and US-China strategic competition in the Asia-Pacific.

College Updates

Graduate Program Coordinators are faculty members who are appointed to coordinate all matters related to their respective graduate programs in collaboration with the Department Chairs of their colleges.

The Deanship of Graduate Studies would like to congratulate the following faculty members on their new appointment as Graduate Program Coordinators for the academic year 2021-2022.

Brendan Galbraith, PhD

Associate Professor
Graduate Program Coordinator
Executive Master of Business
Administration (EMBA)
College of Business

Dr. Brendan Galbraith is an Associate Professor in Entrepreneurship and an editorial board member of the Technology Analysis and Strategic Management Journal and IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management. He has previously held management positions in the United States and Ireland and was a faculty member at Ulster University for over a decade prior to arriving in the UAE.



Dr. Galbraith has also been a visiting scholar at the Sutardja Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology at the University of California, Berkeley and has undertaken faculty training in Microeconomics of Competitiveness and the Harvard Case Study Method at Harvard Business School. Dr. Galbraith has served as a visiting professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University and as a guest lecturer at Portland State University. He is a trained faculty member in the Berkeley Method of Entrepreneurship and is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (UK). Dr. Galbraith has led multidisciplinary research and innovation projects funded nationally and by the European Commission valued at more than \$5 million. These projects resulted in one invention disclosure. His research has appeared in a range of international management, entrepreneurship and multidisciplinary journals. He also has co-authored two books in social innovation and innovation intermediaries. Furthermore, his research was presented in the European Parliament, European Commission, Committee de Regions and Northern Ireland Parliament, and featured on BBC News. Dr. Galbraith has taught graduate and executive programs for more than ten years, contributing to academic programs in the US, Europe and the UAE.

Dr. Galbraith has been appointed as Graduate Program Coordinator of the Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) program offered by the College of Business at Zayed University. He commented, "As we continually upgrade and develop the EMBA experience at Zayed University, we plan to provide a rich forum with deeper involvement from local and international industry leaders, whether that is from guest lectures, applied projects or industry visits. We value an immersive EMBA experience to help our graduate students develop the skills, knowledge and critical thinking that is required in today's dynamic business environment."

Khadija AlHumaid, PhD

Assistant Professor

Graduate Program Coordinator
Master of Education in Educational Leadership
and Administration

College of Education

Dr. Khadija AlHumaid joined Zayed University as an Assistant Professor in 2014. She was awarded a Bachelor of Arts in Arabic Language Studies from the Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, UAE in 2003, a Master of Arts in Arabic Language Studies from the University of Sharjah, UAE in 2007 and a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Kansas, US in 2014.



Dr. AlHumaid has served as a member of the UAE Ministry of Education's Curriculum Development Committee from 2015 to 2018. She also was a mentor to the participants in the Ta'alouf Teacher Training Program and the mentorship program sponsored by the Al Jalila Foundation in 2020. Recently, she was granted an award by the Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr AlQasbi Foundation for Policy Research.

Dr. AlHumaid has been appointed as Graduate Program Coordinator of the Master of Education in Educational Leadership and Administration program offered by the College of Education at Zayed University. She has experience in teaching and curriculum development and is teaching courses in classroom management, public speaking, Arabic concepts, adolescent development, parents as educators and early childhood program models. Her research interests include teaching strategies, curriculum design, and integrating technology to learning process.

One of the main reasons why Dr. AlHumaid has chosen to pursue a career in academia is the opportunity to work with generations of educators. She views teaching central to her scholarly activities. Based on student-centered principles, she implemented various instructional strategies to ensure that students learn how to learn, think critically, and reshape their futuristic identities. An important part of her teaching philosophies is giving diversity and multiculturalism due consideration. She encourages students to engage in critical evaluations using collaborative research projects, presentations, review activities, and portfolios.



Kadhim Hayawi, PhD

Assistant Professor
Graduate Program Coordinator
Master of Science in Information Technology
(Cyber Security)
College of Technological Innovation

Dr. Kadhim Hayawi is a member of the Cybersecurity and Digital Forensics Research Group where he teaches a wide variety of courses and pursues his research endeavors. He was awarded a Master of Science in Computer Science-Cybersecurity from Dalhousie University, Canada in 2004, and a PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering-Cybersecurity from the University of Waterloo, Canada in 2018.

He earned several prestigious industry cybersecurity certifications and has over 20 years' experience in academia and industry. His research interests are in tackling cybersecurity and privacy challenges of emerging technologies such as IoT, Industrial IoT, fog, cloud, and social networks using real-time and distributed deep learning, and blockchain technologies.

Dr. Hayawi has been appointed as Graduate Program Coordinator of the Master of Science in Information Technology (Cyber Security) program offered by the College of Technological Innovation at Zayed University. He commented, "The UAE has witnessed significant growth in the acquisition and implementation of information technology systems and infrastructure. As a result, there is an increasing demand for cybersecurity specialists equipped with a big-picture managerial perspective, as well as those with significant competence in the area of IT infrastructure security, blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT) security, and smart city security and safety.

In the Master of Science in Information Technology (Cyber Security) program, we seek to provide graduate students with the managerial skills and technical knowledge needed to plan, acquire, operate, manage, and evaluate an organization's information security and privacy operations. This is a unique program for highly motivated groups of working professionals and recent graduates of undergraduate programs. The program is designed to impart knowledge and develop the skills needed to meet current and future cybersecurity needs of government and corporate organizations, as well as preparing students for PhD programs in cybersecurity and related areas. We advise students to work wisely, creatively, and effectively to solve critical cybersecurity problems of high relevance to UAE industry and government security and safety concerns, as seen in smart manufacturing, smart governments, smart buildings, smart cities, healthcare, oil and gas industry, sea and air ports, logistics, etc. We envision to be able to attract future funding and seeking adoption, investment, and sponsorship."





Graduate Research

2021 UAE Graduate Student Research Conference

Khalifa University in partnership with the Ministry of Education, hosted the 2021 UAE Graduate Student Research Conference (GSRC) on 28 June 2021.

The interdisciplinary academic event shares research conducted at universities across the country and their international partners. The primary purpose of this conference is to provide opportunities for graduate students to share their research work among themselves, receive scholarly feedback and network professionally.

The event enables graduate students to showcase their innovative scholarship to various sectors of industry and government and receive feedback on practical aspects that may enhance the value of their research. Prospective graduate students learn about different research opportunities available at the participating academic institutions.

The 2021 GSRC was organized in collaboration with Zayed University, United Arab Emirates University, American University of Sharjah, University of Sharjah, British University in Dubai, Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, New York University Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi University, and the University of Dubai.

Two Zayed University graduate students presented their research papers at the conference.

Topics in Social Sciences & Management

Internationalization of Higher Education: A Vehicle for UAE Public Diplomacy

Alreem M. Alameri

Master in Diplomacy and International Affairs Student
College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Zayed University

Abstract: This paper aims to examine the internationalization of the UAE higher education (HE) system as a central instrument of promoting scientific and academic diplomacy, one of the UAE public diplomacy's main pillars of its Soft Power Strategy. It also attempts to highlight the policies and programs the government is implementing or intends to implement in this regard. In the end, the paper tries to analyze the effectiveness and feasibility of such a vehicle in enhancing the UAE PD and strengthen its reputation regionally and internationally.

Alreem commented, "Presenting at the 2021 GSRC was indeed a rewarding experience. Besides enhancing my research profile, I also had the opportunity to enhance my knowledge and learn from like-minded people, share my knowledge across different fields, develop my professional network with the right people, and acquaint myself with the latest progress in my particular area. Furthermore, I have received constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement which helped me recognize and overcome my weaknesses. In addition, I also have improved my communication and presentation abilities and I now can engage with more confidence in front of an audience."

Computer and Information Science

Automatic Management Protocol for X.509 Extended Validation Certificates

April Rains R. Maramara

Master of Science in Information Technology (Cyber Security) Student, Zayed University
Ahmad Samer Wazan, PhD
Associate Professor, Zayed University, UAE
David W Chadwick, PhD
Professor, University of Kent, UK



Abstract: The security of the World Wide Web is based on Transport Layer Security (TLS) and certificates issued to web sites by Certification Authorities (CAs). This allows users to securely "talk to" web sites over HTTPS. Recent developments have enabled CAs to automatically issue Domain Validated certificates to web sites that can prove ownership of their domain names e.g. mycompany.com. However, anyone can register any domain name, so this does not guarantee that the domain name is actually owned by a genuine business and not by a fraudster wishing to cheat users. Our project will allow CAs to automatically issue Extended Validation (EV) certificates to nationally registered organizations that can prove their identities using newly standardized Verifiable Credentials. This will help to assure users that the web sites are run by genuine businesses and not by fraudsters.

April commented: "One of the most important benefits from conference presentations is the ability to advocate for one's science. Representing my field of interest and sharing information about the innovative research project with people outside my specific discipline greatly enhanced the visibility of the research." According to April, her presentation contributed to her overall research profile and confidence. She expects that this will have a positive impact on her career advancement and potential future doctoral studies.



Get Involved

Graduate Student Council

Zayed University is committed to graduate student involvement in fostering a quality academic environment by meaningful participation in university governance. Graduate students are represented through elected members of the Graduate Student Council (GSC) and the Graduate Council.

From Fall 2021, the GSC will serve as an official voice for graduate students enrolled at Zayed University. As the Chair of the GSC will serve as the graduate student representative on the Graduate Council, he/she officially will represent graduate student interests in university governance. GSC meetings shall be held no less than once each month during the Fall and Spring semesters.

Charges

- A. Act as the official support council for all graduate students from the different Colleges which offer graduate programs.
- B. Officially represent graduate student interests in university governance.
- C. Act as a liaison between graduate students, faculty and the University administration, ensuring that graduate students' collective ideas, interests and issues of mutual concerns are heard, information is distributed, and graduate student success is promoted.
- D. Provide advice and support to the Deanship of Graduate Studies with regards to professional development opportunities for graduate students.
- E. Contribute towards fulfilling Zayed University's goal of becoming a national research university by promoting and supporting academic research.
- F. Allocate and oversee fund distributions that best serve graduate student's needs by supporting graduate research and planning graduate student-led events and social activities for graduate students.
- G. Assist the University administration in fostering a quality academic environment.
- H. Represent graduate students in the community and facilitate the continued role of Zayed University graduate students in the community and beyond.

Membership

All graduate students will be given the opportunity to become a candidate for GSC membership. The GSC will be made up of a chair and members. Membership shall consist of one (1) representative elected/appointed from each graduate program offered by all Colleges. No single member will be serving as the representative for more than one program. The Dean, Graduate Studies will appoint the chair and members for one academic year.

Call for Nominations

The Deanship of Graduate Studies is calling for nominations for candidacy for the academic year 2021-2022. For details about the GSC or the nomination process, please contact the Deanship of Graduate Studies at +971-2-599-3605 / dgs@zu.ac.ae or visit the website <https://www.zu.ac.ae/main/en/gsd/graduate-student-council.aspx>



Graduate Alumni Corner



Gina Bou Serhal

Master in Diplomacy and
International Affairs
Graduate with High Distinction, 2021
College of Humanities and
Social Sciences

Reasons for Pursuing a Master's Degree

In 2016, as the uncertain social and political landscape began to become more unstable in the United States, Gina decided to go back to school and obtain a higher education degree, re-focusing her career in a completely new direction. Dismayed at the events happening back home, she decided to convert her frustration and energy into something constructive by which she could utilize her abilities and desire to bring about change with the goal of doing her part to make a difference in the world. It was Gina's belief at the time that if everyone worked towards an objective of unifying rather than dividing society, no matter fundamental differences, this collective effort of goodwill would only result in positive, sustainable change. It was this belief and her desire to change the path of her own future that led Gina to Zayed University, after being a stay at home mom for almost ten years. Not entirely sure what direction her future would take after completing her education, Gina thought it best to take a leap of faith and enroll at Zayed University and ultimately figure out the 'end-game' along the way.

Gina Bou Serhal, a 2021 Master in Diplomacy and International Affairs (MDIA) graduate from Zayed University and an American expat living in the UAE, relocated to Dubai in 2007 after having been transferred by her employer based in Las Vegas, Nevada.

With the transfer, Gina was looking to gain international experience abroad and working in an up-and-coming cosmopolitan city like Dubai was a clear decision. Following several years gaining experience in the hospitality design sector in the UAE, Gina then decided to take a break from her career to start a family. She has since become the mother of three children.

Choosing Zayed University for Graduate Studies

The decision to join Zayed University seemed quite an easy one. While the UAE offered several choices in terms of international affairs programs, she found Zayed University specifically offered courses related to UAE foreign relations, Middle East geopolitical affairs, and her personal favorite course during her time at Zayed University: Politics of Oil. The fact that the MDIA program focused predominantly on Middle East Studies was an important factor in Gina's choice in enrolling. No matter the direction her career path would ultimately take, she believed the UAE would be her home for years and hence by obtaining a solid education in regional affairs such an option seemed crucial for whatever would transpire professionally in the years ahead.

For Gina, the most memorable part of her time at Zayed University was the interaction and relationships she built with her fellow classmates. While it may seem that being the only 'expat' of the cohort could seem intimidating to some, the women she studied with in MDIA 11 were some of the most kind-hearted and welcoming people she has met during her time in the UAE. The bond she developed with her classmates was truly a sisterhood and she will always remember the laughs (and tears) they shared along the way. Gina commented, "It is impossible to discuss the 2020-2021 semesters without acknowledging the struggles we encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly relating to our studies and the seismic shift we faced of promptly adjusting to online learning."

For Gina, finishing her master's degree online came with the added challenge of assisting her three children who were studying online as well. Without any other options, 'sink or swim' became the new mantra of working (and studying) moms. Thankfully Zayed University was able to adapt quickly and online courses taught by internationally credentialed faculty became the new normal.

When asked if she would repeat her studies at Zayed University or recommend the MDIA program to other international students, Gina replied 'absolutely!' without hesitation. One of the most rewarding aspects of living as an expat in the UAE is the insight one gains from interacting with so many different nationalities, religions, and people from all walks of life and the Zayed University experience for Gina was no different.

Certainly, attempting to enter the workforce amid a pandemic has also brought its own unique challenges. Gina has had to learn to adapt once again, this time having to forgo the traditional 8-5 office experience and instead opt for freelance work until something more permanent comes her way. She is currently writing for Trends Research and Advisory in Abu Dhabi, as a non-resident fellow, focusing on Middle East geopolitical affairs. A copy of her paper, "Decades of Political Mismanagement and Foreign Intervention Causing Lebanon's Imminent Collapse" can be viewed on <https://trendsresearch.org/insight/decades-of-political-mismanagement-and-foreign-intervention-causing-lebanons-imminent-collapse>

Alumni Liaison

Zayed University Alumni LinkedIn Group for Graduate Students

The learning journey does not stop after graduation. Holding a graduate degree means that students are knowledgeable within a field of specialization. However, graduate students should continue growing after graduation. A graduate degree puts a student on the right path, however with desire and motivation graduate students should build their own learning network. One effective tool that can assist them with this is “LinkedIn”. LinkedIn is not only a professional social networking platform or job hunting facilitator, it is so much more than that.

The aim of the Student Careers and Alumni Department is to keep Zayed University graduates connected and engaged through offering several services. One such service is a private Zayed University Alumni LinkedIn Group to connect former and recent Zayed University graduates with different backgrounds and various levels of experience to the professional world and to offer them a community of learning. This includes exclusive employment opportunities, professional development and networking opportunities.

There are several benefits from joining the ZU Alumni LinkedIn Group. These are:

- Discover Zayed University organized campus events and activities and be informed about recent college activities.
- Connect with fellow colleagues and know about their current professional achievements and activities.

Graduate students who recently graduated should visit the Zayed University Alumni LinkedIn Group at <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3921724> or <https://www.linkedin.com/school/zayed-university>

All Zayed University alumni members who would like to share a success story, make an announcement, advertise a job opportunity or promote an event on the Zayed University Alumni LinkedIn Group, should contact the Student Careers and Alumni Department at +971-4-402-1885 / +971-2-599-3397 / alumni@zu.ac.ae for assistance or more information.

Let Us Continue to Connect. Let Us Continue to Learn.



Staff Spotlight

Meet the Graduate Registrar:

Wafa AlWahedi

Can you tell me a little about yourself and your role as a Graduate Registrar?

I am a very ambitious person and I am passionate about my work. I was awarded a Bachelor of Information Technology by Ajman University and an Executive Master of Business Administration by Zayed University. I am currently enrolled in a Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) at the United Arab Emirates University. I have more than ten years of experience in academia. Prior to my role as Graduate Registrar, I have been employed as an Academic Advisor in the College of Business and as adjunct faculty at Zayed University.

In my current role, I am responsible for effectively managing all administrative and operational functions of the Office of the Graduate Registrar and to implement, interpret and enforce academic policies and regulations of the University and its accreditation agencies in a student-centered and client service-oriented manner. I strive to be a leader in the use of best management techniques. This is done by consistently monitoring office practices and procedures and implementing changes to ensure efficient and prompt service based on best practice. I am also responsible for establishing a vision and direction for College graduate program stakeholders on how to best approach graduate enrolment retention to enhance student satisfaction and graduation rates.

Over time, due to changing educational environments, technologies and service expectations by students and faculty, the Office of the Graduate Registrar has evolved from primarily a record-keeping entity to an influential service office. i) Which technological advances did your office recently implement, and ii) what advances are your office considering implementing to improve customer services to graduate program stakeholders?

Following Zayed University's and the government's vision of bringing the university to the digital era where services are proactively anticipated before being requested by graduate students, our Office is aiming to upgrade systems with the support of the Information Technology Department so as to meet the leaders and graduate students' expectations. The Emirates Government Service Excellence Program, along with the Ministry of Possibilities, have introduced a government initiative "Proactive Services". From this perspective, the Office aims to enhance several digital services to create a user-friendly service. Some of the main services that the Office continue to improve is self-registration and fee assessment. As these services



An effectively functioning Registrar's Office is critical to the vitality of academic programs and the success of students. Today's registrar leaders are tasked with ensuring the integrity of student records, interpreting and enforcing academic policies and outstanding student services."

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)

are considered critical, the Office has worked on overcoming many technical issues previously faced by graduate students to create a better registration experience and maximize the level of satisfaction of graduate students. In addition, the Office developed a new academic reporting platform which assists in providing timely pertinent reports as needed.

Such focus on developing internal systems and enhanced services will help create new efficient communication channels with graduate students and other parties involved. The Office also aims to keep abreast of the development of academic policies and procedures, the academic calendar and the Deanship of Graduate Studies intranet portal.

The Graduate Registrar plays a strategic role within strategic graduate enrollment management (SGEM) primarily because of access to vast amounts of data that are needed to drive SGEM efforts. How does your office i) access and leverage data for better reporting, and ii) use academic analytics to look for trends and develop strategies to address challenges?

The Office of the Graduate Registrar aims to follow a comprehensive approach when it comes to data management. Recently, the University shifted to a new data analysis and reporting platform (dashboard) which assists in analyzing and presenting data in a more logical manner and to derive the knowledge to make informed decisions. However, the system requires further development to meet expectations and needs.

In addition, the Office is in the process of developing an academic advising policy to guide students through their academic journey from the time of admission until they successfully graduate, providing follow up on their academic progress and career advice in terms of aligning academic goals with career and personal goals.

Graduate registrars are involved in a huge span of activities and thus encounter a wide diversity of their responsibilities. How do you intend to stay on top of best practices in higher education, and accumulate the required knowledge and expertise to implement or apply the latest trends in your field?

Continuous learning is key. In such a role, and to cope with the changes taking place in technology and in the field, continued learning is essential. There are many new practices evolving daily. Being in contact with other colleagues through personal relationships, conferences, and regular meetings helps me to stay current with best practice and to ultimately implement in the university.

Where do you see yourself in three years and how do you envisage the role of the Graduate Registrar to be at that time?

I am determinant towards achieving my career goals as well as the goals of the Office of the Graduate Registrar and Zayed University as a whole. The University is currently going through a transformational phase and I hope to play a positive and significant role throughout this critical period. I also hope to develop the Office of the Graduate Registrar to become one of the most efficient and advanced units within the University.

What do you work toward in your free time?

My doctorate studies occupy most of my free time. I aim to read more, research, and educate myself in various topics that meet my interest and my study. I also try to spend some quality time with my little daughter, be active and do more fun activities together.

Deanship of Graduate Studies Updates

New Staff Appointment

Abdulla AlJneibi

Graduate Student Recruitment Specialist



Abdulla AlJneibi joined the Deanship of Graduate Studies in May 2021. Upon receiving his Bachelor of Applied Science in Information Management from the Higher Colleges of Technology, Abu Dhabi Men's College, he joined the Municipality of Abu Dhabi City as Analyst Strategic Planner. In 2014, Abdulla started his career in academia as Student Recruitment and Admissions Officer at Khalifa University.

In his current position as Graduate Student Recruitment Specialist at Zayed University, Abdulla has primary responsibility for the development and successful execution of an annual strategic Graduate Student Recruitment plan to drive graduate student recruitment efforts with the aim to build a robust, well-qualified

and diverse pipeline of applicants for graduate program admission. He furthermore guides prospective graduate students through application, admission and enrolment requirements in accordance with university approved policies and procedures.

You may contact Abdulla at
+971-2-599-3605
dgs.recruitment@zu.ac.ae

We would like to welcome Abdulla to Zayed University.



Professional Development

Fatma AlKhadar Al-Ali

Administrative Officer



Fatma AlKhadar Al-Ali was one of eight Zayed University employees who completed a Diploma of Customer Happiness offered by the Ministry of Interior (General Department of Happiness) and Etisalat Academy. The diploma is internationally accredited by the International Association for Business Training.

The diploma was offered online in Arabic over a period of four months to employees of government and semi-government entities located in the UAE. In accordance with best practices and international standards for customer service and happiness, the program included important training axes, the most important being happiness and positivity in government work, positive corporate culture and quality of life, customer happiness possibilities, proactive and positive teamwork, effective communication and professional dealing, innovation and creativity in the happiness of dealers, and digital transformation.

In addition, participants completed a final project of their choice on either the enhancement of an existing service or the development of a new service to improve customer happiness. Physical examinations were written at either the Al Khwarizmi International College (Abu Dhabi) or Etisalat Academy (Dubai).

As Administrative Assistant, Fatma's job responsibilities include providing information and services to graduate students recognizing these persons as the University's primary constituency. She also interacts with and represents all Zayed University graduate programs in a confident and professional manner to internal and external graduate program stakeholders.

After having completed the diploma, Fatma is of the opinion that she has an in-depth understanding of customer expectations and that she has acquired the necessary skills to improve their expectations. Furthermore, she aims to improve the quality of her customer services to internal and external graduate program stakeholders with the goal to increase customer satisfaction, happiness, retention and loyalty that will enhance Zayed University's reputation.

You may contact Fatma at
+971-2-599-3626
dgs@zu.ac.ae

We would like to congratulate Fatma on her achievement and wish her every success.

CONNECT WITH US

There are a variety of ways to connect with the Deanship of Graduate Studies online, and to keep up to date with current news and developments such as important deadlines, policy updates, upcoming events and more.

1. Graduate Blog

The graduate blog covers different aspects of student life with useful articles for those considering applying for graduate studies. Prospective and current graduate students can also discover a variety of educational articles that include advice to support career and professional development opportunities.

The graduate blog can be viewed on the website <https://gradblogs.zu.ac.ae>

2. Graduate Post

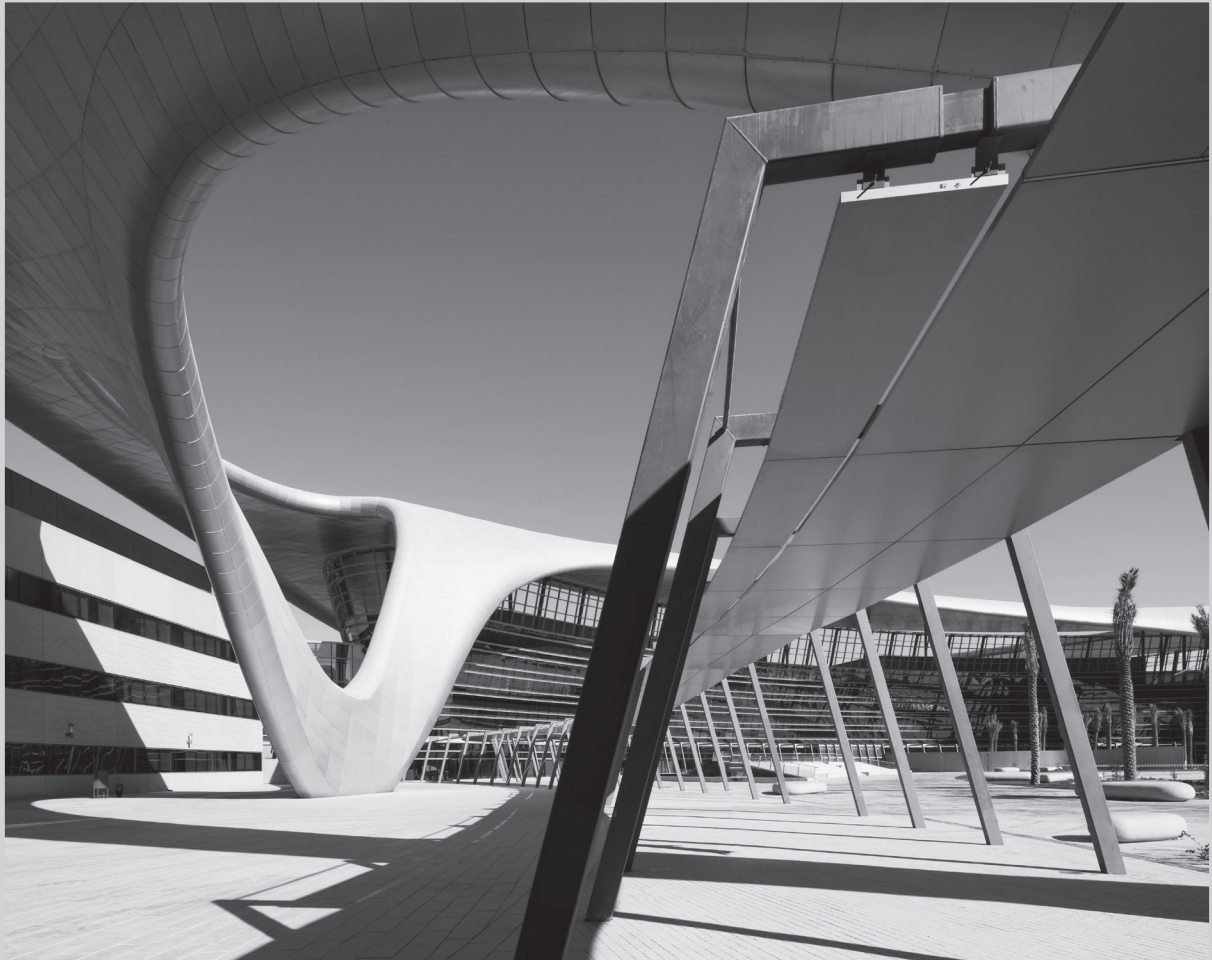
The Graduate Post is a bi-annual e-newsletter publication for the Zayed University graduate education community. The newsletter highlights important announcements, latest news and developments, professional development as well as other information on topics of specific interest to current graduate students at Zayed University including opportunities for engagement. Prospective graduate students can learn more about graduate programs and the exciting research being conducted by Zayed University faculty and graduate students. Profiles of current graduate students, alumni and faculty are also included in the newsletter.

The most recent newsletter as well as past issues can be viewed on the website <https://www.zu.ac.ae/main/en/gsd/connect-with-us/newletters.aspx>

3. Virtual Events

Participate in virtual events and other campus initiatives offered throughout the year by the Deanship of Graduate Studies in collaboration with different colleges and departments across the institution. Discover a wide range of career and education fairs, conferences, exhibitions, information sessions, seminars, webinars and academic and professional development workshops by browsing the upcoming events on the website <https://www.zu.ac.ae/main/en/gsd/connect-with-us/index.aspx>

If you would like to connect with us, contribute, or have any questions, please contact the Deanship of Graduate Studies at +971-2-599-3605 / dgs@zu.ac.ae. We would love to hear from you.



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