



High School Counseling Newsletter

Counseling Staff

Mrs. Denise Al-Shammari
Counselor, grades 12 & 9
SAT / AP Coordinator

Ms. Bea Parich
Counselor, grades 10 & 11

Mrs. Andrea Al-Adwani
School Counseling
Psychologist K-12

Ms. Maya El Cheikh
Academic Support
Counselor

Ms. Enas Ibrahim, Asst.
College Resource Center
Registration and Records

Mrs. Lilian Eineder, Asst.
College Resource Center
and Reception

2012 CIS Canadian University Tour

The CIS Canadian Tour to the Middle East is an ideal opportunity for students and parents to meet with representatives from twelve of Canada's finest universities. You will be able to investigate courses of study, admission requirements and application procedures. The University Fair will take place at the **Sheraton Hotel and Towers in Kuwait on Monday, Feb. 13th from 7:00-9:30pm**. The program will begin with a short presentation, followed by the University Fair.

Should you have any questions, please contact the tour's directors:

Ms. Kristen Sutherland—kristen.sutherland@smu.ca

Ms. Daralyn Holt—daralynholt@trentu.ca

SAT PREP course for the May 5th SAT test begins March 17th. Sign ups will start in mid-February. The cost of the course is KD 250. Interested students should see Dr. Paul Sullivan, the High School Principal, for more information.

Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) kicks off

Students at Universal American School of Kuwait (UAS) have joined SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), a peer leadership organization dedicated to preventing destructive decisions, particularly substance abuse, careless & reckless driving, teen violence and other destructive behaviors. The counseling staff at UAS became interested in forming a SADD chapter, so they enlisted the help of several students, including Ali Al-Mulla, who will serve as the SADD student head.

"Teens sometimes make poor choices when it comes to destructive behaviors, without realizing the harmful consequences," said Ali. "I'm hoping our SADD chapter will be a positive influence on our school and community. We'll be participating in campaigns and activities throughout the school year to spread our message."

The SADD students are hoping to find more classmates to join them in their

efforts. The new group is also exploring ways to get support and funding from the community.

Founded as Students Against Driving Drunk in 1981 in Wayland, Massachusetts, SADD has grown to become America's premier peer-led youth education and prevention organization, with 10,000 chapters in middle schools, high schools, and colleges throughout the U.S. In 1997, in response to requests from SADD students themselves, SADD expanded its mission and now sponsors chapters called Students Against Destructive Decisions. More information about SADD is available at www.sadd.org.

The school kicks off its SADD program on Feb. 7th with presentations in the auditorium.

Parents are invited to attend the High School Safety Presentations on Feb. 7th from 11:38-12:08 and 12:20-12:50 in the auditorium.

Upcoming Events

Jan. 19—Dress-down day

Jan. 19-26—Arabic/Religion Finals

Jan. 25 & 26—Final Exams

Jan. 28—SAT test

Jan. 29—Semester 2 begins

Jan. 30—Deadline for Senior submissions to the Yearbook

Feb. 1—HS Open House—7pm

Feb. 2—Last day to change semester 2 schedule

Feb. 2—Pay KD 5/- for Sports Day

Feb. 2—Report cards go home

Feb. 5—Prophet Mohammad's Birthday (pbuh) - Holiday

Feb. 7—SADD Safety Program in the Auditorium
Grades 11 & 12—11:38-12:08
Grades 9 & 10—12:20-12:50

Feb. 6-14—Spirit Week
6th—Clash Day
7th—Twin Day
8th—Culture Day
9th—Jersey Day
12th—Pyjama Day
14th—Friendship Day

Feb. 13—Canadian Universities Visit @ the Sheraton—7pm

Feb. 16—Sports Day 8am-1pm at the Salmiya Sports Club

Feb. 25-27—National/ Liberation Day holiday

Mar. 1st—Progress reports/Half day for students

PSATs HAVE BEEN RETURNED

When the sophomores and juniors returned from holiday break, they received the results of their PSATs. The most important thing to remember is that these scores can indicate “college readiness”. Below are the benchmarks provided by College Board. It is important to remember that scores can improve and if students are looking ahead to college, they will need to know if SATs are required for entry.

PSAT COLLEGE READINESS BENCHMARKS

	<u>Critical Reading</u>	<u>Mathematics</u>	<u>Writing</u>	<u>PSAT Composite</u>
<u>11th grade scores</u>	50+	50+	49+	149-152
<u>10 grade scores</u>	49+	47+	48+	144-145

A few ways in which scores can improve are:

Utilizing the test results and the returned test booklets (self-study).

Using www.collegeboard.org and their free study guide.

Taking a SAT PREP class close to the chosen test date.

It is noted that juniors taking the SAT in the spring of their junior year, after taking a PSAT will usually see an increase in scores because the PSAT is more difficult than the SAT. Of course, several factors can influence the amount that scores will change, such as a student’s academic course work, outside reading, and increased focus and study

If there are additional questions you or your student have with regard to the PSAT, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Bea.

DID YOU KNOW ??? Seniors who graduate **WITHOUT** taking an AP class here at UAS **WILL NOT** be considered an **HONOR STUDENT** even if their GPA is between a 3.3-4.0. Up coming sophomores and juniors ... take heed, this is something to think about and add in your schedule for next year.

MEETINGS, MEETINGS, MEETINGS

Ms. Bea is just finishing up with meeting the remainder of the Juniors and their parents to complete a credit check and a four year plan. In these meetings college plans are also discussed. If you have not met with Ms. Bea yet, be sure to give her a call. It is not too late and she would love to meet with you and your student. That being said, **second semester is just around the corner.** Finals are the last week of January and the new semester begins January 29th. If schedule changes need to be made, **NOW is the time.** **Schedules CANNOT change after the first week of the second semester.** Please be sure that if your student is a Freshman or Senior meet with **Ms. Denise** and Sophomores or Juniors meet with **Ms. Bea** to get this done. We are looking forward to settling in and completing our meetings with Freshman and Sophomore parents and their students in the Spring.

STUDY SKILLS AND HOMEWORK: Ms. Bea has been meeting after school with students needing additional help with organization and homework help. She meets every day from 2:45 to 3:30 p.m. in Room 417. The positive result is that students have seen an improvement in grades and more assignments have come in. She **is considering** doing this again for second semester. Let her know if you are interested.



SETTING GOALS

Setting goals is important for people of all ages. Get in the habit of setting both short-term and long-term goals. Setting goals helps students determine where they want to go and what they want to accomplish. Goals give focus, direction and purpose. Having a goal also helps determine a plan of action. If, for example, a goal is to go to college, there are specific things that must be done in order to achieve that goal. Make the goals specific and measurable. Questions like **What, How, and When** should be included in goal setting.



BE IN SCHOOL EVERY DAY



To succeed in high school, students must have good attendance! When a student misses school, they miss lectures, notes, class discussions, homework explanations, assignments, quizzes, and tests. It doesn’t matter how good students are about making up work, they can never make up everything they miss, even if they’re out of school for only one day. In order to get good grades, students need to be in school EVERY day!

If a student must be absent from school, remember that they are responsible for finding out what they missed and for getting all of the work made up as soon as they return. They are, of course, also responsible for arranging to make up any quizzes or tests that they have missed.

Since teachers usually don’t have time to talk to students DURING class to remedy this absence, students should see each teacher before or after class, **and ask when he/she might have time to talk to them.** Once they find out what they need to do, make up the work as soon as possible. (Know the absence policy for UAS and follow it!) Because we are in such an electronic age, find out teacher’s school e-mail and utilize that form of communication as well. Good attendance will NOT guarantee good grades. Poor attendance will, however, pretty much guarantee poor grades. Be smart, stay in school, be here every day, and do the best possible.



Parents' Roles in Children's School Success

Numerous studies have shown that adolescents from what psychologists call "authoritative homes," homes in which parents are warm, firm and supportive of the adolescent's developing sense of autonomy, perform better in school than their peers.

Research has pointed to two specific psychological advantages that authoritatively reared children have over their peers when it comes to being engaged in school. First, growing up in an authoritative home makes youngsters more psychologically mature, especially when it comes to their willingness to work hard and to take pleasure in doing something well. Adolescents from authoritative homes are more self-reliant, more persistent and more responsible than their classmates. This more mature psychological make-up equips authoritatively reared students to do better in school, especially as they move into high school, where students are expected to be more self-directed and to take more responsibility for their own work.

A second psychological benefit of authoritative parenting is seen in the ways children from different types of homes explain their academic successes and failures. Authoritatively raised children tend to attribute their success to hard work and, when they are not successful, they see their failure as due to lack of effort. When things go well in school, they see their success as resulting from their own diligence; when things go poorly, they believe the cause was they didn't working hard enough. As a result, when children from authoritative homes face a challenge in school, they feel more confident that they – not their teachers, their genes or the luck of the draw – control their scholastic fate. Students from homes with other parenting styles, in contrast, often attribute success or failure to conditions they have little control over, such as ability or luck. As a result, when challenged, they are more nervous about the outcome. And, when given the choice between a challenging course and an easy one or a difficult assignment and a less-

demanding one, children from non-authoritative homes are more likely to take the easy way out.

Parents of successful students mobilize the school on their children's behalf. They "work the system." When they discover their children are having a problem with a subject or teacher, they begin by phoning the school and setting up an appointment to meet with the teacher, school counselor or principal. They express their concern and offer their assistance in solving the problem. If the school suggests certain home exercises requiring the parents' participation, parents of successful students cooperate. But they make it clear they see their role as helping the school to better serve their child, rather than solving the problem themselves.

The other reason for the success of system-work as opposed to home-work, is, again, in the message the parents are communicating to their children and the school. By working through the school, parents send their children the message that they have faith in the school's ability and willingness to educate their children, and this strengthens the students' belief in the school's efficacy. Moreover, contacting the school when the child is having difficulty lets the school know the parents are involved and expect the school to serve their child. As in dealing with any organization, squeaky wheels get the grease.

Given the importance of parental involvement to student success, it is discouraging to report that we have found that few parents are as involved in their child's education as they should be. Nearly one-third of the high school students we've studied say their parents have no idea how they are doing in school. About one-sixth of all students believe their parents don't care whether they earn good grades in school. More than half of all students say they could bring home grades of C or worse without their parents getting upset, and one-quarter say they could bring home grades of D or

worse without upsetting their parents. Even if students are wrong in their assessment of their parents' concern, the fact that so many think their parents have little interest in their schooling is evidence of a problem of tremendous significance.

Finally, the general lack of involvement by parents in school is reflective of widespread parental disengagement in general. According to our surveys, only half of adolescents' parents know their children's friends, what their children do

after school or where their children are when they go out in the evening. Only a third of all parents know how their children spend their spare time or their money. Regardless of whatever complaints we have about schools and the tactics they employ to keep parents less than fully informed, this type of pervasive parental ignorance of their children's day-to-day activities cannot be blamed entirely on educators.

Some parents think that it's sufficient to simply tell their children that school is important. But studies show that the students who do best in school are generally the ones whose parents are actively involved. When it comes to schooling, parents' actions really do speak louder than their words.



Parent = Firmness + Support + Love

"All human beings are born with unique gifts. The healthy functioning community depends on realizing the capacity to develop each gift."

- Peter Senge

Contacts:

Ms. Denise deniseashamari@uas.edu.kw Ext. 504

Ms. Bea beatriceparich@uas.edu.kw Ext. 503

Ms. Andrea andreaaladwani@uas.edu.kw Ext. 510

Ms. Maya mayaelcheikh@uas.edu.kw Ext. 401

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UAS High School Counseling Office

