VISION

To provide a unique educational experience that inspires, nourishes and celebrates the individual, one in which staff, students and parents are proud partners.

MISSION

IAA delivers a holistic international education that exemplifies lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

IAA belongs to the Jordanian community, fostering an atmosphere of pride and identity, celebrating our traditions and promoting a sustainable future.

IAA equips its students with the skills, principles and experiences that empower them to fulfill their academic, personal and social potential.

IAA promotes ethical development, intercultural empathy and a duty to the global and local community.
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Welcome To *Leaders of Today*

Once again, it is our great pleasure to welcome all of you to the fourth annual edition of IAA’s alumni magazine. This last year has truly been an exciting time for all of us – from our teachers and students to our alumni and friends of IAA – and we are so delighted to share our latest milestones with you.

In this issue of Leaders of Today, we are particularly excited to unveil our new Portrait of a Graduate. With the support and participation of IAA’s teachers, students, parents and alumni, we set out to define exactly what values, skills and characteristics were especially important for IAA graduates to possess as they head out into the world. After months of hard work, we ended up with a statement and image that we believe truly capture the essence of IAA’s alumni – and what makes them so exceptional.

It’s clear that our previous graduates are already embodying this portrait – as was especially apparent when we caught up with two of our 2016 graduates, Waleed Abu Nada and Alsharif Majd Alluhamaq, who both exemplify the spirit of IAA and its pillars and values.

We also had the chance to speak with several of our faculty and staff members, including our beloved chemistry teacher, Ms. Maha Mohammad, who has just finished her final year at IAA, and our community and service coordinator, Mr. Hesham Elnagar, who had some wonderful words of wisdom for our graduates.

We also learned a great deal about the extraordinary work that goes into being a DP coordinator from Ms. Muna Darwish and Mr. Antony Nesling, who just finished out his first year in this role and is looking forward to many more to come. And finally, we said a fond farewell to our incredible Chief Head of Security, Mr. Vance Parker, as he sets off on a new journey.

There is even more to discover in this year’s issue of Leaders of Today, and we hope that you take the time to read about all the activities our teachers, faculty and alumni have been up to. And of course, we are honoured to welcome the latest cohort of IAA’s alumni, the Class of 2018, who are now setting off on their unique paths toward excellence, achievement and success. We wish them, and all our alumni, a bright and boundless future.

On behalf of the IAA PR & Events Department, we hope you enjoy this latest edition of our alumni newsletter.
A Message from the Secondary Principal

Dear all,
Another year has passed – my tenth at IAA. Along with beginning to feel a bit old, I feel honoured to have seen so much wonderful talent pass through the school. This year, we celebrated our successes in many ways. One way we did this was to consider what it is that makes you all so special. This exercise involved creating the portrait of an IAA graduate, based on the words that sprang to mind when our stakeholders were asked to think about the kind of characteristics you, a graduate of IAA, embody. After much debate and discussion, six traits were chosen:

As you may remember, an IAA graduate is always

• **Resilient:** Having left all your deadlines to the very last moment, it is amazing how our graduates still manage to function! Of course, I am sure this has completely changed at university and work.

• **Genuine:** That sincere look of surprise on the face of someone who claims never to have heard or read about that deadline before.

• **Adaptable:** This is definitely a trait I have come to admire over the years – that ability to flexibly transfer responsibility for unsavoury deeds at school onto the shoulders of others.

• **Responsible:** Our students are responsible for many things – not least of all forgetting to do most of them.

• **Confident:** No matter how stressful Grade 12 is, you will undoubtedly get your priorities straight by May in order to pass your driving test.

• **And of course Independent.**

Doesn’t that take you down memory lane?

Maybe I am, in fact, getting old, as perhaps those weren’t quite the reasons these words were chosen! In all sincerity, though, when I think of the many individuals who have graduated from IAA, I do think these words sum up so much about what makes you unique. There is something special in you, our graduates, and we love hearing about what you have been up to. As you go through life, remember to embody these words, fit this portrait, live your moral code, and set standards for yourself that everyone will be proud of. There is much to celebrate as you begin to chart your journeys through life. Keep in touch.

Martin Thompson
Secondary Principal
Welcome Class of 2018

May your vision make miracles.
The International Academy - Amman (IAA) is proud to congratulate all 64 members of the Class of 2018 on their graduation and for their admissions into the universities of their dreams.

UK
Anglia Ruskin University
Bath
Birmingham
Brighton
Brighton & Sussex
Bristol
Bristol West of England
Brunel
Cardiff
Central Lancashire
City University
Coventry
Derby
Durham
Dundee
East Anglia
Edinburgh
Essex
Exeter
Goldsmiths
Greenwich
Imperial
Kent
King's College London
Kingston
Leeds
Leicester
Liverpool
Liverpool John Moores University
Loughborough
Manchester
Newcastle
Nottingham
Nottingham Trent
Portsmouth
Queen Mary
Queens Belfast
Reading
Richmond
Roehampton
Royal Holloway
Salford
Sheffield
SOAS
Southampton
St. Andrews
Surrey
Sussex
Swansea
University for the Creative Arts
University of Westminster
UCL
Warwick
IRELAND
University College Cork
University College Dublin
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
USA
American University
Amherst College
Bentley
Columbia College
Cornell University
De Paul University
Florida Institute of Technology
Fordham
George Washington University
Hofstra
Loyola Marymount
Mount St Marys
Northeastern
NYIT
NYU
Pace University, NY
Princeton University
Penn State
Purdue
Rollins
San Francisco State University
San Diego State
St Edwards
Stony Brook
Suffolk
Tampa
UC Berkeley
UC Davis
UC Irvine
UC San Diego
UC Santa Barbara
UC Santa Cruz
UC Riverside
UCLA
University of Missouri
University of Alabama
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa
University of Massachusetts Amherst
University of Miami
University of Southern California
Yale
CANADA
Alberta
Brock
Calgary
Carleton
Concordia
McGill
Mc Master
Ryerson
University of Toronto
University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Waterloo
Western
Queens
York
EUROPE
Cesar Ritz, Switzerland
IE University, Spain
Jacobs University, Germany
Maassticht University, Netherlands
Nicosia University, Cyprus
BI Norwegian Business School, Norway
Schiller International University, Germany
SHMS, Switzerland
University of Amsterdam, Netherlands
University of Groningen, Netherlands
Utrecht University, Netherlands
Webster University, Vienna
MIDDLE EAST
American University of Beirut, Lebanon
American University of Sharjah, UAE
Lebanese American University, Lebanon
NYU, Abu Dhabi
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Bahrain
RIT, Dubai
Wollongong, Dubai
IAA’s Portrait of a Graduate

By: Dr. Lois Warner
Assistant Director for Curriculum

As IAA approaches its 15th anniversary, we have all been reflecting on what it means to be a graduate of The International Academy – Amman. So many classes of students have passed through our halls and have gone on to achieve extraordinary things.

In this time, IAA has gained a sterling reputation, and is now recognised as one of the best and most prestigious schools in Jordan. We have earned accreditations from some of the most esteemed international educational authorities and organisations, including the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP), the Council of International Schools and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

At IAA, our aim is to develop and cultivate a character that is both Jordanian and international, which means embracing diversity and multiculturalism. At the same time, of course, we also know how important it is to maintain a unified vision when it comes to the teachings and principles we want to impart on our graduates. In order to keep us all focussed on our collective values and purpose, this year we developed what we call our ‘Portrait of a Graduate.’ This statement and image reflect what the IAA community agrees are the most important attributes for our graduates to possess when they leave us and head out into the world.

Our Portrait of a Graduate will help our teachers as they plan their curricula and projects; it will help our admissions, public relations and counseling teams to explain what IAA is all about; it will help parents better envision their children’s futures; and it will provide students with ideals and values that they can continually aspire to embody.

To design this Portrait of a Graduate, we formed a steering committee made up of teachers, administrators and parents.

We hosted workshops that engaged with teachers, parents, alumni and Grade 12 students in order to find out as much as we could about the IAA community’s shared values. With these insights, we created our portrait that entails six traits: Resilient, Adaptable, Responsible, Confident, Independent and Genuine.

Along with defining and affirming IAA’s vision and values, working on this project has demonstrated just how much the IAA community cares about this school, and how much pride our graduates take in being IAA alumni. It’s been a wonderful experience.
PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

Resilient
Genuine
Independent
Confident
Adaptable
Responsible

Duty
Cultural Heritage
Leadership
Acceptance
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
CHAMPioning a Cause
Waleed Abu Nada
IAA Class of 2016

Since graduating from IAA two years ago, Waleed Abu Nada has been busy: along with pursuing a dual degree in Law and Business Administration from Spain’s IE University, he’s also gained global recognition as a supporter of young athletes. His local non-profit organisation, The Champ Camp, is actively working to empower youth in Jordan’s Al-Baq’a’a Camp through sports, and his tireless efforts were recognised last December by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). As one of the IOC’s Young Change-Makers, he has been invited to participate in this year’s Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires, Argentina. We caught up with Waleed to learn more about his exceptional achievements, his future plans and how IAA helped drive his incredible ambition.

What have you been doing since you left IAA?
Completing a dual degree is no easy task, and that has kept me quite occupied. However, I still try to make the most out of my free time. As an athlete, I was selected to represent in the Spanish league for rugby. I also founded my university’s first Olympic Weightlifting Club, which is now the largest athletic club on campus. Through the club, I’ve been coaching athletes on the fundamentals of sports, and we are now entering our third year, with the hope of competing in the Spanish nationals.

Additionally, in August 2017, I founded a non-profit organisation, The Champ Camp, which aims to employ sports to empower young boys and girls at Jordan’s Al-Baq’a’a Refugee Camp. I’m currently directing all operations for this initiative, and hope to sustain it for many years to come.

At the end of last year, I was honoured by the International Olympic Committee as one of 80 Young Change-Makers from around the globe, and as a result, will be serving the Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires later this year. I hope to use this opportunity to further elevate the social impact of sports in Jordan.

How did you come up with the idea for The Champ Camp?
Since I was a child, I was always involved in sports – as an athlete, coach and activist. At 16, I switched from playing football to participating in Olympic weightlifting, and when I got to university, I wanted to share these experiences, which led me to found the IEU Weightlifting Club. Seeing the impact that this club had on my friends, inspired me to take what I’d learnt back to Jordan with a mission: to share my experiences by giving back to my people.

Last summer, after doing some research with the help of the National Olympic Committee, I came across Nadi Al Yarmouk at Al-Baq’a’a Camp. This social, cultural and athletic centre is located in the heart of the largest Palestinian refugee camp in the Kingdom, and being of Palestinian origins myself, I felt a particular connection with it. Here was this small, underfunded training hall where Olympic weightlifting was being taught by Captain Ali Al Gabri: he was working in poor conditions, with very little support. He was just the person I was looking for to help me achieve my mission.

Over the course of three months, I visited the camp and decided to join forces with Captain Ali in order to bring this great idea to life. The Champ Camp has transformed a simple training centre into a safe space for young boys and girls. By releasing a documentary on my experience, I was
able to raise much-needed awareness, highlighting the social struggles of life in the camp, and how sports are helping keep hope alive in the hearts of these kids.

What are your future plans for The Champ Camp, and for your own broader personal and professional aspirations?

Today, Champ Camp is currently providing 25 kids – 14 girls and 11 boys – with a safe space away from their daily struggles and challenges. We’ve been successfully empowering young females in particular, emphasising the immense role women can play, not only in sports, but in society in general. As we grow, I hope to transform The Champ Camp into more than just a weightlifting school: I hope to see it become a way of life. Our vision for 2018 is to help these kids achieve better academic results and improve their social lives, by incorporating educational curricula, public speaking programmes and other tools. Our goal is to create individuals who can adequately cope with life’s challenges and go on to succeed in their lives – no matter how many medals they attain as athletes.

They now have much broader horizons, and they are dreaming bigger than ever. I have learnt more from them than I could ever give back, and for that, I will be eternally grateful.

How did studying at IAA impact your life?

IAA offered me so much more than I ever asked for or expected. Not only did I receive a high-quality education, but the school had a lasting impact on my personality. IAA has always supported non-traditional ideas and encouraged students to pursue these ideas. I was able to cultivate so many different passions – not only in sports, but in developing new skills, like robotics. Being active in the CAS programme – as a participant and an organiser – helped increase my awareness of the needs of local communities across Jordan.

Meanwhile, IAA’s founding pillars have become the principles I have chosen to live by. I never truly appreciated the influence the pillars had on shaping my views until I started my university life. These values prepared me for daily encounters with people of different backgrounds, views, interests and practices.

The Champ Camp really epitomises all of IAA’s pillars: it required leadership to launch it. It is the outcome of my sense of duty toward my people. It celebrates cultural heritage and it encourages acceptance – particularly when it comes to gender equality in sports. All of these values are things I try to instil in the kids as much as I can, and I’m sure that these ideals will shape their perspectives just as they did mine.
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Demonstrating Duty

AlSharifa Majd Alluhaymaq
IAA Class of 2016

AlSharifa Majd is one IAA alumna who truly embodies our school’s founding pillars – especially when it comes to duty and giving back to the community. As a third-year medical student at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, AlSharifa Majd is preparing for a lifelong career of care and giving. On top of her rigorous academic schedule, she also finds time to volunteer with a number of medical charities and non-profit organisations – with long-term plans to apply her medical education toward helping those in dire need. Her selfless, giving spirit is apparent in everything she does, and we were thrilled to be able to learn more about her busy life, ambitious future plans and her advice for the class of 2018!

How has IAA shaped your life post-graduation?

IAA has been an indispensable factor in shaping the person I am today and guiding the narrative through which I aim to live my life. One of the key lessons IAA taught me was that knowledge lies well beyond the boundaries of the classroom, and beyond the constraints of books and pages. Because of this, I’ve made it a point to avoid the stereotypical image of a medical student whose life is bound to textbooks, instead embracing a life that is more engaging and hands-on.

What sort of activities have you been involved in outside the classroom?

Since starting medical school, I have been regularly volunteering with Médecins San Frontières (MSF) in Jordan, helping young victims of war recuperate – whether through medical shadowing or by setting up interactive activities in the hopes of alleviating the trauma these men, women and children have endured. MSF has really expanded my love for humanitarian aid, and as a result, I’ve become involved with The Friends of MSF Ireland, where I was chosen to fill the role of treasurer. By holding this position, I hope to help MSF expand its presence, operations and impact. Additionally, I have made sure to get involved with activities at my university that work to aid Ireland’s large homeless population.

This includes providing these individuals with food, clothing and basic hygienic goods. I also participate in my university’s annual Teddy Bear Hospital event, which aims to educate young children about health and wellness, stressing the fact that prevention supersedes any treatment.

In addition to volunteering, I also had the chance to participate in an essay competition in the field of neurology, which allowed me to combine my love for writing with my fascination for the human brain, and gave me the opportunity to delve into the pathophysiology of epilepsy. I hope to continue pursuing research in this field by undertaking an internship in the United States.

How have IAA’s founding pillars shaped your journey and ambitions?

IAA’s four pillars are the four major cornerstones of any successful, giving individual. Leadership is essential in all aspects of life, especially when it comes to leading others through your own knowledge and experiences.
And while leadership is something that is acquired, duty is something that is innate — but it is a seed that must be frequently watered and tended to, so that it can continue to grow.

In my case, my sense of duty compels me to give back to my community — as a scholar, a scientist and a physician.

Meanwhile, my cultural heritage shapes my beliefs and traditions, and is a crucial part of everything I do: it is what helps guide my sense of leadership and duty. And in that same respect, my cultural heritage has taught me acceptance, and the broader idea of cultural humility, whereby I value and respect other cultures – assimilating to my surroundings while remaining true to myself. Embodying all these pillars is what crafts IAA alumni like myself into competent global citizens, capable of weathering all life's storms and challenges. These pillars allow me to continually grow, improve and learn.

**What plans do you have for the future?**

Right now, I’m taking it a step at a time: I hope to graduate from medical school with honours, after which I aim to continue studying and to complete my medical school residency in the US or UK. I hope that these experiences will make me adept at practising medicine in Jordan.

Additionally, I hope that in the future, I will be able to apply my education to providing medical aid to those who are impoverished or who have fallen victim to the grotesque actions of war. In that same vein, I aspire to major in public health, in order to expand my knowledge of the ways in which healthcare in Jordan can be improved to become more efficient and less costly.

**And what advice do you have for IAA’s class of 2018?**

**To the entire class of 2018 – including my younger brother, Qatada – if there is one thing to hold onto as a life motto, it is that you should not fear fear.**

Fear emboldens you, challenges you, and makes you a more powerful, resilient, better version of yourself. Seek discomfort, leap outside the boundaries of your comfort zone, and you will find a better future and your best self.
This year, the Libraries revived the IAA Community Book Club for Parents of IAA students. The purpose of the club was to read books, originally published in Arabic that have been translated into English to promote cross-cultural dialogue and understanding about such texts. There were 8 participants in our first month’s club. We read and discussed Saud AlSanousi’s The Bamboo Stalk (2012), the winner of the 2013 International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF). Our rich discussion raised many thought-provoking thoughts that we have decided to carry on with the book club next year, our next being Azazeel (2013) by Egyptian author Youssef Zeidan, winner of the 2009 IPAF. Below is a review of our first book club novel.
Novelist Anne Tyler has said, “I read so I am able to live more than one life in more than one place.” Reading books about various cultures gives readers insights and empathy into the world. That is certainly true of The Bamboo Stalk.

Having lived in Kuwait for 8 years, I was intensely curious to see how a Kuwaiti man would tell the story of a boy whose father was Kuwaiti and whose mother, although the two were legally married, was still the result of the father’s union with the family’s Filipina maid.

As it turns out, AlSanousi’s tale is realistic, believable, and as heart-breaking as I thought it would be. Afraid of the shame the mixed-race child will bring to the family name, the father is forced by his domineering mother to send the mother and son packing back to the islands, shortly before he goes missing in the 1990 invasion.

Jose grows up, fatherless in his motherland, never quite feeling complete, always dreaming of the day his father will make good on his promise to raise him as his legitimate Kuwaiti heir.

When that time arrives, Jose becomes Isa Al Tarouf, and is literally caught in the net of the Tarouf family reputation. What ensues is a Juvenalian satire of the state of class and race relations in Kuwait.

AlSanousi creates a microcosm of the microcosm that is Kuwait—with the bad, as well as so much that is good.

It is a first novel, so perhaps some of its elements are a bit contrived. For example, the attempt to connect the colonisation of the Philippines to the lack of a father figure, is a bit of a stretch, but it does ultimately work for the “islands” part of the story as it resolves. The main motif, the titular “bamboo stalk” is made a bit too obvious in places. However, the historical backdrop and discussion of Bidoon and Kuwaiti politics from 2006-2008 was dead-on accurate, as I was teaching during those years and remember those elections quite well.

Was I surprised at the outcome of the novel? No. No, I wasn’t.

Was I disappointed? Yes, I was.

Oh, Kuwait. You are a small world, indeed, as the book so clearly reminds us. I wish the novel would become required reading for all students in the Middle East; however, I fear the opposite may be more likely to happen. Tongues wag. Reputation is more important.
The Life of a DP Coordinator

Being a DP Coordinator for the IB programme is a role that goes far beyond the classroom. The challenges may be big, but the joys and rewards are even bigger. To get a sense of just what goes into the job, we spoke to two of IAA’s extraordinary DP Coordinators – Ms. Muna Darwish, who held the post of DP Coordinator for several years, and Mr. Antony Nesling, who just finished his first year in this role.

How long have you been with IAA?

Ms. Muna: Eight years.
Mr. Antony: Five years, but this last year was my first as a DP Coordinator.

What would you say are the most important roles for a DP Coordinator to play?

Ms. Muna: As a DP Coordinator, I had to attend to many different aspects of the IB programme, including academic concerns, pastoral perspectives and liaising with parents and guardians. It’s a very important role to fill, because you have to be highly sensitive to the emotional, psychological and intellectual needs of all students, which requires close cooperation with students, teachers, administrators and parents. It’s important to be very empathetic towards the students, in order to help facilitate their future successes.

Mr. Antony: Being a DP Coordinator involves wearing many hats. On the administrative side, you have to register students for their IB courses, make sure their coursework is correctly uploaded to the International Baccalaureate and administer final examinations. I also have to coordinate with subject teachers on IB documentation, and make sure that the DP instructors are teaching their courses according to IB policies and regulations. That means, working side-by-side with all DP teachers and students on a daily basis, to ensure that we adhere to the best pedagogical practices, so that IAA can continue to be a leader for IB education in Jordan.

What are the most rewarding parts of your job?

Ms. Muna: It’s so rewarding to see academically-challenged students succeed, and finish their schooling filled with positivity and confidence. Another rewarding part of being a DP Coordinator is helping students with other types of challenges — whether psychological, behavioural, or otherwise — overcome those difficulties.

Mr. Antony: I really enjoy helping students succeed — especially those who are struggling or facing obstacles. The IB curriculum is the most rigorous of all pre-university curricula, so every student is going to be challenged during their time at IAA. Encouraging students to meet these challenges head-on, and to believe in themselves and their abilities, is one of the most rewarding aspects of what I do.

And what are the hardest parts of being a DP Coordinator?

Ms. Muna: The biggest challenges are the tough academic demands of the IB Diploma Programme. Along with having to complete the requirements for three higher level subjects and three SL level subjects, students must write a theory of knowledge essay and a 4,000-word extended essay. Thankfully, IAA’s carefully structured pastoral programme makes sure that students are equipped with the skills they need to excel, including time and self-management, rigorous learning habits, and all the support systems they may need — from supporting sessions to one-on-one meetings with subject coordinators, heads of department and counsellors.

Mr. Antony: It can sometimes be a challenge to make sure that we are meeting the underlying philosophy and values of the IB Diploma Programme in the unique context of IAA — mostly because we have such driven students, who are extremely invested in achieving the highest possible grades. This focus on the end goal is contrary to the spirit of the IB Diploma, which is grounded in experience, journey and process. Thankfully, the IAA team does a wonderful job of finding the right balance, with the IB values placed front and centre.
What are the greatest advantages that the IB programme affords its students?

Ms. Muna: The greatest advantage of the Diploma Programme is that it enables students to become more open-minded and to realise that there are many different perspectives to ‘truth.’ The programme is inherently based on the premise of accepting differences as sources of strength rather than weakness. It prepares students for university on all levels – academically, intellectually and emotionally.

Mr. Antony: The IB programme is designed to create lifelong learners, each ready to embrace an unknown future. On a practical level, students are given the skills to succeed at university. In a more abstract sense, having students choose from six different areas of knowledge – each with their own ‘ways of knowing’ – means that IB Diploma students are extremely well-rounded individuals who can readily transfer knowledge and make insightful connections across disciplines.

How do IAA’s pillars embody the values of the IB programme?

Ms. Muna: IAA’s pillars are strongly synchronized with the IB Learner Profile. To properly embody IAA’s pillars of Duty, Leadership, Acceptance and Pride in our Cultural Heritage, you ultimately need to possess the characteristics of an IB Learner: you need to be knowledgeable, inquiring, caring and risk-taking. You also need to be a balanced, reflective, open-minded and principled, as well as a strong thinker and communicator.

Mr. Antony: To me, IAA’s pillars embody the idea of ‘ethical exploration,’ which is what the IB Diploma is all about. Students are encouraged to question everything around themselves, in a considerate and humble manner, mindful of how their actions reflect on others.

Mr. Antony, what are the goals you hope to achieve as a DP Coordinator?

Mr. Antony: I’m a big fan of systems, so I am trying to implement systems, procedures and practices that enable IAA students to get the most out of their IB Diploma. I want to help create a meticulously-structured journey that doesn’t cause teachers, administrators, students, or parents to become overwhelmed by the challenges before them.

And Ms. Muna, what advice do you have for Mr. Antony?

Ms. Muna: Mr. Antony is incredibly dedicated to students’ learning, and this dedication is reflected in his tireless work and unflinching support for our students. I have no doubt that he will continue to take IAA and its students to new heights and new levels of excellence.
For The Love of Chemistry

After seven wonderful years at IAA, our beloved chemistry teacher, Ms. Maha Mohammad, has recently completed her final year with us. As we bid her a sad farewell, we decided to talk to her about her time at IAA, and her advice for graduates.

It’s not always easy to adjust to new surroundings, but when Ms. Maha joined the IAA family in 2011, something just felt right. “From the moment I stepped on campus, I felt at home,” she says. “The atmosphere was wonderful, and everyone was so hospitable. It instantly became my second home.”

Ms. Maha has always been known for her devotion to helping her students succeed in all aspects of their lives. As she explains, “While my number one aim was to help my students excel in their academic results, I was also determined to be more than just a teacher of chemistry: I also wanted to guide and support my students in other ways.” Over the years, Ms. Maha has helped instil a sense of leadership and duty in countless students, inspiring them to represent themselves, their school, and their country to the best of their abilities.

One of the most important leadership lessons that Ms. Maha has imparted on her students is how to lead the way from vision to reality – mapping out exactly what they need to do, and where they need to go, to achieve their goals. She continually helped students understand the practical aspects of good leadership, including working as a team, managing time effectively, and embracing visionary ways of thinking. “These skills are especially important with the highly demanding nature of the IB Diploma Programme,” she says.

It’s not easy to keep things interesting in a chemistry classroom, but Ms. Maha certainly made it look effortless. “My biggest challenge was to always be inventive, both in and outside the classroom,” she explains. “I wanted to do things that would make my students love and appreciate chemistry, in particular, and science in general. Fortunately, the staff and administration at IAA were always very supportive of my ideas.” From giving the science pod an inventive makeover to creating fun, engaging and educational classroom games, Ms. Maha always kept things interesting!

So what memories will she take with her as she moves on? “I will always cherish and remember my time spent with my students and colleagues – they have always given me the motivation and push I needed.”

After seven wonderful years with Ms. Maha, it’s certainly not easy to say goodbye, but we at IAA wish her a bright future ahead.

Ms. Maha’s Words of Wisdom to IAA’s 2018 Graduates:

“Make sure to fortify your future with knowledge, kindness, duty and respect.”
Faculty Spotlight

Mr. Hesham Elnagar
Community and Service Coordinator

CAS In Action

Mr. Hesham Elnagar may have only joined us two years ago, but we feel like he’s always been a part of the IAA team – and what a huge part he is! In addition to serving as our Community and Service Coordinator, Mr. Hesham teaches Global Politics, Individuals and Societies, Grade 12 English and Service as Action. We chatted with him about his experiences at IAA and his words of wisdom for alumni.

How did you first decide to join IAA?

About two and a half years ago, I saw the opportunity to come on board at IAA, and was excited by the prospect of joining a team of well-established teachers, and by the opportunity to grow professionally, teach new courses, and serve as the community and service coordinator, which was really something new for me.

How has CAS evolved over the last couple years?

The CAS curriculum has changed drastically over the past two years. The most important of these changes is that CAS is now part of the IB Diploma Programme, and we’ve connected it to Theory of Knowledge. After all, it’s one thing to have experiences – it’s another to understand and derive meaning from these experiences. Without experiences outside the classroom, our knowledge inside the classroom lacks relevance, and this knowledge becomes stagnant rather than iterative.

By incorporating CAS into the IB curriculum, I can encourage my students to identify their values, interests and passions and engage in activities that help them achieve balance.

I also encourage them to step outside of their comfort zones, because sometimes we don’t know the inherent value of an experience until long after it has passed.

Through these changes, CAS is really helping our students balance the stresses of IB life, by allowing them to better attend to their physical, mental and emotional health.

What are some of the highlights of your time at IAA so far?

Some of the best moments here occur during class discussions – particularly with my Global Politics students. They possess academic and intellectual maturity far beyond their years, and it has been such a privilege exploring critical world issues with them.

Have you faced any challenges while teaching at IAA?

With teaching in general, the biggest challenge is that, to succeed, you must be especially good at multitasking, assessing and organising. You’re constantly having to attend to and meet so many different needs at any given time, and sometimes it can feel overwhelming to try and help everyone. Fortunately, at IAA, there is always someone with whom you can discuss these challenges – and you can guarantee that you’ll find someone who has experience with these same issues, and who can provide advice and help you trouble-shoot. It’s a very supportive and collaborative environment.

As a teacher at IAA, what are your goals?

As a teacher, as in my personal life, one of my biggest goals is to never stop learning and asking critical questions about the world. I grew up in an educational system that did not push me to ask difficult questions, because it aimed to maintain the status quo. I do not teach to maintain the status quo, but to make changes that will positively impact us all, and sometimes this means challenging the ways we think and how we do things – including education itself!

What message would you like to share with the graduating Class of 2018, and with the rest of IAA’s alumni?

“Never stop making connections between ideas, people, places and knowledge. It is when we connect the dots that we get to experience the real excitement of life.”
IAA’s Chief Head of Security, Mr. Vance Parker, has been one of our school’s most important fixtures over the last eight years. During his time here, Mr. Vance has worked tirelessly to ensure the wellbeing of everyone on campus, so that we can continue to provide an incredibly rewarding experience for our students. With his time at IAA drawing to a close, we caught up with him to talk about his favourite moments and achievements.

Mr. Vance joined IAA all the way back in 2010, after spending five years in Qatar. “I was originally offered a two-year position at IAA,” he explained, “and little did I know that this exciting new opportunity would be extended for another six years!”

Originally joining as Chief Head of Security, Mr. Vance’s position quickly expanded to include his work as our Health and Safety Officer – an enormous role to fill. In addition to guaranteeing the safety and security of all individuals on campus, he had to apply high-level risk assessment, operational acumen and analytical skills to identify and address any potential security gaps – which is even more difficult than it sounds.

“My job at IAA required mitigating risks, while adapting to ever-changing security priorities,” he told us. “This meant creating comprehensive security reviews, proactively identifying and implementing improvements to our security functions and communicating with senior faculty about potential threats and counter-measures.”

And Mr. Vance certainly left his mark on the school. In addition to keeping students, teachers, parents and visitors safe, he recruited and trained a dedicated, high-quality security staff, who helped him implement a number of high-level security systems, including infrared wall systems, CCTV and highly secure lockdown areas. On top of all that, he managed to train 84 teachers and administrators in Emergency First Aid – all of whom are now certified to administer first aid. Additionally, the Emergency Response Plan he created for IAA has already been adopted by a local university, spreading his impact far beyond the gates of our school.

So what does Mr. Vance have to say to IAA’s alumni? “Mostly, I would love to know where you all are, and what you have achieved since leaving IAA,” he said. “Although my employment at the school is coming to an end, I do not feel that this is the end of my adventure here. I hope to remain in touch with as many people as possible – and I hope all our alumni will do the same.”

We certainly hope this isn’t the last we hear from you, Mr. Vance!

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In the words of our beloved Chief Head of Security, “There is no such thing as goodbye, so… farewell for now.”
IAA held its second alumni reunion last August, celebrating its leaders of today. It was such a joy to see everyone back on campus.
The 2017 Alumni Reunion
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