The AUCian experience of an alumnus

Interview transcript

Interviewer: Nouran Omar

Interviewee: Youmna Mohamed

Dates: 2/3/2013

Place: Al Mashfa Hospital

University: The American University in Cairo

Prof.: Kim Fox
Nouran Omar

Younna Mohamed’s Interview

2 march 2013

People present: Youmna Mohamed

Nouran Omar

Nouran: Good afternoon.

Younna: Good afternoon.

Nouran: I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.

Younna: No, it’s no trouble. It’s ok.

Nouran: My name is Nouran Omar. I’m an AUC student, and I’m studying IMC, and this is a project for my class. So can we start off by you telling me a bit about yourself?

Younna: Sure. My name is Youmna Mohamed. I’m a training psychologist in AL Masha hospital by Suez road. I live here in Cairo, in Heliopolis, and I’m 24 years old.

Nouran: Ok. Uhhh Can you tell me what did you study in AUC? And..

Younna: Ummm I was a double major in psychology and business. I though about minoring in Islamic studies but I didn’t have the time so I couldn’t.

Nouran: Ok. Uhh what was the experience for you (to be like a ) to be an AUC student?

Younna: what was it like you mean?

Nouran: Yes.

Younna: To be honest it wasn’t the best. My university years weren’t the best years of my life. Everyone says university is where you have the time of your life and all this stuff. It didn’t really apply to me as a person. I didn’t enjoy my university experience that much. For me, AUC wasn’t the best place to be or I didn’t feel like I fit in in the university. The courses, even though I doubled majored, it was just out
of interest for me but not actually interest in the university and the courses in itself. I
didn’t find the courses very challenging not in the sense that they weren’t hard or
anything but I thought they were a bit boring. That the university could have done a
better job in choosing which courses should be taught to gain an actual degree in a
major or how they could be taught.

Nouran: Ok. So this is your opinion from an academic side. What do you think of the social
side of it?

Younma: The social side umm I’m kinda gonna have a negative, a bit of a negative answer to
this one too. Cause the social side uhh, well the thing is cause in the classes you
have people from all different … for example you can have people from totally
different majors and people from totally different school years. You can have a
sophomore, freshmen, junior, and everything in one class so it is really hard to make
friends at this point. Cause each semester you have five different courses and each
course you have completely different people and it goes on for all the four years or
five years or whatever that you stay in university so it is really hard to make friend.
So my theory was unless you actually go into university with a bit of friends and you
can make friends from these friends, it was really hard getting to know people like
actually well or getting that close to someone.

Nouran: uhh when we were talking earlier you told me you went a year abroad and then you
changed your mind and you came back to AUC. Could you elaborate more about
that?

Younma: I spent a semester in AUC and then I decided I am not gonna do this anymore I
want to go study medicine in Prague. So I went there for almost a year and then I
decided to come back. It wasn’t because of the university or anything. It’s just I had
family problems and I was missing, uhh I had home sickness and everything so I
couldn’t really keep up with living there but the experience there was amazing and
the social life. People were really friendly and everything and I thought the courses,
even though it’s a completely different thing than what I took in AUC, the way the
teachers presented the courses and everything we didn’t have the assignments and all
that but we had ... The way they taught it ya3ni made it stick. You didn’t have to like
memorize stuff and everything. What I appreciate about AUC is they try to do that
they try to implement that ideology or whatever in our minds that you don’t have to
like its not like national schools were you have to remember everything and do
everything. You just need to improvise and think and everything but I don’t really
think it’s focused on as much here in AUC.

Nouran: uhh ok. Being an AUC graduate, do you have any stereotypes that you face from
people when applying for a job? or like when people are dealing with you in general,
here even at the hospital?

Youmna: uhh well the thing is umm AUC have a great name and a reputation and everything.
People are like oh my God she is an AUC graduate and everything. So the high class
or the really important companies or whatever are proud to actually say ahh our staff
is like AUC students and everything. People brag about us, but the thing is when you
go into actual jobs or whatever people don’t take you seriously. We are taken very
lightly. People don’t think we are hardcore or whatever. They think we are spoiled,
specially the girls. The boys, the stereotype doesn’t really fit. Somehow the
stereotype is like oh my God he’s the rich boy and everything but it goes away. But
the girls they are like she’s spoiled; she is a brat; she’s a daddy’s girl. So we are not
taken seriously in our jobs which kinds of affects us. I had to really work hard to
prove myself here in this hospital, to prove that I’m not just any university graduate
that I was slacking off and I was taking psychology and that it was just a trip to me.
Nouran: Ok. Uhh when they say you will miss university once you graduate. Is that true? Did you feel like ... I know you’ve been talking about it wasn’t the best experience, but they compare it with like being in the work force and being a student?
Youmna: I do. I miss university even though it wasn’t the best experience as u said and as I said earlier. The atmosphere was different. The pressure was different. The pressure was only to get a good grade or whatever. You had the chance in university; you have the chance to have a do over and a make over for example you can retake the classes you can do whatever, you have extra credits and everything. But in life in real life, in a job if you mess up that’s it for you. You only have like… the boss can agree one time to let you off the hook but it doesn’t happen very often. So of course I miss university, and I miss how it was just easy meeting with your friends and socializing whatever university life was totally different.

Nouran: Do you believe AUC was the best choice for you as a student? Because after you came back, there were other universities that you could have applied into but you chose AUC. Do you think this is the best choice you’ve made or do you regret it?
Youmna: To be honest, I don’t know if it’s the best choice I’ve made but being here in Egypt it is the best choice I’ve made. Maybe if I could’ve gone to any other university abroad it would’ve been better for me. Cause I’m… To be honest now I’m a training psychologist and everything but I’m still not sure what I want to be. Later on maybe I could change my mind and go into business, which is my other major. So I’m not really sure but being here in Egypt yes AUC is the best choice I could’ve taken I guess. It’s one of … IT IS the best university here in Egypt.

Nouran: Thank you so much for your time I really appreciate it.
Youmna: I hope I’ve helped.
Nouran: Yes very much. Thank you.