

# AKU-NAMA

Aga Khan University Newsletter and Magazine for Alumni

Winter 2009, Vol. 2, Issue 2





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North American alumni at a reunion dinner in San Francisco.

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# Alumni Impact

Adeel A. Butt

Many of you are aware of the ongoing efforts to determine the impact of Aga Khan University alumni. While the concept to quantify alumni impact may seem simple – the actual quantification of such an abstract idea is far more difficult. A dedicated group of alumni is working diligently to determine all possible areas of impact and will come up with their report soon.

Anecdotally, we know about the tremendous work many of the alumni are involved in. From educators in the northern areas of Pakistan to nurses in Afghanistan, and from the highly successful researchers in Pakistan, East Africa and North America to public health workers across the globe,

A large measure of the University's success is its alumni's success, each reinforcing the other. While it is imperative for the alumni to ensure that the University's reputation is protected and enhanced, it is also incumbent upon the University to hold true to its core values and support the alumni.

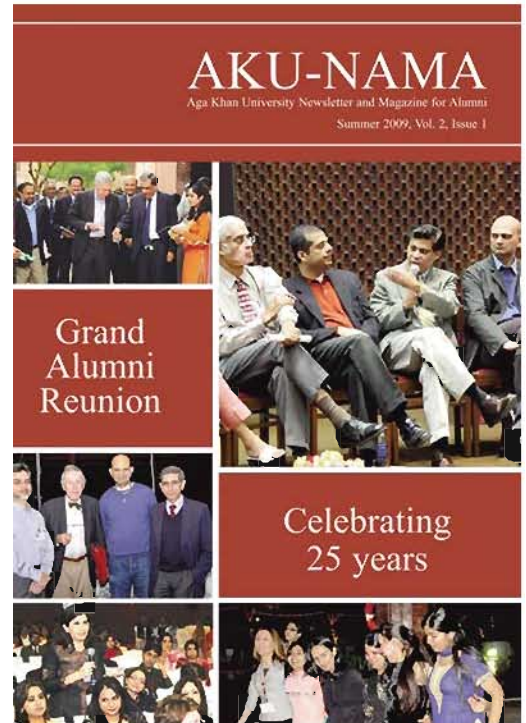
AKU alumni are leaving indelible marks.

Some of the measures this group is already looking at are alumni accomplishments in academia, research, education, clinical practice and public service. However, one crucial area that needs to be highlighted is service to the University and to other alumni.

Whether it includes bringing human, technical or financial resources to the University, providing alumni with tangible benefits in their careers or promoting the University and its alumni locally or globally, these services need to be highlighted and

acknowledged. And such acknowledgment should come from representative alumni chapters, once they are formed.

A large measure of the University's success is its alumni's success, each reinforcing the other. While it is imperative for the alumni to ensure that the University's reputation is protected and enhanced, it is also incumbent upon the University to hold true to



its core values and support the alumni on and off the campus.

Alumni interested in helping in this important task should contact the office of alumni affairs with their ideas and suggestions. In the end, this measurement will only be as good as your reporting of your own and your colleagues' contribution to policy development, research or teaching.

On another note, we are now seeing second-generation alumni – graduates whose parents went to AKU. This year we congratulate Dr Atif Bashir, MBBS '09, son of Dr Bashir Hanif, MBBS '91, who became the first second-generation Medical College alumnus. It is a proud moment to realise that our next generation have had the chance to experience the same camaraderie, mentorship and quality of education that gave us the base for our accomplishments. Welcome to the ranks of AKU graduates.



*Generation Next: Drs Atif and Bashir Hanif; Atif is the first second-generation Medical College alumnus.*



# Careers in the Pharmaceutical Industry

Nauman G. Rashid, MBBS '90



*The spectrum of research in the pharmaceutical industry is huge.*

*Gary Otte*

Broadly speaking, the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry can be separated into Big Pharma and biotech companies. Big Pharma are the large pharmaceutical firms such as GlaxoSmithKline, Pfizer and Merck – commercial ventures with a global reach and a large workforce. Biotechnology, or biotech, companies vary in size, from only a few employees to corporations that compare with the bigger pharma firms. Smaller biotechs tend to operate from one main geographical base.

Physicians are employed in large numbers in Big Pharma, and can range from recent medical graduates to Nobel Prize winners. Several roles exist for physicians, ranging from drug safety, regulatory affairs and project management, to medical advisors that act as an interface between the scientific and commercial arms of the company. Big Pharma offers the potential for career development and transfer-

ability. Many physicians start in the research and development (R&D) or the medical marketing divisions, before moving to roles in business development (buying smaller companies and building alliances with biotechnology) or to full-time commercial work. Although there are opportunities for employment across the globe, most major companies have their headquarters in Switzerland (Roche, Novartis) or the United States (Merck, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Wyeth). Irrespective of the location or profile of the company, the opportunities for career growth are substantial and varied. Some extremely successful pharmaceutical executives started their careers as medical doctors.

For physicians wishing to consider a return to clinical medicine following a period in the corporate environment, the pharmaceutical industry may offer a perfect compromise. Employment in Big Pharma may allow an individual to return to clinical medicine armed with a broad skill-set of experience in research, general management and international culture. For those opting to remain on the corporate side, the industry offers a reputable launch platform for careers in health care consultancy, business development and venture capital or private equity investment firms. There is also the option to obtain additional qualifications, such as a diploma in pharmaceutical medicine, which is designed specifically for doctors employed in the pharmaceutical industry.

Biotechnology companies range from small start-ups to international giants such as Genentech and Amgen. Start-ups are hugely excit-

ing places to work in and tend to lean toward the real cutting-edge of science and clinical development. They are not typically starting points for physicians straight out of medical college, as they are generally heavy on the R&D side and focused on extremely technical aspects of medical science. They are nonetheless, a potential second role following a period of time spent in a larger corporation, or for those seeking a more entrepreneurial experience.

A large number of biotech companies are located on the East and West coasts of North America. Salaries tend to be lower than those of Big Pharma, but the share options can, and often do, make individuals very wealthy. The spectrum of research, development and products is huge and encompasses many sub-sectors, with varying disease processes and conditions that are treated as a result of new developments and emerging technology. With the emergence of gene therapy, stem cell research and important breakthroughs such as RNA interference, the biotech industry will undoubtedly continue to grow and maintain a requirement for motivated physicians who wish to combine their medical knowledge with an industry perspective in order to transfer theoretical products into practical clinical applications.

Both Big Pharma and biotechs represent industries where clinical medical skills can be put to extremely good use and where doctors can flourish with dynamic and exciting new career paths.

*Nauman G. Rashid is Medical Director, GlaxoSmithKline, Middle East and North Africa, and is based in Dubai, UAE.*

# Women on the Go

Rehana Naz, MEd '03

The role of women in development is widely recognised and their empowerment is taken as a key component of development policies. But 'empowerment' can be interpreted in different ways. In my preferred definition, empowerment consists of four dimensions, each equally important and none sufficient on its own: cognitive (critical understanding of one's reality), psychological (self-esteem), political (awareness of power inequalities and the ability to organise and mobilise) and economic (capacity to generate independent income).

Only well-designed educational settings have potential to foster all four dimensions; they also need to explicitly aspire to unleash each of these in their graduates. Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED), Pakistan's educational programmes are designed to cultivate all four aspects. In my experience, the Institute has made a remarkable contribution to women's empowerment – which has, in turn, contributed to overall national development. Many women have been cognitively, psychologically and economically nurtured by the well-designed study programmes at AKU-IED – with multiplier effects at the national and international level in educational development and development as a whole.

In my case, my family had not allowed me to apply for the Master of Education (MEd) programme when it was first offered in 1993 in Pakistan, as it included an international exposure module which meant that I would have to travel alone and be away from home. In 2001, however, an alternative opportunity opened up: students now had the

option to travel to Pakistan's Northern Areas (newly-named Gilgit-Baltistan) for the required field work. I enrolled in the MEd programme and grabbed the opportunity to travel to Gilgit – and my first chance to travel alone! The experience of working in an unfamiliar environment and staying with friends enhanced my confidence and decision-making skills and indeed my family's trust in me.

The Institute's support gave me the confidence to accept the challenge of working as a Professional Development Teacher at AKU-IED's Professional Development Centre, Northern Areas in 2004. The next year, I joined the Education Sector Reform Assistance programme, a five-year programme initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development in sup-

port of the government's education efforts and began working as a teacher educator, travelling to many locations and provinces. Working in the field with primary school teachers was good exposure that helped me grow as a professional. An Australian aid scholarship in 2007 gave me the chance to earn a second MEd degree, at Monash University, Australia, and to open the door to experiences in Japan, New Zealand, the US, Malaysia and many more places. While the MEd was the first step towards my empowerment as a woman, I feel all four dimensions of my personality have been nourished by the University and its programmes.

*Rehana Naz is currently a consultant with the USAID-funded ED-LINKS project at AKU-IED, Pakistan and hopes to join the PhD programme at Monash University.*



*AKU-IED's programmes have made a valuable contribution to women's growth and progress.*

*Mohammad Danish Khan*

# Why Did I Choose Psychiatry?

Sobia Haqqi, PGME (Psychiatry) '07

“What? Have you lost your mind? Why on earth would you want to do psychiatry?”

“But ... I like this field, I think it is so cool what the ‘psych’ people do, and they can actually ‘look’ into other people’s brains.”

This was the very first conversation I had with my family when it was time for me to choose a postgraduate field. A woman choosing psychiatry for postgraduate studies ... one must be kidding! It seems like only yesterday, but seven years down the line, lots of hard work, commitment, seemingly never-ending on-calls, evaluation exams, degree exams, zero social lives... what is

it that made me choose psychiatry? Well for that, I have to look back at the whole journey.

To think life would be easy once you enter a good teaching institution ... that’s actually where it all begins. From the very first day as a psych resident, the chills of a first night on-call, the very first psychotic patient – one by one, the revelations of being a postgraduate in a tertiary care hospital dawns upon

you and all you can do is pray for all of it to be over soon. In spite of the ever-so-hecktic, rigorous training years, there were many wonderful times shared with fellow residents, having *sehri* (the pre-dawn meal in the month of fasting, Ramadan) with the nursing staff, going out

face some stigma in developing countries. Supernatural forces, spirits, possession and black magic are all linked to mental illnesses. Patients end up going to traditional faith healers, *hakims*, and other sorts of alternative healers long before they go to a mental health professional.

Also, there still is a dearth of awareness regarding common mental illnesses like depression, anxiety, substance abuse and psychosis. In Pakistan, with an estimated population of 170 million, to date there are about 300 qualified psychiatrists and around 400 psychologists, located in urban centres while the majority of people live in rural areas. Other allied mental health profes-

sionals such as social workers, psychiatric nurses and occupational therapists are all but non-existent. The only solution is to induct more medical graduates in postgraduate psychiatry training programmes.

When I look back at my journey from graduation to postgraduation, it may not have been a joyride, but there is not a single moment I regret and if given the choice, I would choose psychiatry all over again.



*Survivors of natural disasters and terrorism may need help in coping with the trauma but professional psychiatric help is not readily available in Pakistan.*

with fellow residents for *iftaris* (breaking of the fast at sunset) and dinners with pagers beeping and a dash back to attend to patients. Then there were the moments with your mentors and more senior doctors, who were always there in times of need with their anecdotes and motivational guidance.

Why did I choose psychiatry? Mental health patients and even mental health workers all tend to



# Volunteering in Mardan

Saleema Gulzar, MScN '06

Swat used to be an idyllic, peaceful valley, a favourite destination for visitors, travellers or tourists wanting to experience its breathtaking natural beauty. But conflict and anti-terrorist military operations in the valley in mid-2009 forced people to leave their homes for safer havens. It was one of Pakistan's worst displacement crises, with over 2 million people being affected. Most of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) moved to Mardan and sought refuge with their extended families or were sheltered in official camps in the district.

Based on a needs assessment, the University initiated an obstetrics-focused programme to help the IDPs in Mardan, where I volunteered my services. There were many ifs and buts attached to taking the decision to work in the camps: personal security, physical infrastructure, leaving the family for so many days, and similar other challenges. In the end, what compelled me to go and work there was an ethic, that as a public health professional I had to assist people in need. In addition, the vision of Aga Khan University School of Nursing (AKU-SON) to serve people in their communities, gave me the confidence to proceed with enthusiasm. Working in the camps provided not only a unique opportunity to learn and apply knowledge creatively, but it also changed my perception towards life itself, which really is so uncertain and unpredictable.

I believe that the systematic approach to work, learnt in my academic life at AKU-SON, helped immensely in the efforts to assist people efficiently. A quick initial assessment gave me an idea about where I needed to begin and how to proceed. Providing services such as an antenatal clinic, conducting deliveries and providing referrals was

**Providing services such as an antenatal clinic, conducting deliveries and providing referrals was not quite the same as doing them in a tertiary care setting; it required innovation, critical thinking and patience to be able to work productively.**

not quite the same as doing them in a tertiary care setting; it required innovation, critical thinking and patience to be able to work productively. This was also possible because I was working with the help of a fully dedicated team of AKU professionals. People were so supportive and caring that the long working hours



*The University initiated an obstetric-focused programme to help the IDPs.*

*Fahim Siddiqi*

didn't tire me at all. After returning from Mardan, I thanked God for giving me so much, for I now realise that I have nothing to complain about, and can only be grateful for His countless blessings.

I would like to conclude with a quote from Indira Gandhi who said, "There are two kinds of people, those who do the work and those who take the credit. Try to be in the first group; there is less competition there."

# Changing the Learning Environment at AKU

Shariq Khoja, MBBS '96



*At AKU-IED, East Africa teachers monitor the course participants' text messages via Moodle (a virtual learning environment) through which faculty can track comments and provide support. Ameer J.K. Mamdani*

of fields – all abroad. “These sessions give our residents a chance to tap into a type of expertise which we just don’t have in Pakistan”, says Dr Azfar Siddiqui, Chief of Dentistry, AKU, who moderates these lectures from Karachi. He gives the example of Dr Karim Alibhai, Associate Professor, University of Washington, a well-known specialist in endodontics – root

In the 25 years of its existence, Aga Khan University (AKU) has grown from a single-campus health institution to a multi-faculty, multi-campus University. The changing structure has also brought changes in the needs of the institution to better utilise its faculty and other teaching resources. AKU also recognises change in the needs of its learners, and has therefore encouraged its faculty and students to bring innovative ideas in teaching and learning. eLearning – the use of information and communication technology for teaching and learning – has emerged as an important strategic direction to respond to such changing needs. Many feel that eLearning is no longer just an option, but rather, a necessity – a bridge between AKU campuses and teaching sites that can help ensure that all parts of the University have access to the same high quality education. New eLearning technologies can also help improve the quality of AKU’s research and academic pro-

grammes by opening the door to international collaboration, something which AKU is strongly committed to as an international university. Other benefits include opening online courses to outside users and using technology for meetings and informal discussions by staff.

Although a fairly new initiative, eLearning has successfully attracted enthusiasts and early adopters from different parts of the University. This has resulted in increased usage of eLearning software tools like Elluminate Live! (a real-time virtual classroom) and Moodle (a course management system that can be used to create effective online learning sites). In Karachi, many AKU faculties and major departments have incorporated eLearning into their respective programmes, and more are joining in. For instance, dental surgery residents from the Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) programme are using Elluminate to listen to lectures online from specialists in a variety

of fields – all abroad. Dr Alibhai’s lectures have been so effective in supplementing the material covered in the classroom, that these lectures have now been opened up to participants, free of cost, from the Altamash Institute of Dental Medicine and Dr Ishratul Ibad Institute of Oral Health Sciences. It is estimated that apart from AKU faculty and residents, nearly 100 other participants log on to take advantage of this facility.

Similarly, recognising that teachers incorporate new learning skills into their teaching methods, the University’s Institutes for Educational Development (AKU-IED) has started using Elluminate and Moodle for their programmes, enabling their graduates to teach with new technologies once they return to their home institutions.

In East Africa, AKU-IED, East Africa, PGME and the Advanced Nursing Studies programme have all adopted eLearning. AKU-IED, East Africa is currently working on



a number of information and communications technology (ICT) initiatives with the goal of being recognised as a leading ICT user in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of teaching, learning and research. This ambition has been strengthened by a partnership with the University of Calgary, Canada and the University of Cambridge, UK through the Zanzibar Roundtable ICT projects. Their current focus is on virtual learning environments and they have created course websites on Moodle for seven of their Master of Education courses – ICT and Education, Effective Educational Leadership, Writing in English for Academic Purposes, Monitoring and Evaluation, Social Studies, English Education 2 and Science Education 2 – as well as a certificate course, Educational Leadership and Management. This certificate course even includes a mobile learning (mLearning) component which allows course participants to contact their teachers through mobile phones, which are both cheap and readily available in East Africa.

AKU-IED, Pakistan has also been experimenting with various modes of teaching and learning. The Institute offered its first blended learning course in 2003, which incorporated a web-based discussion forum. In 2005, a virtual learning environment, IED Online, was introduced for the first time in distance education and on-campus courses to provide a virtual space for interaction among the participants, the content and the facilitators. Adopting Moodle and Elluminate Live! in 2008 was another milestone for eLearning initiatives aimed at making learning processes more interactive and accessible to students. According to Dr Shabnam Ahmed, faculty and coordinator for the Certificate in Education: Health Education Programme, “use of technology in distance education programmes at AKU-IED is making a major contribution in developing teachers (especially women) in remote areas in Pakistan in initiating and sustaining health education projects.” Research and development projects are also undertaken by faculty and

students to explore the use and effectiveness of video-based virtual learning environments, computer mediated communication and use of educational software for teachers’ professional development. The Institute is currently working towards developing a strategy for the integration of eLearning with teacher education programmes.

A number of challenges stand in the way of eLearning, with the most obvious ones being logistical in nature, such as limited Internet bandwidth, particularly in East Africa, and frequent power outages. People’s own psychological barriers, which prevent them from considering eLearning as a viable alternative to ‘classical’ teaching methods, are also an issue.

AKU will undoubtedly, move towards eLearning as it aligns with the University’s efforts to promote collaborative learning across its campuses.

*Dr Shariq Khoja is Chair, AKU eLearning Technical Committee. Please write to [elearning@aku.edu](mailto:elearning@aku.edu) for more information about AKU’s eLearning initiatives.*

## Art and Surgery

Dr Adil Khan, MBBS '00, training in plastic surgery in the UK, is at the same time blazing trails in a unique art form which can only be described as ‘art and surgery’. He held a public viewing at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital in London, called ‘Chiaroscuro Unveiled’. Chiaroscuro is the interplay and contrast between light and shadow. Khan, who has liaised with renowned celebrity photographer, Anthony Lasala, and has used many of his photographs as a template for his own work, also paints in other forms.

In the words of Dr Syed Ali Hyder Zaidi, an artist and former researcher at AKU, Dr Khan, “created his own reality and invented his

own depictions, fusing the use of light and dark, which, in effect, also adjusts the sense of form and depth. His deep quest with the dark is an effort to participate in the world around him and many of his models appear to be fighting the eternal contest between man and his inner demons.” Boldly-lit figures appear to emerge from dark shadows but somehow retain a remote and mysterious quality. Ephemeral figures of hazy white and grey stand out in relief against murky backgrounds and charcoal blackness. Some chiaroscuro paintings emanate intimacy and serenity while others seem to be in a state of flux.



*Paintings from the Chiaroscuro Unveiled exhibition.*



# Exploring Diversity

Coming together, Simon Fraser University's Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures and Aga Khan University's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMC) offered a two-week course, *Expressions of Diversity – A Contemporary Introduction to Muslim Cultures*, in London during the summer. It attracted 35 participants from Australia, Belgium, Canada, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Portugal, South Africa, the UK and the US.

Through a series of sessions, films and co-curricular activities, the programme provided a comprehensive insight into the scriptures, Prophetic tradition, law, Sufism, art, science, music, contemporary concerns and other related topics that delved into the history, culture and present issues of

Muslims. An underlying theme was the exploration of the ways in which experiences and insights from a major world civilisation may bear upon the questions humanity faces today. Faculty was drawn from the Simon Fraser, Aga Khan and City universities, the School of Oriental and African Studies and the Institute of Ismaili Studies.

"Looking back on the programme, I gained a great deal. Like many academics, I am involved with teaching and thinking about

themes of transnationalism, globalisation and world history. The programme enriched my understandings of these issues by demonstrating how Muslim history is in fact world history. To learn about Muslim traditions is to engage with the major processes of global and world history. I had been trying to educate myself in Muslim histories but doing it on my own was slow

traditions in Muslim history. "For me, this programme was an excellent way to know more about Islam and Muslims around the world, especially their history and culture and how Islam is seen by others in the Western world," said Fara Samgy, from Portugal. "We weren't there to know the lecturer's point of view; we were there to get to know what history tells us about Islam.

The best thing of all is that all of us, the participants, became good friends. We shared different experiences and different ideas. I think that was very enriching for the programme."

Another participant, Munira Barkat Ali from Pakistan expressed similar feelings. "There were participants and faculty not only from the Muslim world

but also from around the globe, which enriched the objectives in particular and the programme in general."

In 2010, AKU-ISMC will be offering a number of public education courses on music, law, gender, art and architecture, minorities in Muslim contexts, and a Summer Programme that will be held in Vancouver, Canada.

*For more information on current courses and future programmes, please visit [www.aku.edu/ismc](http://www.aku.edu/ismc).*



*AKU-ISMC partnered with Simon Fraser University, Canada, to run a two-week public education course on the multi-faceted nature of Muslim cultures.*

going. The programme was exactly what I needed," said Christine Isabel Hofmeyr, one of the course participants from South Africa.

The Summer Programme is just one of a series of educational offerings at AKU-ISMC. The Institute has been offering a range of public education courses since 2008 that explore the multi-faceted nature of Muslim cultures. These courses are designed to provide a comprehensive, non-specialist window into the spiritual, ethical and intellectual



## Celebrating Excellence

A graduate of the Medical College, Dr Javed Butler, MBBS '90, was awarded the 2009 Simon Dack Award by the American College of Cardiology and named one of the five best cardiologists in the 'Top Doctors in Atlanta' report by the *Atlanta* magazine. Earlier in the year, he accepted a part-time position as the Deputy Chief Science Advisor for the American Heart Association. In this role, he will oversee and direct many of the scientific and research, advocacy, and quality improvement initiatives of the American Heart Association, including collaborations with the William J. Clinton Foundation, Microsoft Inc, Intel Corporation, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among others.

Dr Butler did his residency and chief residency in primary care internal medicine at Yale University, a Master in Public Health from Harvard University, and a fellowship in cardiology from Vanderbilt University. At Vanderbilt, he also gained a specialised fellowship, training in heart failure and cardiac transplantation; later, Dr Butler became the Director for the Heart and Heart-Lung Transplant programmes there. His many academic

accolades also include a cardiac imaging fellowship at the Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medicine School, Boston.

He is board-certified in cardiology, internal medicine and nuclear cardiology.

Dr Butler has been at Emory University, Atlanta, since 2006, where he is Associate Professor of Medicine at the School of Medicine and director of heart failure research at Emory Healthcare. His current work entails looking for new ways to prevent and treat heart conditions.

**Dr Butler and his colleagues created a model to predict the risk of heart failure among the elderly. "This is a scoring system that could help individuals or their physicians understand their five-year risk for heart failure, using basic risk factors that are easily obtained at relatively low cost," said Dr Butler.**

Dr Butler and his colleagues created the Health ABC Heart Failure Model to predict the risk of heart failure, especially among the elderly. "This is a scoring system that could help individuals or their physicians understand their five-year risk for heart failure, using basic risk factors that are easily obtained at relatively low cost," said Dr Butler.

Dr Butler's research interest is in determining novel prognostic markers for the development of

incident heart failure and risk stratification among patients with prevalent heart failure. He has published over 80 peer reviewed papers and over 150 abstracts, reviews, editorials, and book chapters. He is an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Cardiac Failure* and also serves on the editorial boards for the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, *American Heart Journal*, and *Congestive Heart Failure*. Dr Butler is currently actively serving on steering committees of several multinational clinical trials and also participates in various capacities with the National Institutes of Health, American College of Cardiology, and Heart Failure Society of America, and is routinely asked to speak in or chair seminars at national and international meetings.

Through a generous donation from an anonymous donor, an endowed research chair was created in honour of Dr Butler at Emory University, Atlanta, which will be inaugurated in 2010.



*Butler's research is focusing on models pinpointing those at risk of heart failure.*



## Change for a Better Tomorrow

Fatima Ali Naqvi, MBBS '97

Once again, I find myself packing and stacking boxes as we move to Maryland where my husband has secured a research fellowship at the National Institutes of Health. This is our third move to a new state in the US. The first stop was Michigan, then New York and now Maryland. All these moves have involved a residency or a fellowship, either mine or my husband's. I question myself, why I am taking all these pains to move from place to place? I can settle down in one place and avoid all this trouble. But the voice of reason reassures me, time and again, that education comes first.

Like always, it puts into perspective how much AKU has imparted to us. It is not just the professional education, but a lifelong commitment to growth. Endless Continuous Assessment Tests and End of Terms were not appreciated at the time and it seemed like our days and nights revolved around some sort of exam. Yet now, as I am steeped in sweet reverie of those days, it strikes me that those were the first stepping stones on the path of enlightenment. Our AKU training has indeed prepared us for everything – to be rough and tough at one end; gentle and passionate at the other. Compassion, keeping myself abreast of recent research and providing the best patient care are the ever-blooming gifts that AKU gave me.

My recollections of leaving AKU and moving to the US are still vivid and fresh. I still miss AKU, the pleasant lakeside walk, the library and especially the devoted teachers who were always there to help us. I believe that there are a few things you choose in life and the rest of the decisions are

made for you by divine intervention. As they say, the only constant in life is change. These changes should be for a better self and a better tomorrow. I am hopeful that once we are done with our training, we will go back home and share our knowledge with another generation. This will be the final accomplishment in our journey of self-actualisation.

## Thoughts from AKU-ISMC

Nadia Amin Rehmani, MA  
(Muslim Cultures) '08

One year has elapsed since I left Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMC) after completing the Master of Arts in Muslim Cultures. As I look back and reflect on the experience, I can affirm that the programme has changed my perceptions and brought a paradigm shift in my thinking process. The aim of the programme, which was to make us look at Muslim societies and cultures through a multidisciplinary approach, seems to have become a natural part of the way I look at the world.

Having been introduced to the key current debates in the humanities and social sciences, and the ways in which they can be used to

study Muslim societies, I feel more competent than ever before to think of the various facets shaping our everyday lives as Muslims. I can now relate to many fields of studies, which gives me confidence to contribute to the Muslim societies where I live and work, as well as to the Institute where many academic endeavours are taking place.

The course at AKU-ISMC was creatively constructed to engage us in critical thinking processes, debating and exploring various ways of addressing issues related to the Muslim world. I went through a tough internal struggle to find a balance between thinking as a social scientist, my beliefs as a Muslim, and analysing the phenomena surrounding me, without falling into the trap of reductionism. The most important lesson I learnt, however, was to shed my prejudices and to break free from dogma in order to think for myself.

The experience would not have been as gratifying were it not for our professors who shared their passion for their fields with us. It is because of them that this learning experience, despite its perils, proved pleasurable. They were great minds and generous souls to whom we shall always be grateful.



Students at a presentation at AKU-ISMC.



## Heading North ... of the US

Mohamed Zawahir, MBBS '94

In these trying times of economic hardship, I'm sure the thought of moving to another country has crossed the

minds of a few of our colleagues in the US. The most obvious choice, I suppose, would be Canada: it's a neighbouring country, the lifestyle is almost the same as in the States depending on where you live and work, the economy is more robust and health care is free. As someone who is undergoing the process of moving up north, I can

only say – be sure you have at least a plan B and a plan C in place before attempting to negotiate the maze of Canadian certification.

Over the past year I have been trying to work in Ontario, Canada, and after a lot of red tape, I have finally succeeded but with some conditions. The main problem is that in their efforts to entice more doctors northward, the College of Physicians and Surgeons have kept changing the policies under which a doctor can migrate and work in Canada. Having said that, there are a lot of doctors living in Ontario who are trying to get into the health system through residency training programmes, evaluation exams and so on. This year a total of 80 foreign graduates were accepted into training programmes

in Ontario. It is unclear how many international medical graduates are in the province, but most have had to take on other jobs to survive. One such doctor I know is being hired by a medical transport

service to supervise patient transfers; another is volunteering her time in different hospitals while waiting to pass the qualifying exams.

The United States Medical Licensing Examination has only recently

For doctors trained in the US, it's now easier to apply for registration and provided that your postgraduate training was done in the US, you can get certification but with conditions. These include: a physician must practice with a mentor until he or she has successfully completed an assessment; and, a physician must undergo an assessment after completing a minimum of one year of practice in Ontario.

been accepted as an equivalent exam to the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination. For those doctors who are trained in the US, it's now easier to apply for registration under two different pathways, and provided that your postgraduate training was done in the US, you can get certification but with conditions. These include: a physician must practice with a mentor and/or supervisor until he or she has successfully completed an assessment; and, a physician must undergo an

assessment after completing a minimum of one year of practice in Ontario. The certificate of registration automatically expires 18 months from the date of issuance, but may be renewed by the Registration Committee, with or without additional or other terms, conditions and limitations.

A committee decides whether you meet the registration requirements. This committee meets once a month and reviews your case to decide if you are fit to practice medicine in Ontario. You would need to have your whole application package in before a deadline including the name of a doctor willing to supervise you. Once you have completed the registration requirements, you are granted a temporary certificate and then have to handle the payment issues. The

province pays you for the work you do and you have to bill the provincial health authority, the

Ontario Health Insurance Plan. This

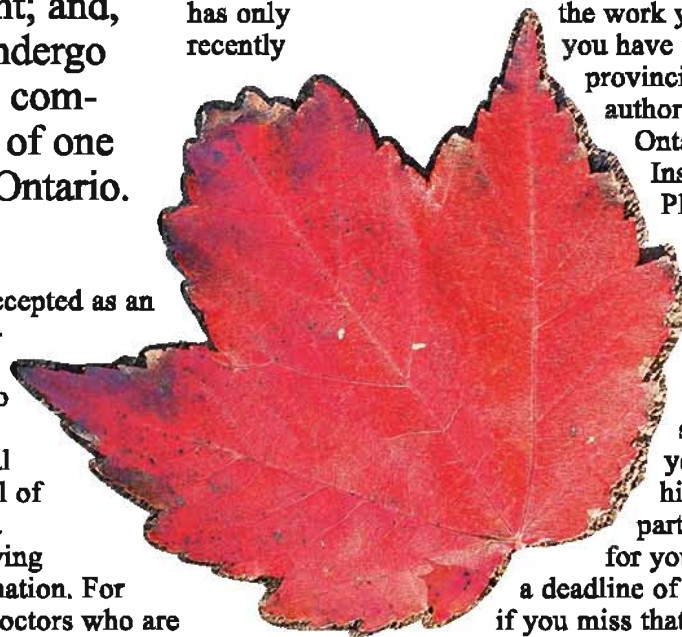
billing must be done electronically using proprietary software or you need to hire a third

party to do it for you. There is

a deadline of course and if you miss that you'll

have to wait for the next month to see how much you earned and the inevitable billing errors incurred. Another important requirement is maintaining your certification through continuous professional development.

So is all this hassle worth all the effort? I have to honestly say that I don't know yet – it's still work in progress.





## Changing Wrong Perceptions

Aamir Hameed, PGME Intern '07

I was filled with happiness and joy when I saw my name in the final list of candidates selected for the AKU 2006-07 internship programme. It was an extremely competitive process, and though I had some reservations, I was fortunate to be selected.

I had graduated from a public-sector medical college with an attached government hospital. The perception of most people in these institutions is that a trainee doctor in a private sector hospital does not have the autonomy or case diversity available in a public hospital. I was also warned that I

may not be able to withstand the pressure and would probably have to leave the programme.

**The perception of most people ... is that a trainee doctor in a private sector hospital does not have the autonomy or case diversity available in a public hospital.**

These were disturbing messages but it now became a challenge for me to get acclimatised to a totally different work environment. I

accepted this change as a learning opportunity, though I wondered whether I would be able to learn and practise as freely as my classmates interning at the public hospital.

Orientation day came around and I entered the AKU auditorium full of enthusiasm and excitement. Cordially welcomed by the Postgraduate Medical Education programme representatives, we were allotted different rotations and then taken on a formal visit of the Hospital. Pagers were given out. The next day we had to join our respective wards and take responsibilities from the previous interns. I had opted for surgery as my first six-month option. The very first thing I was told was that the reporting time was 7:00 am, but there was no set time to leave! I had never



*A journey ends, another begins: PGME graduates await their awards.*



reported to the wards so early in my entire student life.

So I attended my first morning round trying to stop the gaping yawns and keeping myself attentive. The chief resident was kind enough to offer us an after-rounds breakfast, which I happily accepted. Other residents helped us execute our orders, to give us time to familiarise ourselves with the working environment. It took hardly two to three days to adjust myself to the environment. Doing phlebotomy at 4:00 am when on call, so as to have the results in hand before the morning round, answering the non-stop pages, attending the workshops which were only good if they came on a post-call day (so that we got a chance to 'escape' from the ward), were part of our routine. An intern's duties are no doubt tough, but they inculcate a great sense of responsibility and punctuality apart from the full attention required to absorb what is performed, spoken and advised by senior doctors.

Time flew by and I was rotated through neurosurgery, emergency room, internal medicine and paediatrics, gaining valuable experience. The assumptions of well-wishers from my previous institution proved to be wrong. During my internship I did many procedures including bone marrow biopsies, lumbar punctures and central line placements under supervision. I learnt to do the procedures following proper protocols, training which is unfortunately missing in other health care institutions in Pakistan. Yes, those perceptions turned out to be wrong. That one year of internship was surely the best period of my life, and I can never forget it.

### **Making It Happen** Zehra Mithani, RN '05

I can still recall every single moment of that day, Convocation 2005, and being awarded the Diploma in Nursing by the

Chancellor, His Highness the Aga Khan. On the same day, His Highness inaugurated the Ibn Zuhr Building, for oncology services, and as luck would have it, I was designated to look after the visit to the oncology ward area. I then continued to work in this specialty, under the supervision of highly skilled doctors and staff, learning and contributing with the best.

The Daycare Oncology Unit is equipped to meet current requirements and facilitate patient care and satisfaction with top-of-the-line services. But behind this is the committed service of every

**To say that AKU has given us all a tremendous amount of prestige and dignity would be an understatement.**

member involved in the team that runs the oncology ward – a team that brought in the award for the 'best ward' every year since the unit started work.

Working in the oncology ward has helped me grow as a person. It has given me knowledge, expertise and taught me the real meaning of patient care. It is really an amazing feeling, almost impossible to describe in words, when a patient depends on your words of encouragement to help them respond positively to treatment. That's the moment when we realise the meaning of real satisfaction.

It is often said that to help others is the meaning of life and that only this brings lasting happiness to one's heart. I must say that I am fortunate to be able to feel the essence of such happiness in my everyday life, during my working hours in the ward. Although sometimes it is very tough to manage

and deal with the situations and cases we face, a patient's satisfaction and improvement is the ultimate source of happiness for us.

### **Blessed to be a Part of the AKU Family** Shehnaz Karim Mamdani, Post-RN BScN, '92

I am part of a group of health professionals in San Antonio, Texas, many of whom are AKU alumni. This group has bonded like a family, where a newcomer needs just one introduction and the whole family stands by. Whether it's about preparing for the nursing National Council Licensure Examination, the United States Medical Licensing Examination or the Graduate Record Examination, finding a job, a little friendly encouragement and a reminder to move forward, or just a shoulder to cry on – the family is there to support you. Being a part of this AKU mini-family is just one of the many bonuses you get from being alumni.

In my case I always say that it has changed my life 180 degrees for the better and no words could ever describe my gratitude to my alma mater. To say that AKU has given us all a tremendous amount of prestige and dignity would be an understatement. The University has given me so much more than that. It gave me my career, nursing, that will always have a bright future; and this reminds me of Majid Shafiq's piece in AKU-NAMA Winter 2008, where he wrote '*naam hi kafi hai*' (the name is enough). It is hard not to notice the raised eyebrows when our alma mater is mentioned.

As the previous issue's editorial noted, "complacency is not an option" and a warm invitation from Carol Ariano has definitely ignited some sparks. I am sure that alumni around the world are rolling up their sleeves to connect with their alma mater one way or another.

# AWARDS AND HONOURS

## Rhodes Scholar

Dr Misbahuddin Ali Rai, MBBS '08 heads to the University of Oxford as the 2009 Rhodes Scholar from Pakistan and the first AKU alumnus

lamentations on HIV/AIDS and its effects on the Pakistani population, to make an impact on health policy," explains Dr Rai. "Though my peers at AKU were far more experienced researchers, I was

duct of research, libraries, information technology, external relations, rules governing political demonstrations, and the welfare of faculty, students, and research officers.

Dr Adool A. Butt, MBBS '90 was elected to the Faculty Assembly and the Senate Council of the University of Pittsburgh in 2008. As a University Senator, Dr Butt represents the School of Medicine and is currently serving the second year of his three-year term. The University of Pittsburgh is ranked fifth in National Institutes of Health research funding awarded to the Health Sciences Schools. The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Health System is ranked 14<sup>th</sup> overall in the *US News and World Report's* 2008 ranking of America's Best Hospitals.

At Columbia University in New York, Dr Faisal H. Chasma, MBBS '00 was elected as a University Senator representing a constituency of several thousand research officers until 2011. He will also be serving on two important Senate Committees: Research Officers, and External Relations and Research Policy.



Off to Oxford: Dr Rai will engage in retrovirus research.

Ministry of Health Affairs, Pakistan

to receive this prestigious award. He joins a select group of a veritable 'who's who' that includes presidents, prime ministers and scientists among others. Rai will engage in retrovirus research at Oxford. "The battle against infectious diseases is particularly fierce in developing countries, where they still claim an intolerable number of lives," says Dr Rai. "My dream is to make some headway, through research, into the prevention of infectious diseases."

Dr Rai competed for and won a position in the cancer and virus research group at the University. "Our work ranged from successfully conducting studies on how various organisms are evolutionarily related ... to organising awareness conferences for Pakistani par-

never looked down upon in the lab or treated as a novice. AKU is working towards solidifying a strong mentorship programme which will help strengthen research at the University."

## Alumni Elected as University Senators

University Senates are university-wide legislative bodies representing faculty, staff and students from all schools and departments. They decide on policy on a range of issues that affect the entire university or more than one school, including educational programmes and priorities, budget, academic freedom and tenure, the con-



Drs Faisal H. Chasma and Adool A. Butt are making an impact.



## Making Your Mark

Nephrologists **Dr Naeem Rahim** MBBS '99 and his elder brother, **Dr Fahim Rahim** MBBS '97 were honoured by a Congressional Record Statement recognising their efforts in establishing a world-class kidney treatment centre, The Idaho Kidney Institute, in Pocatello, Idaho. US Senator Mike Crapo of Idaho said, "The Rahim brothers have helped people of all ages seeking relief and care for renal diseases ... Additionally, they have a reputation for delivering their medical expertise with an astute sense of care and concern for their patients."

Using creative learning strategies and helping students after hours are only a couple of the things that make **Dr Arif Sarwari**, MBBS '89, a memorable professor among his students and colleagues at the West Virginia University School of Medicine. An Associate Professor of Medicine in the Section of Infectious Diseases, Dr Sarwari has been nominated by faculty and staff in the Department of Medicine for numerous awards and has won at least one departmental award every



*Dr Arif Sarwari: 'king of the one sentence summary'.*

year since 2002. "He is, in my opinion, the king of the one-sentence summary and has mastered the ability to summarise a complex clinical scenario and state it in a simple, clear, concise and accurate manner," said Dr Joshua M. Dower, a faculty member at the School.

Dr Sarwari received the prestigious Herbert S. Waxman Award for Outstanding Medical Student Educator from the American College of Physicians in 2008. It is presented to only one person every year. A former student recalls Dr Sarwari going out of his way to help him and another student learn the basic questions for physical exam skills and recording patient history – he gave them a full five hours after class!

### Major Rubina Kausar

**Walter**, RN '85 was awarded the *Tamgha-i-Imtiaz* (Military), a medal of excellence on March 23, 2009, in recognition of her meritorious services and devotion to duty in performing her military responsibilities. She dedicated the award to her mother, her sisters, her alma mater and the Pakistan Army.

Major Walter completed her intermediate studies (years 11 and 12) from the Government Girls' College, Nawabshah, Sindh, followed by a Diploma in Nursing from AKU and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Karachi in 1988. It was followed by diplomas in Intensive Care Unit in 1987 and Midwifery in 1988 from the Armed Forces Postgraduate Medical Institute, Rawalpindi; she

completed her professional education and management and administration course from the same institution in 2005. In September 2007, she participated in a joint US and Pakistan Aviation Casualty Care and Evacuation Exchange Programme at Fort Rucker, Alabama. After offering her voluntary services to the



*Major Rubina K. Walter receives the Tamgha-i-Imtiaz from Lieutenant General Shahid Iqbal, HI(M), Commander 5 Corps, Karachi*

UNO Peace Mission to Mogadishu, Somalia, for a year (1994-95). She was granted the UNO Peace Mission Medal in 1995.

The Millennium Lifetime Award 2008 was presented to **Nausheen Salim**, Post-RN BScN '02, by South Asia Publication (SAP), a Pakistani company founded in 1983. SAP acknowledges the outstanding achievements and contributions of children, young people and adults in different fields. As part of its Silver Jubilee celebrations, SAP awarded the Millennium Lifetime Award 2008 to the 21 most distinguished men and women recipients of its Star Awards in the last 18 years. Salim received the Star Award in 2003 for her outstanding academic achievements in her Post-RN BScN studies and was nominated this year for her contributions to the field of nursing and midwifery.

**Dr Farhat Abbas**, Interim Dean, Medical College was conferred the *Tamgha-i-Imtiaz* by the Government of Pakistan for his achievements in medicine. From the time he joined as a resident in 1985, Dr Abbas has been associated in many ways with the University and Hospital, making significant contributions to the development of the Medical College – as faculty member; and Associate Dean, PGME – in addition to his present position. Dr Abbas has been Medical Director and Associate Dean, Clinical Affairs; and Chief Operating Officer of the Hospital in Karachi.

The World Health Organization's World No Tobacco Day medal was awarded to **Professor Javaid Khan**, Head, Section of Pulmonology, Department of Medicine at the University in Karachi "in recognition of his outstanding contribution to tobacco control" efforts in Pakistan. Professor Khan also chairs the National Alliance for Tobacco

Control. He received the medal from the Federal Minister for Health on behalf of WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan, on World No Tobacco Day, held on May 31.

### People in New Positions

**Khadija Pir Muhammad**, RN '83 has been appointed Director, Nursing Services at the Hospital in Karachi. Her responsibilities include all nursing services and related operational areas and she will lead efforts for continuous quality improvement and widen the range of the Hospital's services. She will also invest in the development of nurses, especially for leadership and specialty roles within the University. Pir Muhammad, brings with her 26 years of field experience, returning to AKU after holding various responsibilities in four stints here between 1983 and 2002. Her last assignment was at a private hospital in Australia, after completing her Master in Health Administration from the University of New South Wales.

working in particular with the newly-integrated Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan hospitals and with the French Medical Institute for Children in Afghanistan. Dr Khowaja is a certified assessor for ISO 9002 and a trained facilitator for Continuous Quality Improvement. She earned her PhD in Nursing from Ballarat University, Australia, completed her post-doctoral studies from McMaster University, Canada and recently celebrated 25 years of service at AKU.

**Dr Parvez B. Nayani**, Senior Instructor, Community Health Sciences has been appointed to a new position as Head, AKU Programmes in Afghanistan. He will work with the University's academic entities in defining a long term strategy for programmes in Afghanistan, including identifying funding sources for expansion. He will also help the University build partnerships with NGOs, government departments, international donor agencies and other stakeholders to ensure quality programmes. Dr Nayani has been associated with the University since 1984. He earned a Master in Public Health from the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health, USA.

**Anjum Halai**, MEd '96, Amir Sultan Chinoy Group Associate Professor and Head, Research and Policy Studies, AKU-IED, Pakistan has been seconded to AKU-IED, East Africa to serve as Interim Director.

**Bernadette L. Dean**, MEd '96 has been appointed Principal of the prestigious Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore.

**Dilshad Ashraf**, MEd '98 has been appointed Head, Research and Policy Studies, AKU-IED, Pakistan.



*Professor Javaid Khan receives the WHO's World No Tobacco Day medal from Pakistan's Minister for Health, Mr Aijaz Jhokrani.*

**Dr Khurshid Khowaja**, BScN '93 has become Director, Nursing Outreach Development. This is a newly-created joint appointment between the Hospital's Nursing Services and the University's School of Nursing. She will focus on clinical quality and improved patient care,



# AKUTEXANS at Houston

Zakariya Imam, MBBS '06



*Medical College and School of Nursing alumni with President Firoz Rasul and Asif Fancy.*

The last week of June 2009 proved to be a historic one, both for AKU alumni in Houston, as well as our growing body of alumni in general. President Firoz Rasul, making a brief stopover in the city as part of his North American tour, joined the alumni on June 24 at a late afternoon meeting at the Intercontinental Hotel, just a block from Houston's Galleria. Thirty graduates from the School of Nursing and Medical College welcomed the President. This was befitting, since Houston boasts of the presence of around 150 nursing and 80 medical graduates.

Zakariya Imam, MBBS '06 and Shirin Chumara, RN '91, delivered the welcome address followed by a brief speech by Asif Fancy, Director-General, Resource Development and

Public Affairs, AKU. President Rasul succinctly highlighted the University's impact and achievements in the last 25 years, before outlining the vision, aims and objectives for the future. The audience also received news of Dr Mohammad Ali Rai, MBBS '08 becoming the first AKU graduate to be granted a Rhodes scholarship to the University of Oxford. A lively interactive question-and-answer session followed with alumni expressing their firm resolve to support AKU in any way they could.

Two days later, on June 26, around 45 graduates from the Medical College got together at Houston's Shahnai Restaurant to honour Professor Khalid Khan, who had taught at AKU and is presently Chair, Department of Anatomy, Kuwait

University. Dr Khalid Khan was on a private visit to Houston and had kindly agreed to meet his students over dinner. It was a pleasant reunion, refreshing peoples' memories of their years at AKU, centred on the lecture halls, the dissection hall, the 'MDL' – the multi-disciplinary lab – and the microscopy lab. This dinner was the least that Medical College alumni could do to honour a person who has had such significant impact on the development of their careers. Especially remembered were his lectures on neuroanatomy, and his honesty and integrity as chair of the Stage I curriculum sub-committee. The dinner also provided an opportunity to welcome University graduates who had recently moved to Texas to begin their residency or fellowship training.



## On a Cruise to Alaska

Sara Abbas and Ghulam Abbas, MBBS '94

Alumni reunions are always memorable experiences, but this one aboard a cruise ship headed to Whittier, Alaska, was more memorable than others. Some of us from the MBBS Class of '94 decided to get together at the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA) meeting aboard the *Carnival Spirit* in August 2009. In addition, there was the continuing medical education programme, which allowed us to meet physicians from other parts of North America and we exchanged notes, clinical experiences and phone numbers.

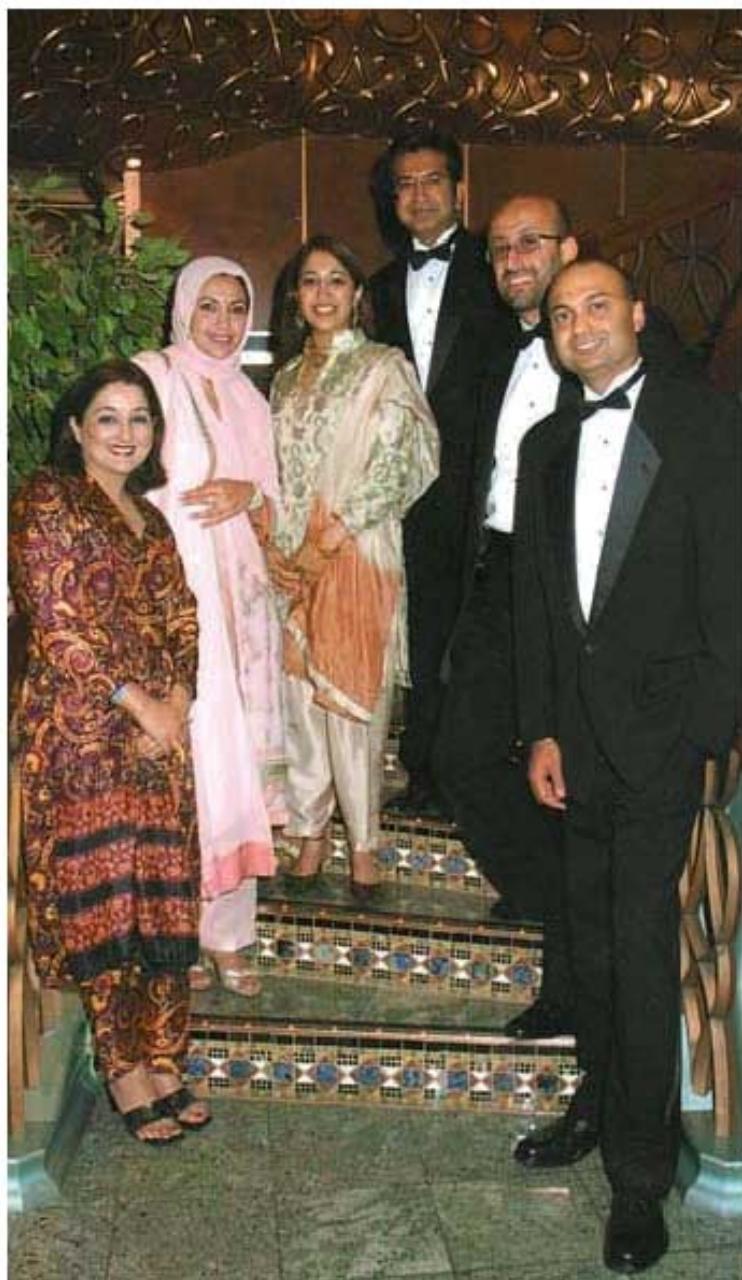
Within our group, we talked about our years at the University while watching whales lob-tailing off the coast of Canada's Prince William Sound and indulging in a Pakistani chicken *karhai* – APPNA had arranged a lavish four-course menu with *halal* food and entertainment for the 400 people who had come to the meeting. The reunion took us back 20 years to 1989, the year we were admitted to AKU. There we were, a bunch of thin, gawky 18-year-olds introducing ourselves nervously in the cavernous lecture hall. We were so excited to have made it to the prestigious Aga Khan University, before finally getting to know each other at lectures, Community Health Sciences rotations and exams. The years at AKU are seared into our collective memory and have fostered a sense of community that has lasted till today.

In the 15 years since we have been out of AKU, class members like myself have faced a troubling, soul-searching question: how can we repay the debt to our people? How do we take the success reaped in the new world and transfer it to our own

country? These questions have been the subject of heated e-debates among classmates. We finally decided to sponsor a school through The Citizens Foundation (TCF), which has built 600 schools for 80,000 students in Pakistani villages and towns. Though this may seem like a big number, it is only a drop in the ocean.

According to UNICEF, about 6.4 million children in Pakistan do not go to school. TCF's budget for a school is \$100,000 and we have raised enough money, through our collective efforts, to support one educational institution. The class is very excited to be playing a small role in this nation-building experience.

Alumni meetings are to remember, to laugh and to dream. Together, we can forge deeper relationships and recognise goals that allow us to work on projects of common interest.



Sara and Ghulam Abbas, Sadia and Khalid Mateen, and Sehar and Fuad Hasany.



# Medical College, North American Alumni

Faiz Bhora, MBBS '92

The North American chapter of the Aga Khan University Medical College Alumni Association held its reunion dinner at the Marriott Hotel in San Francisco, California. Around 60 alumni attended, piggy-backing on the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA) summer meeting. We started off with some free time to allow attendees to meet and greet before a series of short presentations.

Carol Ariano, Vice President for Human Resources, AKU, spoke about the University's widespread campuses, with 11 sites in 8 countries and future expansions being planned both in Karachi, Pakistan and Arusha, Tanzania.

Dr Farhat Abbas, Interim Dean, Medical College, AKU was the next speaker. He spoke about progress in the medical field and how very important it is for the alumni to intellectually engage with AKU for it to progress. It was very clear to all present that the University wishes to work with alumni to enhance its reputation and development.

Dr Faiz Bhora, MBBS '92, President of the AKU Medical College Alumni Association of North America, presented an overview of the Association's structure, highlighting an action plan that incorporates:

- Increased active membership;
- Improved connectivity amongst North American alumni;
- Close working relationships with the University in all academic disciplines;
- A final Alumni Association constitution;
- A new website;
- A mentorship programme aimed at providing Medical College



*Dinner for alumni hosted by Dr Faiz Bhora and Naveen Bhora.*

and postgraduate medical education graduates with research and clinical training opportunities in the US; and

- Work towards financial stability for the Alumni Association.

The reunion was a great opportu-

nity to meet old friends and make new ones. Another such opportunity is the APPNA's winter meeting, hosted by AKU in Karachi. We look forward to continuing to build a strong relationship between alumni and the University.

The AKU Medical College Alumni Association of North America has undergone a revival as of January 2009. The Association is an independent, non-profit entity, established in the United States, whose primary mandate is to serve Medical College alumni residing in North America.

There is now a formal organisational structure in place to better serve the Association's members. It consists of an Executive Committee and an Executive Council. The Council includes members of the Executive Committee and class representatives who are nominated by their peers. The role of the class representative is to serve as a liaison between the Executive Committee and their classmates.

The Executive Committee meets weekly and the Executive Council quarterly to discuss initiatives being undertaken by the Association. Members of the Executive Committee are: Dr Faiz Bhora (MBBS '92), President; Dr Faisal Cheema (MBBS '00), Secretary; Dr Syed Jawad (MBBS '97), Treasurer; and Shain Amershi, Executive Coordinator, Ex-Officio member.

*Class Notes highlights important news and events in the lives of alumni.*

## School of Nursing

**2008**

Zehra Parvani, joined the University's School of Nursing as an Instructor soon after completing her Post-RN BScN from AKU. She is proud to serve the school as an alumnus.

## Institute for Educational Development

**1999**

Zafar Yasin, faculty at the Provincial Institute of Teacher Education, Quetta, has become Coordinator, Balochistan, for the ED-LINKS project.

S. Zulfiqar Ali Shah is serving as Deputy Director, Education Management in a US-based NGO called RISE, supporting the education sector in the earthquake-affected areas of Pakistan.

Abdul Qasim is serving as academic coordinator, ED-LINKS project in FATA, Pakistan.

Farasat Mumtaz, faculty at the Provincial Institute of Teacher Education, Peshawar, is currently associated with UNICEF. She is working on Early Child Education and Internally Displaced People education projects in the NWFP.

**2002**

S. Tahir Hussain is Chief Operating Officer at the City District Government Karachi and Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce's joint venture on education.

**2003**

Imdad Ali Baloch has been serving Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan as Provincial Coordinator, Sindh for the ED-LINKS project.

Tauseef Akhlaq is District Manager, Mirpurkhas, Sindh, for the ED-LINKS project.

## MC Alumni Association, North America

Members of the Executive Council and your class representative in North America are:

**1988**

Anwar Ahmad, resident of Sugarland, Texas specialises in cardiology.

**1989**

Saira Ahsan, resident of Williamsburg, Virginia specialises in paediatrics.

**1990**

Nayyar Iqbal, resident of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, specialises in internal medicine and endocrinology. He is involved in global clinical research and in developing a novel anti-diabetes compound. He also maintains a clinical practice at the University of Pennsylvania as an adjunct Associate Professor of Medicine.

**1991**

Lubna Khawaja, resident of Sugarland, Texas, specialises in internal medicine and paediatrics. She is an academic hospitalist at the Baylor College of Medicine.

**1992**

Saleem Islam, resident of Gainesville, Florida, specialises in paediatric surgery and is an Associate Professor of Surgery and Program Director of the Pediatric Surgery Fellowship at the University of Florida. He is married to Shehla Peshimam (MBBS '92) and they have three children. When time permits, he enjoys travelling,

reading books, watching movies and playing cricket.

**1993**

Atif Shafqat, resident of St. Louis, Missouri, specialises in haematology-oncology. He works at the Missouri Baptist Medical Center and is married to Nadya. They keep busy with their kids, Mehreen, Sonya and Sameer.

Imran Chaudhary, resident of Rochester, New York, specialises in cardiology. He works at the Cardiology Unit at the University of Rochester Medical Center.

**1994**

Ghulam Abbas, resident of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania specialises in thoracic surgery. He is faculty at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, specialising in minimally invasive and image-guided thoracic surgery. He is married and has three children.

**1995**

Nudrat Rizvi Nauman, resident of Las Vegas, Nevada is a paediatrician in private practice. She is married to Nauman Jahangir (also an AKU alumnus). They have three sons: Rafae, Ehmed and Reza. She loves to paint and is involved in community social activities and primary care paediatrics.

**1996**

Syed Abbas Agha, resident of Atlanta, Georgia, specialises in cardiology.

Yousha Mirza, resident of Windsor, Ontario, Canada specialises in child and adolescent psychiatry. He has a post-doctoral research fellowship in brain imaging of paediatric neuropsychiatric disorders. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of



Physicians of Canada and is board certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. Yousha is also Division Head, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Windsor Regional Hospital and Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Canada.

**1997**  
Syed Jawad, resident of Paris, Illinois, specialises in internal medicine and paediatrics. He is married to Zainab (MBBS '97) and their three children keep them busy and entertained in this small rural community. He is also the Treasurer for the AKU-MC Alumni Association for North America.

**1999**  
Babar Hassan, resident of Brookline, Massachusetts, works at the Children's Hospital Boston, Harvard Medical School. He is a senior fellow in interventional cardiology and advanced cardiac imaging. He is married and has three children.

Imran Syed, resident of Mankato, Minnesota, specialises in cardiovascular diseases. He completed his residency in internal medicine at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois and his fellowship in cardiology and advanced cardiac imaging, from Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota.

**2000**  
Furqan Raja, resident of Duluth, Minnesota, specialises in nephrology.

**2001**  
Nadia Ali, resident of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, specialises in internal medicine. She is an academic internist at the University of Pennsylvania Health System, and is pursuing a Master of Public Health from Johns Hopkins University. Her interests are quality improvement and health literacy. She has developed a website to help health providers communi-

cate with patients with low health literacy:  
[www.healthliteracynow.org](http://www.healthliteracynow.org).

**2002**  
Mahboob Alam, resident of Houston, Texas, specialises in cardiology and interventional cardiology. He completed his residency at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

**2003**  
Imran Khalid, resident of New York, specialises in internal medicine. He taught at the Biological and Biomedical Sciences Department, AKU before joining Columbia University as a research scientist in the Department of Medicine. Imran now works as PGY1 in internal medicine at the Harlem Hospital Center, New York. He recently married Sadaf.

**2004**  
Saadia Saleem, resident of Seattle, Washington, is a hospitalist and involved in research in haematology at the University of Washington. She completed her residency in internal medicine at the Baylor College of Medicine and is interested in pursuing a haematology-oncology fellowship.

**2005**  
Fawad Aslam, resident of Houston, Texas, specialises in internal medicine.

**2006**  
Sardar Zakariya Imam, resident of Houston, Texas, specialises in internal medicine. An alumnus of Lahore's Aitchison College, he was an instructor in the Department of Community Health Sciences at FMH College of Medicine and Dentistry for one year before proceeding to the US. He is currently serving as a PGY2 in the Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Texas Medical School in Houston.

**2007**  
Sumaira Talib Shaikh, resident of Madison, Wisconsin, is an internal medicine resident at the University of Wisconsin.

Ahmed Jawad, resident of Jersey City, New Jersey is a Research Assistant at Beth Israel Medical Center in the Department of Colorectal Surgery in New York.

**2008**  
Mohammad Bin Pervez is currently pursuing a fellowship in cardiovascular research in Florida.

Zarmeneh Ali, resident of Brockton, Massachusetts, specialises in neurology.

*Please send Class Notes submissions to [fybhora@aol.com](mailto:fybhora@aol.com) or to [alumni.nachapter@aku.edu](mailto:alumni.nachapter@aku.edu). The maximum length of your submission should be 150 words. Pictures are welcome but must be sent separately as high resolution, JPEG files.*

## Request for Contributions

The editors of AKU-NAMA invite you to contribute to the next issue of the magazine. Please send your contributions to any of the editors or to your respective school or programme representative on the editorial board.

- Please send us pictures to accompany your articles. Pictures must be high resolution, A4 size digital images (at least 1 MB in size) which are separate JPEG files, and not embedded in a word or PDF document.
- Please share stories of what you are doing now, and how you link your achievements back to your experience at AKU.
- When you send in an article make sure you include your degree information and year of graduation from AKU.



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